



Media Release: ATODA Welcomes Commonwealth Investment in the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Sector

11 May 2023

The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) welcomes the announcement of \$68.3 million investment in the alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) sector as part of the Australian Government 2023-24 Budget handed down on 9 May 2023.

In particular ATODA welcomes \$17.3 million over two years from 2023–24 for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services Maintenance program. This is critical funding for the sector to attract and retain a skilled and appropriately remunerated workforce. ATODA also welcomes the announcement of \$377.3 million over 4 years invested in making access more affordable under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the Opioid Dependence Treatment Program (ODTP), and congratulates the organisations and individuals who have been advocating tirelessly for improved and non-discriminatory access to ODTP.

ATODA Interim CEO, Susan Helyar, said “The continuation of the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services Maintenance program for ATOD treatment and harm reduction services is the result of tireless advocacy by many community organisations, including the National Peak Body the Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC).”

The AADC has outlined their response to the Budget here: https://aadc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/AADC-MEDIA-RELEASE-Federal-Budget-2023-24_090523.pdf

Ms Helyar concluded: “The appropriate response to drug use as a health issue is investment in high quality evidence-based ATOD treatment and harm reduction services. Continued investment through the 2023-24 Budget, and ongoing growth of funding in future Budgets to match growing demand for services in the ATOD sector, is vital to supporting improved health outcomes for the ACT community”.

For more information or comment, please contact Susan Helyar, Interim CEO, ATODA on 0431 504 805.

ATODA is the peak body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT. Its purpose is to lead and influence positive outcomes in policy, practice and research by providing collaborative leadership for intersectoral action on the social determinants of harmful drug use, and on societal responses to drug use and to people who use drugs. ATODA’s vision is a healthy, well and safe ACT community with the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms.

While the term AOD (alcohol and other drug) is commonly used to refer to the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector, ATODA’s preference is to use the term ATOD. This acknowledges the role that specialist service providers in this sector play in providing tobacco cessation support, and because tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of the burden of disease in Australia, contributing far more than alcohol or all illicit drugs combined.

Advice for media: Communicating about alcohol and other drugs

Mindframe is funded by the Australian Government and supports safe media reporting, portrayal and communication about suicide, mental ill-health, alcohol and other drugs. Relevant resources include:

- Mindframe Guidelines for communicating about alcohol and other drugs: <https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs/communicating-about-alcohol-other-drugs/mindframe-guidelines>
- Mindframe guidelines for image use in communicating about mental ill-health, suicide and alcohol and other drugs: <https://mindframe.org.au/images-matter-mindframe-guidelines-for-image-use>
- Adding help-seeking information: <https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs/communicating-about-alcohol-other-drugs/adding-help-seeking-information>