



Media Release: ATODA launches the Service Users' Survey on Outcomes, Satisfaction and Experience (SUSOSE)

27 March 2025

The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) is pleased to release the report of findings from the latest Service Users' Survey of Outcomes, Satisfaction and Experience (SUSOSE).

The SUSOSE is unique as the only alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) sector-wide survey of its type done anywhere in Australia. It is a key source of information not available from any other study or survey.

The SUSOSE was developed through a unique co-design process led by ATODA, in collaboration with the Project Advisory Group and the ATOD sector. This group included majority membership by people using ATOD services and peer workers from the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA).

The SUSOSE found an overall very high satisfaction rating for service users with their experience of ATOD services in the ACT, with an average satisfaction score of 28 out of a maximum satisfaction rating of 32. Further, 87 percent of service users agreed that services support them to reach their wellbeing goals; and 94 percent indicated they felt "treated like a person, not like a problem."

ATODA CEO Anita Mills said, "The SUSOSE indicates that the ATOD sector in the ACT are exceptionally good at what they do and enjoy high levels of satisfaction from service users, who have reported overwhelmingly positive experiences when accessing treatment and support."

Results from the survey are also a clear reminder that further investment is needed into the sector to provide services to people with complex needs. The SUSOSE found that 68 percent of respondents were unemployed or not working; 39 percent were homeless or at risk of homelessness; 38 percent identified as having a disability; and 45 percent of women using ACT ATOD services had experienced domestic and/or family violence in the past 12 months.

Ms Mills said, "These statistics are no surprise to frontline services delivering alcohol and drug treatment and harm reduction in the ACT who are managing complexity of demand every day. More resourcing across the system is needed to support people in our community get the treatment and support they need."

While the majority of service users did not feel judged at ATOD services, 40 percent of respondents still reported that they had experienced stigma around their drug use in the community more generally. The fear of being stigmatised and lack of support from family and friends can be significant barriers to accessing ATOD services.

CAHMA Executive Director, Chris Gough said, "Removing stigma and discrimination from drug use is key to empowering people to access and complete drug and alcohol treatment and engage with harm reduction services. This study outlines how important judgement free, holistic and person-centred services are to the people that use them."

Outcomes of alcohol and other drug treatment scored highly in the SUSOSE:

- 74 percent of service users said both the quantity and frequency of their alcohol and other drug use decreased.
- 69 percent of service users said their risk of involvement with police and the justice system decreased.
- 74 percent said their overall quality of life was better.

Ms Mills said, “The SUSOSE results tell a story about the high value work of our local ATOD sector in the ACT, through the voices of people using these services. This is an invaluable piece of research to support our sector to continue to deliver to such a high standard.”

The SUSOSE will be launched at an event at Veteran’s Park on **Friday 28 March 11.30am -12.30pm** and will include an address from the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

For more information or comment, please contact Anita Mills, 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 advocate for a strong and sustainable alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT, using best practice policy, research and evidence. ATODA’s vision is a healthy ACT community with reduced alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms, served by a high-quality treatment and harm reduction sector.

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>
- Australian Alcohol & Other Drugs Council: [Best Practices for AOD Services in Media Engagement](#)