



Statement by the Alcohol and Other Drugs Peaks Network

The Australian Government should continue to directly fund alcohol and other drug treatment

- Australian families and communities are increasingly concerned about alcohol and other drug related harms, with data confirming increasing harms from methamphetamine ('ice') use.
- Drug and alcohol treatment interventions have been proven to be efficient and cost-effective, achieving positive outcomes for individuals and the broader community.
- Every year across Australia between 200,000 and 500,000 people are unable to access the drug and alcohol treatment that they want and need. Meeting the current level of demand would require doubling treatment places in the alcohol and other drug sector.
- The Australian Government is an essential, direct and long-term funder of alcohol and other drug treatment, contributing approximately 38% of government funding for treatment services.
- The Australian Government built upon this commitment through additional drug treatment funding, announced on 6 December 2015 as part of the National Ice Strategy. The additional funding represents about a 5% increase in the total drug treatment investment.
- This new drug treatment funding is being commissioned through the Primary Health Networks.
- While still in its early stages, the alcohol and other drug sector has identified a significant degree of variability across the Primary Health Networks' approach to the allocation of the new funding. While some commissioning processes have commenced around the country, the funding has yet to result in additional services or episodes of care, with the first of these due to commence in some jurisdictions in January 2017.
- As with any significant change in program structure, it is essential that the impact of the change be assessed to identify and redress any unintended consequences. It will not be possible to make this assessment until any new services commissioned are operational.
- The Australian Government's existing contracts with drug treatment services through the Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program (NGOTGP) and the Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund (SMSDGF), worth \$111.98M, end on 30 June 2017. The future of these funding pools remains unclear, impacting on the sector's ability to guarantee continued drug and alcohol treatment in the Australian community.

The Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Peak Bodies calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Continue to directly fund drug and alcohol treatment services through the Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Fund and Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund for the next 2-3 years, or take steps to ensure continuity of services funded under these programs for the next 2-3 years.
2. During this time (a) undertake an independent external evaluation of the Primary Health Networks' commissioning of drug treatment funding through the National Ice Strategy; and (b) develop a planning process in collaboration with the alcohol and other drug sector to identify the most effective way for commissioning services that best meet community need.

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