



NADA MEDIA RELEASE

Moving drug and alcohol forward with health reform

21 July 2010

The Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA) reiterates the concern of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA) about the gap that currently exists in the National Health and Hospitals Network agreement in relation to the funding, governance and policy responsibility of the drug and alcohol service system.

NADA is disappointed by the misrepresentation of the NSW drug and alcohol service system in a recent article in *The Australian* newspaper on 17 July 2010 which focussed on the “hospital-based drug and alcohol outpatient withdrawal and inpatient detoxification units” and “extensive public-clinic-based drug and alcohol service system” in relation to opioid substitution therapy, while ignoring the large contribution made by the non government sector as well as a number of private providers in the provision of services to individuals and the community.

“A balanced perspective and collaboration is needed. The provision of drug and alcohol services in NSW and other jurisdictions is not simple and involves both community based health promotion, counselling and rehabilitation services, as well as hospital based services for acute care and the provision of pharmacotherapies,” said Mr Larry Pierce, Chief Executive Officer of NADA. “What has been missing from the political and policy context so far is recognition of the work done by the full spectrum of health service providers. This is particularly the case for drug and alcohol in which specialist community workers, psychologists, nurses and doctors working in government, non government and private settings are all responsible for providing services.”

State, Territory and Federal governments should articulate their views on the issue of drug and alcohol misuse which often co-occurs with other serious issues including mental illness, homelessness and poor physical health. Mr Pierce said, “There is an opportunity for real reform in this area, to expand the delivery of community based drug and alcohol treatment and health promotion services within the context of primary health care, and to ease the demand and escalating cost of acute care provided in Australia’s hospitals.”

NADA calls on the NSW and Federal government to work with the non government sector on opportunities for new and expanded models of service delivery with a greater focus on community based care and innovation.

Contact Larry Pierce, NADA CEO on 0411 747 106 or larry@nada.org.au

The Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies Inc (NADA) is the peak organisation for the non government drug and alcohol sector in NSW.

NADA’s goal is to support non government drug and alcohol organisations in NSW to reduce the alcohol and drug related harm to individuals, families and the community.

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