



Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Assistant Minister for Health
Senator for New South Wales
Deputy Leader of the Nationals in the Senate

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 14 December 2014

'ICE' THE FIRST PRIORITY FOR GOVERNMENT'S RESHAPED

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL COUNCIL

The Australian Government has tasked its reshaped advisory council on drugs and alcohol to examine as a priority the issues facing Australia from methamphetamine use, and in particular the rising use of the drug *ice*.

"Tackling the growing ice problem is a major priority for the Government and as a first step I will be asking our advisory council to look at this issue as their first work priority," the Assistant Minister for Health, Fiona Nash, said today.

"We are responding to community concerns and evidence on the ground that ice is causing widespread devastation and destruction, particularly affecting young people.

"It's destroying families, children and communities across Australia – we want this to stop," Minister Nash said.

"New data released by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (20/10/14) shows amongst all those who used methamphetamine there was an increase in the use of ice (or crystal methamphetamine) from 22 per cent in 2010 to 50 per cent in 2013. This is of significant concern.

"Australia needs to be able to respond effectively to the drug and alcohol issues facing the community and particularly to new risks posed by drugs like ice," Minister Nash said.

"Today I am announcing that the Australian National Council on Drugs will be renamed as the *Australian National Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drugs (ANACAD)* which recognises the advisory Council's focus on alcohol as well as drugs.

"ANACAD's key role will be to provide advice to the Government on a range of national drug and alcohol issues, including advice on emerging issues and new substances, to ensure the Government is well placed to respond.

"I'd particularly like to acknowledge and thank the outgoing Chair, Dr John Herron AO, for his contribution to Australia's drug and alcohol policy framework of the ANCD for the past eight years," Minister Nash said.

"The newly constituted ANACAD will be chaired by Ms Kay Hull and backed by a membership of esteemed experts in the drug and alcohol fields.

"Ms Hull was Chair of the Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs Inquiry into substance abuse in Australian communities which delivered the *Road to Recovery* report in 2003, and she is a well- respected community leader who understands community expectations across Australia.

"Other members of the advisory Council are all experts from a wide range of areas relating to drug and alcohol, including health, justice, Indigenous, mental health, research and policy and I thank them all for agreeing to be on this important advisory Council."

Minister Nash said the Government recognises the impacts that drug and alcohol misuse can have on Indigenous communities. Acknowledging this, Associate Professor Ted Wilkes has been appointed to a newly created position on the Council as Principal Adviser on Indigenous drug and alcohol matters.

ANACAD will report directly to the Minister responsible for drugs and alcohol policy within the Health portfolio, Fiona Nash, and be a valuable advisory resource to other ministers including the Ministers for Justice, Indigenous Affairs, Education and Immigration and Border Protection. This broader advisory role will be the first time the Council has had the ability to directly give advice to all relevant Commonwealth Ministers.

"This will ensure that tackling drug and alcohol problems in the community will be a coordinated effort," Senator Nash said.

In welcoming this announcement the Minister for Justice, Michael Keenan said the Commonwealth Government is committed to detecting illegal activities and disrupting criminal networks that threaten the safety of Australians.

"We have witnessed unprecedented co-operation between Commonwealth and State law enforcement agencies and intelligence sharing that is making a significant difference with organised criminal gangs, particularly in the war against the ice scourge.

"Ice requires a whole of government response, and the ANACAD will play an important part in the Coalition Government's commitment to delivering a safer and more secure nation," he said.

Minister Nash said she looked forward to working closely with the ANACAD to reduce the harms associated with drugs and alcohol, which is a priority of the Coalition Government.

Media contact: Kay McNiece, 0412 132 585

Attachment:

ANACAD membership details.

Chair: Ms Kay Hull

Principle Advisor, Indigenous drug and alcohol matters: A/Prof Ted Wilkes AO

Expert Members:

Dr Robert Ali

Professor Steve Allsop

Ms Jo Baxter

Dr Diana Egerton-Warburton

Dr James Fitzpatrick

Mr Anthony Fleming

Dr Jenny May

Mr Michael Phelan APM

Mr Frank Quinlan

Mr John Rogerson