

ANACAD

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Background

The Australian National Advisory Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ANACAD) was established in December 2014 as the principal expert advisory body to the Australian Government on matters pertaining to alcohol and other drugs (AOD).

ANACAD reports to the minister with portfolio responsibility for AOD policy issues. Throughout 2025 this was the Minister for Health and Ageing (the Minister).

This report provides an overview of the discussions amongst ANACAD in 2025, noting the advice provided to the Minister remains confidential.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference state that ANACAD will:

1. Report to the Australian Government through the portfolio minister with policy responsibility for alcohol and other drug (AOD) policy issues (the Minister).
 - a. AOD issues may be raised with other ministers whose policy responsibility intersects or overlaps AOD policy. However, the Minister must be copied into all correspondence.
2. Support the Australian Government by providing confidential, strategic, evidence-based advice on:
 - a. AOD use and related matters.
 - b. Identified priorities of national importance regarding policy, related regulation, prevention, demand reduction, supply reduction and control, harm reduction and treatment, and workforce activities.
 - c. AOD issues relevant to First Nations populations.
 - d. Requests from the Minister as required.
3. Work collaboratively with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to support complex AOD policy development.
4. Advise on and support the Australian Government's activities in relation to relevant national framework and strategies, such as the *National Drug Strategy 2017-2026* and the *National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030*.
5. Provide an annual report to the Minister.
6. Engage as appropriate with key experts such as community and family members, people with lived experience, law enforcement and treatment personnel, First Nations expertise, and any other identified priority population groups.

Key activities

ANACAD met three times in 2025, in June, September and November. These meetings were held on Ngunnawal Country in Canberra and marked the commencement of the 2025-27 term, following a membership refresh and with a renewed focus on national AOD policy and reforms.

June 2025 – Establishment and Planning

The June meeting initiated the new ANACAD term. Members reviewed progress made by the former term in progressing its priorities relating to workforce, primary care, governance, stigma and discrimination, in addition to ad hoc advice as well as built rapport as a new Council.

Members agreed to continue work on primary care, workforce, stigma, discrimination, and racism, and began considering new areas such as the relationship between AOD and suicide and suicidality, challenges in ageing and aged care, and the next iteration of the National Drug Strategy.

Emphasis was also placed on community engagement and consultation, with plans to facilitate these activities over the term.

September 2025 – Work Plan Refinement

The September meeting focused on developing the 2025–27 Work Plan, informed by ongoing primary care and workforce reform activities.

ANACAD centred its discussions around AOD reforms, including the:

- future of the National Drug Strategy
- House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Disability Inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia
- future administration of the Drug and Alcohol Program.

Members also agreed to provide advice to Government on AOD models of care, pursuing AOD workforce modelling in partnership with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, and remaining across the key elements of the Government's primary care reform agenda.

ANACAD agreed to consider all Work Plan items with a view to reducing stigma, discrimination, and racism. Commitments were also made to maintain a watching brief on family, domestic and sexual violence, suicide and suicidality, ageing and aged care, and forensic toxicology, with a view to providing advice to Government as topical or requested.

Key attendees

The September 2025 meeting was attended by the following invited guests:

- The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aging, and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- The Hon Rebecca White MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Assistant Minister for Women, and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health
- Professor Michael Kidd, Chief Medical Officer

- Representatives from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's Primary Care and Health Workforce Divisions.

November 2025 – Work Plan Progression

The November meeting focused on continuing to progress Work Plan priorities.

ANACAD refined the documentation of its 2025-27 Work Plan, to clearly articulate the scope and objectives of each priority activity, and the dependencies between each work stream.

Members discussed several cross-cutting matters, including:

- updates on the respective AOD reform activities and potential next steps
- recently completed research regarding AOD use by young women
- the role and remit of the AOD Research Centres through the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- AOD models of care
- governance opportunities
- the final recommendations from the Productivity Commission review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

ANACAD reaffirmed its commitment to reducing stigma, discrimination, and maintained its awareness of secondary priorities.

Key attendees

The November 2025 meeting was attended by the following invited guests:

- The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aging, and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Professor Alison Ritter AO, Director, Drug Policy Modelling Program at the University of New South Wales
- Drs Megan Cook, Benjamin Riordan, Emmanuel Kuntsche and Amy Pennay, La Trobe University
- Representatives from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's Health Workforce Division.

Membership

Appointments to ANACAD are made by the Minister.

MEMBER	RELEVANT EXPERIENCE
Dr Erin Lalor AM – Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed ANACAD Chair in February 2025 • CEO, Alcohol and Drug Foundation • Chair, Alcohol Change Australia • Deputy Chair, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare • Member, Australian Civil Society Committee on UN Drug Policy • Member, Queensland Achieving Balance, Strategic Implementation Group • Member, Australian Institute of Company Directors
Georgie Harman AO – Deputy Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reappointed ANACAD Deputy Chair in February 2025 • CEO and Director, Beyond Blue • Director, Kilfinan Australia • Patron, Pride in Diversity • Member, National Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance Steering Group • Member, The Victorian Pride Centre • Member, Chief Executive Women • Patron, Out for Australia
Nicky Bath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia • Co-Chair, 2026 Census LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee • Member, Department of Health and Aged Care, Diversity Consultative Committee (Aged Care) • Member, The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Partnering with Consumers Advisory Group • Member, Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care Consultative Committee • Member, LGBTIQA+ Health and Wellbeing 10 Year Action Plan Expert Advisory Group • Member, National Suicide and Self-Harm Monitoring System Expert Advisory Group and User Experience Working Group • Member, Strengthening Medicare Implementation Oversight Committee • Member, Aged and Community Care Providers Association Consumer Advisory Committee • Member, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Consultative Forum • Member, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, Strategic and Scientific Advisory Committee • Member, National Office for Child Safety, Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member, National Aged Care Alliance
Joe Coyte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director, Ngaimpe Aboriginal Corporation and Gulgul Nyugang Aboriginal Corporation (The Glen and The Glen for Women) • Board member, Australasian Therapeutic Community Association • Board member, Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Network
Sione Crawford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO, Harm Reduction Victoria • Board Member and Treasurer, Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League
Professor Michael Farrell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former ANACAD Chair • Professor and Director, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of NSW • Theme lead and research coordinator, Mental Health, Addiction and Ageing Faculty of Medicine, University of NSW • Director, Board of Odyssey House
Dr Robert Stirling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO, Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies Inc • Board Director (Deputy Chair), Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council • Advisory Board Director (Chair), National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, Flinders University • Co-Chair, NGO Advisory Committee, NSW Government, Ministry of Health • Member, Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty Leadership Group, NSW Government • Council Member (NSW Representative), Australian Professional Society for Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD). • Adjunct Lecturer, Drug Policy Modelling Program, Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW
Julie Tongs OAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services Ltd • Member, FASD Advisory Group • ANU Schools of Medicine and Psychology Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee • Committee member, ACT Detainee Health and Wellbeing • CEO and Affiliates Forum, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation • Residential Rehabilitation Facility Watson Working Group
Dr Hester Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Addiction Medicine Specialist, Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs, NSW Ministry of Health • Clinical Advisor to Population and Community Health, South Easter Sydney Local Health District • Conjoint Senior Lecturer, UNSW • GP, Alice St General Practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing and NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal member, Medical Council of NSW • Chair, Specific Interest Group in Addiction in the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners • Deputy Chair, Royal Australasian College of Physicians Australian Chapter of Addiction Medicine training committee • Committee Member, FASD Every Moment Matters • Committee member, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Expert Advisory Group - Smoking and Vaping • GP representative, Scientific Committee for International Medicine in Addiction Conference • Expert, NSW Coroners Court
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