

ANACAD Summary of Activities 2020-2021

ANACAD Background

The Australian National Advisory Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ANACAD) was established in December 2014.

As the principal alcohol and other drug (AOD) expert advisory body to the Australian Government, the Council provides expert advice on new and emerging policies, ideas or issues relating to AOD. ANACAD is a confidential expert advisory Council.

ANACAD membership consists of individuals with a broad range of expertise. The full membership list and Terms of Reference is available on the Departmental website on the ANACAD web page:

<https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-national-advisory-council-on-alcohol-and-other-drugs-anacad>

This summary provides an overview of the activities undertaken by ANACAD over the period of 01 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

The role of ANACAD

ANACAD supports the Australian Government by providing confidential, strategic, evidence-based advice on:

- AOD use and related problems;
- Identified priorities on policy, related regulation, prevention, demand reduction, supply reduction and control, harm reduction and treatment of national importance;
- AOD issues among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations;
- The National Drug Strategy 2017-2026, the National Preventive Health Strategy and accompanying national frameworks; and
- AOD policy including activities to be progressed through the National Drugs Campaign.

ANACAD reports to the Australian Government through the portfolio Minister with policy responsibility for AOD policy issues.

Key activities

ANACAD has actively engaged with the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Greg Hunt and the Australian Government during 2020-2021 and has provided expert advice in respect to AOD priorities. This has included advice in respect to:

- COVID-19 pandemic impacts on the AOD use and the AOD sector, including AOD prevention and treatment services.
- Potential governance impacts which will need to be considered in relation to the implementation of the National Drug Strategy in light of the disbandment of the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol forum and National Drug Strategy Committee.
- The mid-point review of the National Drug Strategy and the importance of developing an evaluation framework.

- Concerns about major alcohol superstores being located in close proximity to dry indigenous communities and the potential impact on those communities.
- The MBS Review Taskforce and barriers to utilising Case Conference items.
- Opioid related deaths and disabilities and the success of the take home naloxone pilot in reducing these harms.
- Funding support and activity to improve awareness of the National Health and Medical Research Council's '*Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol*', and to support individuals, families and communities to adopt low risk drinking.
- ANACAD has played an integral role in the development of the National Preventive Health Strategy with members of ANACAD on the Expert Steering Committee. ANACAD played a pivotal role in the inclusion of Alcohol and Other Drugs as a pillar in the strategy, contributed to the public consultations, and providing expert advice on draft iterations.

Meetings and engagements

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ANACAD was unable to meet face-to-face during 2020-21. However, it met via videoconference on the following four occasions:

- 7 October 2020
- 18 November 2020
- 10 February 2021
- 12 May 2021

Engagement with the community and sector

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted ANACAD's ability to engage with the community through community consultation mechanisms. However, ANACAD has still been able to engage with key stakeholders via videoconference. This engagement has provided valuable insights in respect to complex AOD issues faced by vulnerable populations, as well as the important work being carried out by Australian government agencies and public health stakeholders. Key stakeholders engaged with during this period have included the following:

- National LGBTI Health Alliance
- National Rural Health Commissioner
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council
- Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation

In 2020-2021 ANACAD engaged with the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Greg Hunt via teleconference at its meeting held on 12 May 2021, as well as on a number of occasions out of session.

ANACAD has also engaged with the Northern Territory Government in relation to the location of liquor outlets and their close proximity to vulnerable populations.