



MEDIA RELEASE

TREATMENT CHALLENGES FOR AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO ICE & AMPHETAMINES ABUSE

The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA) supports the position paper on methamphetamines released by the Australian National Council on Drugs last week.

Therapeutic Communities (TCs) in Australia & New Zealand have been successfully treating amphetamine dependence for over 30 years but we need to respond differently and strategically for ICE users seeking help from this destructive drug. It's increased availability and use is increasing psychotic behaviour and creating chaos and disruption for treatment providers.

The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association supports the call for strategic planning and targeted responses so we avoid any knee jerk reactions that result in scarce funds being inadvertently misdirected.

The ATCA also supports the recommendations made by the ANCD last week and in particular; more resources for additional frontline workers in our residential services and increased training for the range of mental health conditions that ICE users can present with at treatment services.

Clearly more beds and outpatient services are needed to cope with the additional demand created by this new destructive drug.

TC operators already cope with co-morbidity. At least 60% of residents today suffer from mental health issues as well as their addiction. This is our area of expertise but we need an increase in beds and qualified staff to cope with this new trend.

Increased investment and capacity building for therapeutic communities is essential if they are to continue to be one of our most effective forms of treatment with this new population of ice users.

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