

MEDIA RELEASE

Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association welcomes NSW Government Drug Summit announcement

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Michelle Ridley, Executive Officer, Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA) welcomes the NSW Government's announcement confirming the dates for the NSW Drug Summit, scheduled to take place in regional NSW in October and Sydney in December.

'The ATCA sees the NSW Drug Summit as a vital opportunity for sector investment reform, to address the increasing challenge of ensuring that NSW has a viable, well-resourced and responsive alcohol and other drugs (AOD) treatment sector.

The ATCA membership includes some of the largest non-government AOD treatment providers in NSW, including Odyssey House, We Help Ourselves (WHOS), The Glen, Ted Noffs Foundation, Watershed, One80TC, The Buttery, Directions and Karralika. These services play a crucial role in delivering AOD treatment programs and reducing drug related harm for young people, adults, families with children and communities.

'ATCA members make every effort to meet the rising demand for AOD treatment. However, the ability to meet demand has been hindered by factors such as funding not keeping pace with the cost of providing services and short-term funding agreements. It is therefore essential that the Drug Summit identify ways of prioritizing reform of current funding and contract arrangements.

Support for a robust and well-funded NGO AOD sector, with substantial investment in AOD treatment services that address the underlying causes of substance use, is also essential. This approach will support improved outcomes for the entire community," says Ms. Ridley.

Gerard Byrne, Chair, ATCA Board, stated that 'the NSW Government's upcoming Drug Summit provides a timely opportunity for input from service providers, service users, families, and communities. It also presents an opportunity to highlight the valuable services that ATCA members provide right across NSW, which include residential therapeutic communities, withdrawal management, non-residential day programs and services for families.

'ATCA looks forward to the NSW Drug Summit and participating in the discussions and in doing so representing the views of ATCA members. The Drug Summit is a pivotal opportunity for essential funding reform that will enhance health outcomes for individuals, their families, and the wider community', said Mr. Byrne.

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