



Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Network



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Network (ADARRN) and Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA) unite to advocate for vital drug treatment services at the NSW Drug Summit

September 2024

Joe Coyte, Acting CEO of the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Network (ADARRN), and Michelle Ridley, Executive Officer of the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA), welcome the NSW Government's confirmation of dates for the NSW Drug Summit.

'This is a critical moment for reform, particularly the need for increased investment in residential drug treatment services,' said Mr. Coyte. 'ADARRN represents Aboriginal Community Controlled services that provide over 100 residential rehabilitation beds across NSW. These culturally safe, community-led services offer not just treatment but also a deep connection to culture and healing for Aboriginal people. We need long-term, sustainable funding to support their continued growth.'

Michelle Ridley echoed the call for greater investment, particularly in Therapeutic Communities, residential AOD treatment and Aboriginal Community Controlled services, especially in regional and rural NSW. 'ATCA members include some of the largest non-government AOD providers in NSW, supporting people with substance use issues, mental health, trauma, and other co-occurring concerns. To meet rising demand, we need substantial, sustained investment in AOD treatment, particularly residential treatment.'

Both networks emphasise the importance of a comprehensive approach to reducing drug-related harm, recognising that no single solution addresses all needs. 'The Drug Summit must include a diverse range of perspectives and voices, from residential and non-residential treatment, harm reduction, and prevention services—as well as voices from First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, the LGBTIQ+ community, rural and regional areas, and those with criminal justice involvement,' added Ms. Ridley.

Danielle Manton, Barunggam Woman & ADARRN Chairperson, echoed this sentiment, highlighting the crucial role of Aboriginal Community Controlled AOD services. Danielle added, "The Drug Summit is an opportunity for the NSW Government to draw on the expertise of Aboriginal Community Controlled AOD services and Therapeutic Communities to align policy and funding with practice and outcomes for the people of NSW to heal."

Gerard Byrne, Chair of the ATCA Board, emphasised the NSW Drug Summit's pivotal role in raising awareness of the need for a strong, adequately funded AOD treatment system. 'Residential treatment services are central to the work of both ATCA and ADARRN members, providing vital support to vulnerable people across NSW. Together, we are advocating for a sustainable, well-funded AOD sector to improve outcomes for the entire community,' Mr. Byrne stated.

To read the ATCA's Drug Summit Position Paper click on the link to the website www.atca.com.au/resources and to see ADARRN's Position Paper click on the link [here](#).

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