

2023 NSW State Election Issues Paper

NADA seeks commitment from candidates to share NADA's vision for a sustainable and responsive non-government Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) sector. Decisive action is required for the sector to meet service demand and reduce alcohol and drug related harms to NSW communities.

NADA key issues

1. Develop and implement a whole-of-government alcohol and other drugs strategy

- The lack of an AOD strategy in NSW since 2010 is a barrier to driving progress in the field.
- An evidence-based whole-of-government AOD strategy, aligned with the National Drug Strategy will strengthen the sector's capacity and response to AOD issues in NSW.

2. Improve access to alcohol and other drug treatment

- The AOD sector is unable to respond adequately to the demand for treatment, particularly in regional and rural areas. Current NGO funding models have resulted in significant underfunding and are unsustainable.
- The AOD sector requires long-term investment with incremental increases in funding needed to attract and maintain the workforce.

3. Attract and develop a sustainable workforce

- A NSW workforce plan informed by current workforce profile data is essential for targeted planning and resourcing.
- Parity with public service salaries and conditions and five-year rolling contracts are essential to attract and retain workers in the non-government sector.
- Career pathways into the sector must be built to lift the profile of AOD work, equip people through training and incentivise a range of professionals to enter the sector.

4. Implement policies that reduce stigma and discrimination towards people who use drugs

- Many current policies in NSW stigmatise and discriminate people who use, or have used, drugs. This impacts on people's ability to access health services, housing and employment.

Questions for candidates. If elected, will you:

1. As a matter of priority, develop a whole-of-government alcohol and other drugs strategy for NSW?
2. Commit to addressing recommendations made by the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice' including the \$500 million investment to the sector?
3. Support implementation of funding contracts for non-government AOD services that are a minimum of five years, ensuring job certainty, organisational sustainability and long-term planning?
4. Consider rolling contracts for NGOs that are entered into on the grounds of continuation rather than completion at the end of a contract, to enable ongoing service delivery?
5. Implement a consistent approach to the application of indexation to NGO contracts across all NSW government agencies and collaborate with the Australian Government funders of NGOs where possible?

6. Commit to review and amend policies that stigmatise and discriminate people who use, or have used, drugs?
7. If elected, what is one key thing you will seek to do to address alcohol and drug-related harms in NSW?

We thank political leaders who hold AOD portfolios within their parties for considering these important issues for people who seek AOD treatment and support. We look forward to hearing whether they endorse the recommendations highlighted in this paper.

Please direct responses or discussion of this paper to:

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About NADA

The Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) is the peak organisation for the non government alcohol and other drugs sector in NSW. We represent almost 80 organisational members that provide services in over 100 locations across NSW and the ACT. They provide a broad range of services including health promotion and harm reduction, early intervention, treatment and continuing care programs. Together, we improve the health and wellbeing of people who use, or have used, alcohol and other drugs across the NSW community. For more information, please visit www.nada.org.au.