

## Snapshot of the NSW non-government AOD sector

The NSW non-government alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector plays a significant role in responding to the needs of people who use AOD, yet our contribution is not well understood. This factsheet provides an outline of AOD treatment in NSW and highlights the work of non-government services.

- In 2021-22 around 131,000 people received AOD treatment
- In 2021-22 around 60% of people who received AOD treatment were male and 52% were aged 20-39 years
- The most common drug of concern nationally, that led people to seek treatment in 2021-22 was alcohol, representing 42% of all treatment episodes
- 43% of Australians had illicitly used a drug in their lifetime and 16.4% had used an illicit drug in the last 12 months
- Australian research shows that every \$1 invested in programs to reduce demand for illicit drugs provides an estimated return of \$5.40

### Who provides AOD treatment services?

The Australian and NSW Governments fund both public agencies and NGOs to provide a range of AOD treatment services in NSW. Government providers typically deliver medically oriented treatment types such as pharmacotherapy and hospital-based responses, while NGOs generally provide counselling and rehabilitation services. There are also a number of private providers and mutual support groups that provide treatment and support.

### About the NSW non-government AOD sector

NSW has a diverse, strong and effective non-government AOD sector which has provided services to individuals, families and communities for more than 50 years. The sector has been critical in responding to the health and welfare needs of those affected by AOD.

50 specialist AOD organisations provide services in over 100 locations across NSW. A similar number provide AOD service delivery as part of a broader health and/or social welfare service.

NSW Government spent \$330 million on AOD services in 2021/22, which is delivered through local health districts and non-government organisations. The below table details funding to the NGO sector.

#### Overview of funding to the NSW NGO AOD sector

Funder	Total in 2022/23
NSW Ministry of Health Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs	\$64.3m
NSW Primary Health Networks (PHNs)*	\$28.7m (+ approx. 6% operational = \$30.1m)
Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care**	\$21.4m
National Indigenous Australians Agency	\$13.6m
<b>Total***</b>	<b>\$ 128 million</b>

\* Not all funds distributed to NGOs, also includes PHN administration for AOD funds – can be up to 6%.

\*\* Does not include SACS.

\*\*\* Includes all NGOs. There are a small number of NGOs that are not NADA members.

The non-government AOD sector is the largest provider of residential rehabilitation services in NSW and also provide specialist treatment programs for methadone to abstinence and methadone stabilisation, Magistrate Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) programs and Drug Court services.

The NGO AOD sector provide a wide range of specialist prevention and treatment services including:

- health promotion
- harm reduction
- outreach
- counselling
- case management
- withdrawal management
- residential rehabilitation
- day programs
- support for families and significant others
- continuing coordinated care

## **AOD workforce profile**

An inaugural census of the NSW AOD Workforce conducted by the NSW Ministry of Health in 2022 found that the total NSW AOD workforce is comprised of 2473.8 FTE, with 60% (n=1493 FTE) employed within public sector services and 40% (n=953 FTE) employed in NGO settings.

A study of the NSW NGO AOD workforce in 2021 showed:

- 70% female, 81% heterosexual and typically 45 years old
- 58% define their ethnic background as Australian and 11% as Aboriginal
- Total life work experience reported as 21 years
- Highest educational level is certificate and diploma (31%) followed by bachelor degree (28%) and master degree (19%)
- In a 2019 study, 42% reported to have lived experience of AOD-related harms

## **NADA members**

NADA represents almost 80 organisational members that provide services in over 100 locations across NSW. Our members are diverse in their structure, philosophy and approach to AOD service delivery.

- 52% are specialist AOD services
- 30% provide residential services
- 21% provide specialist services to young people
- 15% are Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- 8% provide specialist services to women, and women with children
- 48% of services are regional, rural or remote

# **NADA**

## **About NADA**

The Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) is the peak organisation for non-government AOD services in NSW. Our vision is improved health and well-being through access to a connected non-government alcohol and other drug sector that is resourced to deliver quality services. Our purpose is to lead, strengthen and advocate for the sector. Our decisions and actions are informed by the experiences, knowledge and concerns of our members.

We provide a range of programs and services that focus on sector and workforce development, data management, governance and management support, research and evaluation, sector representation and advocacy, as well as actively contributing to public health policy.

Our activity aligns with three strategic priorities:

1. NADA will lead strong and impactful advocacy
2. NADA will strengthen AOD services and workforce
3. NADA will promote the impact of members and the AOD sector

NADA has award level accreditation under the Australian Services Excellence Standards (ASES), a quality framework certified by Quality Innovation and Performance (QIP). NADA maintains accreditation with the Health + Wellbeing Equality Index and was awarded a silver service provider in the Australian Pride in Health + Wellbeing Awards 2023.

## References

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2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020). *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019*. Canberra: AIHW.
3. Voce A & Sullivan T 2022. What are the monetary returns of investing in programs that reduce demand for illicit drugs?. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no. 657. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://doi.org/10.52922/ti78733>
4. *Findings from NSW AOD Workforce Census*, Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs, NSW Ministry of Health, 2022
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6. Roche, A., Kostadinov, V., Hodge, S., Duraisingam, V., McEntee, A., Pidd, K. & Nicholas, R. (2018). *Characteristics and wellbeing of the NSW non-government AOD Workforce*. Adelaide: National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, Flinders University.