

## Increasing access to specialist alcohol and other drugs services: *Funding of the non-government alcohol and other drugs sector*

October 2024

### Context

The upcoming NSW Drug Summit is an opportunity for NSW to meaningfully reform its drug and alcohol policies. This Briefing Note provides recommendations put forward by the Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA), the peak body which represents 85 non-government alcohol and other drugs (AOD) organisations across 100 locations in NSW. This briefing is a supplementary paper to our [overall position](#) for the NSW Drug Summit, specific to funding of the NGO sector.

### The Evidence

- Almost half of all alcohol and drug treatment in NSW is provided by the non-government sector.
- The NSW NGO sector is leading on outcome measurement in the AOD field ensuring that services are producing positive outcomes for people who access treatment.
- In 2022/2023 for every dollar invested by the NSW Government in the NGO AOD treatment system, the NGO AOD sector brought in an additional dollar.
- There are 101,773 people in NSW who do not receive treatment despite being suitable for and wanting treatment.
- The growing complexity of client presentations in NGO services has placed additional demands on the NGO workforce, requiring multi-disciplinary teams to meet client needs.
- Independent evidence shows increasingly complex client presentations, unfunded costs for NGO service providers, structural vulnerability in NGO contract arrangements, and extensive unmet need in NSW.

Source: Ritter, A. (2024) [Evidence brief: The NSW non-government alcohol and other drug sector](#). Drug Policy Modelling Program: UNSW Sydney.

### The Solution

To address the challenges facing the sector, NADA makes the following recommendations:

- **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Consolidate historic funding sources to existing funded NGOs into a **single fund for the NSW NGO AOD sector** (including, NSW Drug Package, Methamphetamine, Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services) to simplify contract arrangements and support workforce retention. This should include a commitment to fold the new investment from the Special Commission ('Ice') into that fund once evaluated.
- **RECOMMENDATION 2:** Over the next five-years, **increase funding to NSW Government funded NGO AOD services against evidence-based costings in the NSW Budget**. This is in addition to projected cost escalation that are applied to NGOs each year by the NSW Government.
- **RECOMMENDATION 3:** The NSW Government to negotiate with the Australian Government to ensure that the funding of NSW NGO services via the Department of Health and Aged Care, Primary Health Networks and the National Indigenous Australian Agency applies a similar approach over the next five years.

### Contact Details

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