



NSW GOVERNMENT MUST ACT ON DRUG SUMMIT REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a joint statement from the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA), the National Users and AIDS Association (NUAA), and ACON.

Following the release of the NSW Drug Summit Report this week, we, as organisations and leaders in alcohol and other drug (AOD) services and supporting communities, call on the NSW Government to implement the report's recommendations in full. This is a critical opportunity to deliver real, evidence-based reform in partnership with people with lived and living experience, the health sector, and affected communities.

To ensure the swift and effective implementation of these critical reforms, we urge the NSW Government to establish a dedicated Taskforce to oversee the rollout of the Drug Summit recommendations. This Taskforce must include representatives of people with lived and living experiences of drug use and other affected communities, health professionals, and justice and social services.

The findings of the 2024 NSW Drug Summit Report underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated response to drug-related harms. The report highlights the need for a whole-of-government strategy, increased investment in AOD services, enhanced harm reduction measures, and systemic reforms in policing and the justice system.

It also reinforces the critical role of community-led and culturally appropriate solutions, particularly for Aboriginal communities, young people, and other priority populations. The report makes clear that achieving meaningful change requires a shift towards a health-focused approach, informed by the voices of those with lived and living experience.

The NSW Drug Summit Report outlines a series of urgent actions required to address drug-related harms, ensuring a health-centred and community-driven approach. As Summit participants and AOD sector leaders, we strongly endorse these recommendations and call for their immediate implementation, including:

- A 10-year whole-of-government AOD strategy
- Expansion of AOD services
- Aboriginal-led solutions
- Strengthening the peer workforce
- Scaling up harm reduction initiatives
- Diversion and policing reform
- Housing and social support
- Youth and family support
- Addressing stigma and discrimination

The NSW Government cannot achieve these necessary reforms alone. A truly effective response must be built on collaboration between government, non-government organisations, researchers, and the broader community. The evidence is clear: a harm minimisation approach saves lives,

reduces the burden on the justice system, and improves health and social outcomes. Now is the time to act.

As leaders of community-based services, we stand ready to work alongside the government to turn these recommendations into action and deliver the change that NSW needs.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES FROM ORGANISATION CEOS

Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) CEO Dr Robert Stirling:

“NADA supports the 56 priority actions and stands ready to work with the NSW Government to expedite development of a 10-year plan to improve drug policy and ensure that the people of NSW can access treatment and support when and where they need it.”

NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) CEO Dr Mary Harrod:

“NUAA welcomes the release of the report from the NSW Drug Summit and thanks Carmel Tebbutt and John Brogden for their time and dedication to this important piece of work. The recommendations highlight the need for a coordinated, whole of government response that includes the voices of people with lived and living experience of drug use. We look forward to continuing our work to improve the health and human rights of people affected by drug use in NSW.”

ACON CEO Michael Woodhouse:

“The NSW Drug Summit Report reinforces the urgent need for a health-first approach, including for LGBTQ+ communities. The successful response to HIV in New South Wales shows us that a strong partnership between people with lived and living experience, government and community services providers is an effective to make progress on complex challenges.”

ENDS

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