

"MISSED OPPORTUNITY": PEAK BODY GIVES VERDICT ON NSW GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE NSW DRUG SUMMIT REPORT

28 October 2025

The Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) gave its verdict on the NSW Government response to the NSW Drug Summit Report, which was released this morning.

NADA CEO Dr Robert Stirling said the NSW Government needs to urgently unlock funds to address the backlog of long waitlists and growing demand at alcohol and other drug (AOD) services across the state.

"Today's response from the NSW Government is a missed opportunity," said Dr Stirling.

"Between the Drug Summit under this government and the Special Commission under the last one, we've had two chances in the past five years to reform drug laws, and unfortunately it looks like we have missed both.

"That said we hold out hope the strategy that was recommended by the Summit and endorsed by the government will be developed, implemented, funded and monitored as soon as possible.

"While we are happy that the NSW Government has supported the majority of the recommendations, there is still a lot that is left unanswered or was already part of the NSW Governments response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice'.

"We need to quickly progress the 10-year whole-of-government alcohol and other drug strategy. The sector—like thousands of people seeking access to treatment—have been waiting for a very long time.

"We need the funding that will follow the strategy to flow as soon as possible, as treatment saves lives.

"And we need to ensure there's an integrated policy and funding response across NSW Police, social services, health services, community and other stakeholders to better support people who need help.

"The strategy must have flexibility to adapt to learnings and evidence that comes to light over the next 10 years, not one that will hold us back until another Summit or Inquiry is called."

The Government's response reports that *'strengthening or implementing some of the recommendations will be contingent on additional funding. Prioritisation for investment will be considered in the context of future budget processes, with consideration for coordinated, whole of government actions'*.

"We are pleased to see the NSW Government acknowledge that historic funding to the non-government sector is not sufficient to cover the cost to deliver treatment and respond to the needs of the NSW communities," Dr Stirling said.

"We encourage the NSW Government to work with the non-government sector in the lead up to the NSW Budget to ensure that future investment will support the needs of NSW communities.

"NADA stands ready to work with the Government to develop a strategy that puts the community first and enables access to support when and where they need it."

To read more about NADA's policy positions and recommendations to Government, visit nada.org.au/nsw-drug-summit-2024

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 87 organisational members that provide services in over 100 locations across NSW. 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.