

## **Revision of the National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Strategy**

WANADA Submission – 28 February 2022

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WANADA welcomes the opportunity to lodge a submission to the revision of the *National Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Workforce Development Strategy*. This submission is intended to supplement feedback provided in consultation sessions (AADC and WANADA).

WANADA strongly supports the definition of workforce development – i.e. a systemic approach balanced across systems, organisational and individual levels. There is a tendency to over-emphasise the ‘individual’ workforce development needs. This strategy needs to demonstrate a commitment to the research-informed definition, including a balanced systemic application.

It is WANADA’s position that the revised Workforce Strategy must prioritise the specialist AOD workforce. This focus will:

- enhance population planning in determining capacity and investment including specialist workforce requirements and relevant competencies, experience and qualifications
- ensure alignment with population health and policy reform in relevant strategies such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan, and the National Preventive Health Strategy
- enable monitoring of the strategy through relevant data sources including the National Minimum Data Set, and jurisdiction workforce surveys
- recognise and endorse the role of the specialist sector in cross-sector capability building to appropriately and safely address relevant intersecting issues (e.g. family and domestic violence, enhancing both sectors’ specialist approaches and service user/community outcomes)
- inform sector and service continuous quality improvement including the application of evidence-informed practice
- strengthen and give voice to the specialist workforce to drive an informed approach to address stigma and discrimination
- ensure community needs are sustainably met, including in times of crisis
- enable a specific focus on AOD specialist wellbeing and retention.

The revised Workforce Development Strategy is an essential component in delivering the National Drug Strategy. To assist this, WANADA recommends the revised Strategy:

- promotes the establishment of an AOD national governance structure – with initiatives driven by national coordination, and relevant jurisdiction and cross-sector implementation
- has a ten-year term, with the mid-term review aligned to the redevelopment of the National Drug Strategy in 2026 (and alignment with the needed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD Strategy)
- contains a significant and balanced focus on prevention, harm reduction and demand reduction
- includes, as a minimum, population groups identified in the National Drug Strategy and its subsidiary strategies.

There is an urgent need for a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD Strategy that informs and strengthens the National Drug Strategy. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD Strategy would have

significant implications for this revised Strategy, ensuring cultural responsiveness and enhanced implementation of self-determination principles. The revised Strategy must acknowledge this policy gap and incorporate responsive systemic workforce initiatives, consistent with cultural models of service and workforce needs. These are demonstrated, for example, in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan (2021-2031), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy (2020-2024), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework (2016-2023), Closing the Gap 2020 and Close the Gap 2021.

Please don't hesitate to contact WANADA if you have any questions regarding our submission of feedback in the consultation forums.