



MEDIA RELEASE

Response to call for re-introduction of Alcohol Mandatory Treatment

The Association of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies NT (AADANT) is the peak body for non-government Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) treatment services in the Northern Territory (NT).

We represent over 20 organisations providing drug and alcohol treatment and support to families and clients throughout the NT.

We refer to recent commentary in Northern Territory media relating to Territory Alliance's position on the reintroduction of an Alcohol Mandatory Treatment (AMT) Program. It is AADANT's position the AMT program did not achieve its stated aims and required excessive funding to operate. This program did not offer an effective model of rehabilitation and therapeutic services and should not be reinstated.

The evaluation of the AMT program released in 2017 clearly outlined this approach in addressing harmful alcohol use was not effective. AMT was a punitive approach rather than a treatment option which led to further stigmatisation of people who use alcohol and other drugs. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people were most impacted by this program and had their rights infringed upon.

The financial costs of AMT were calculated at \$29 million over 3 years (Evaluation of the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Program, 2017). The costs of delivering this model are unsustainable and excessive compared to other alcohol and drug treatment options.

AADANT strongly supports calls for increased investment in the AOD treatment sector, however, believes this funding should be delivered in consultation with the sector to meet the identified needs of service, individuals and communities.

As part of the rationale for the reintroduction of AMT, Territory Alliance's Robyn Lambley claimed on ABC Radio Alice Springs this morning, "We have seen a distinct and dramatic cut in alcohol rehabilitation services across the NT." This is inaccurate. Since 2017, there has been an increase in funding for AOD treatment services through the delivery of Commonwealth funding through the Northern Territory PHN.

AADANT supports continued development of alcohol and other drug treatment options that are respectful of human rights and that do not increase barriers to accessing treatment by stigmatising and criminalising individuals or by removing civil liberties.

AADANT continues to support the recommendations from the Riley Review and remains supportive of the Northern Territory Government's implementation of these recommendations.

AADANT strongly supports the evaluation of programs working to reduce the harms of alcohol on the NT. AADANT believes it is imperative the NT maintains the current supply reduction measures until a thorough independent evaluation is completed with changes made based on evidence rather than political agendas.

Once again, AADANT welcomes all political parties to consult with our organisation regarding issues relating to the alcohol and other drug sector to clearly identify issues and to avoid promoting misleading or false information.

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