



MEDIA RELEASE

Call for increased training, investment and review of legislation into equitable access to medical cannabis in the Northern Territory

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.

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

There has been significant attention and discussion on the legalisation of marijuana in the media recently. This is an issue AADANT has highlighted, asking politicians for a commitment to providing equitable access to medical Cannabis therapies for all Territorians.

Medical Cannabis approvals by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) are at record highs.

For Territorians who live remotely, access is almost impossible resulting in people resorting to illegal methods to access supply to their preferred medication.

Territorians continue to be imprisoned for accessing Cannabis for medicinal reasons.

Recent surveys show that only between 2.7-3.9% of Cannabis users who report using for medical purposes are accessing through a legal prescription.

While we acknowledge the NT Government has removed legal barriers to access, insufficient investment and support for people seeking to use this medication continues to result in very low uptake of medical cannabis in the NT.

Recent reports show that Cannabis use costs the economy about \$4.5B/year with the majority of these costs being spent on law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Increasing accessibility to medicinal cannabis through legal prescriptions would help to reduce the cost impacts of unregulated use and provide a valuable linkage to medical management for people who use cannabis.

AADANT is calling for the NT government:

- To invest in training for GPs and other health staff on medical applications and regulatory processes related to accessing medical cannabis for clients
- Review of legislation relating to Cannabis possession to ensure the judiciary is able to recognise legitimate medical use as justification for personal possession.
- Invest in pathways to access through provision of medical cannabis products through government-controlled pharmacy supply.

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