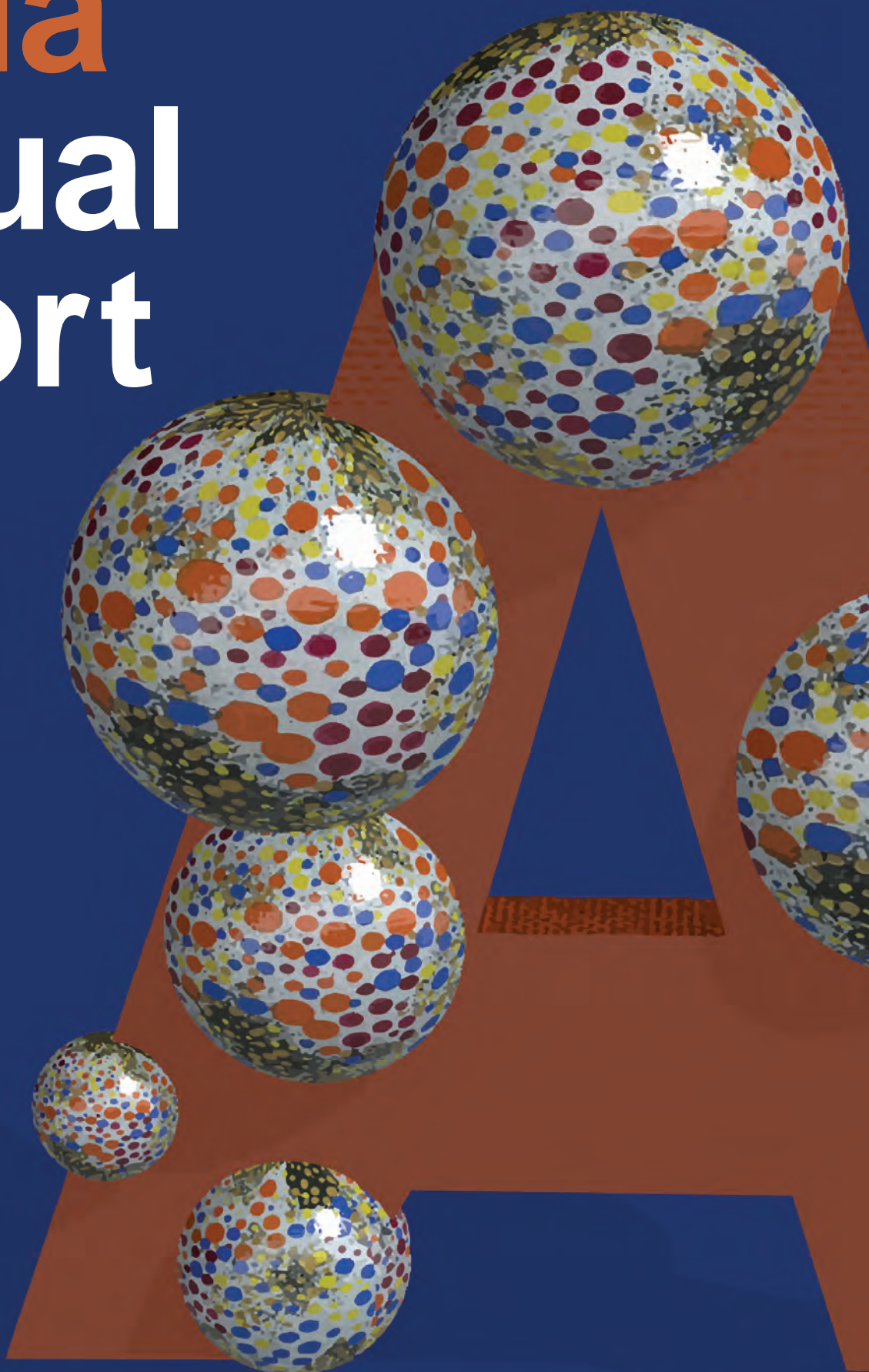




# atoda annual report

2021-2022



**ATODA**

Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug  
Association ACT



## Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians

The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) acknowledges and celebrates the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the land of the ACT. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. ATODA recognises and continues to learn from the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector.

## Acknowledgement of ATODA members, funders and collaborators

ATODA's work would not be possible without the support of our members, funders, and collaborations and partnerships with services and organisations across a range of health, community, academic and government sectors. Together we work towards achieving the aim of a healthy, well and safe ACT community with the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) related harms.

**ATODA's 2021-2022 annual report should be read in conjunction with accompanying documents including:**

- Strategic Plan 2020-2023
- Financial Statements 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022



[www.atoda.org.au](http://www.atoda.org.au)



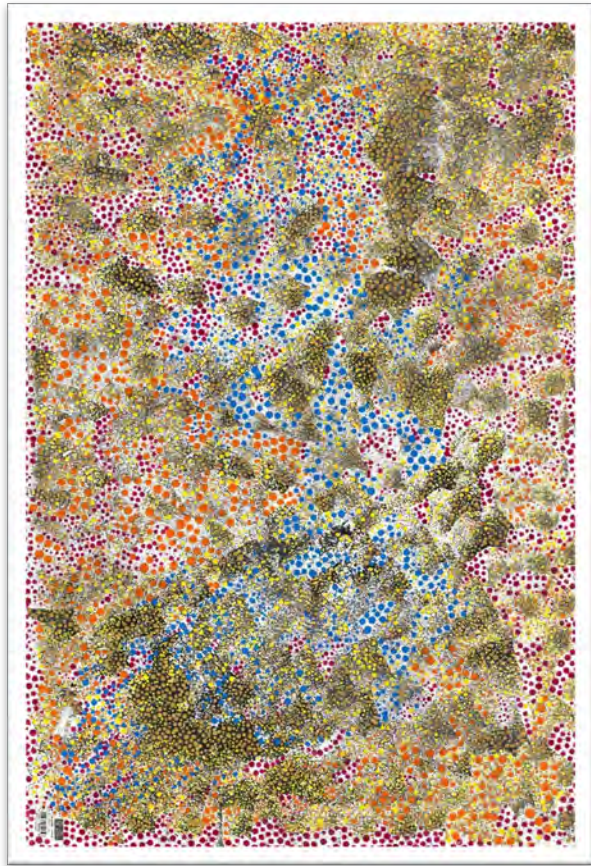
# Annual Report 2021-22

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***Note:** While the term AOD (alcohol and other drug) is commonly used to refer to the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector, ATODA's preference is to use the term ATOD. This acknowledges the role that specialist service providers in this sector play in providing tobacco cessation support, and because tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of the burden of disease in Australia, contributing far more than alcohol or all illicit drugs combined.*



### Unspoken History, Map of Pain

Artist: Sharon

Date: 2020

#### About the artist

Sharon is a Stolen Generation Aboriginal artist who spent many years tracing her origins. After a long journey she reunited with her family of the Noongar tribe (/ˈnʊŋɑː/) a constellation of peoples of Indigenous Australian descent who live in the south-west corner of Western Australia, from Perth on the west coast to Esperance on the south coast. At the age of 16 she married into the Ngunnawal tribe in Canberra where she has been living for the last 30 years. Her kids and grandchildren identify as Ngunnawal and many of them inherited her talent and are artists too.

#### About the artwork

*While I was painting this, I was thinking about all layers of unspoken history that I will never get to know. Unspoken history of my family, my tribe and my Aboriginal peoples.*

*My mother belongs to the Stolen Generation, she was taken from her mother very early and sent to Gnowangerup Christian Mission for Aboriginal kids stolen from their parents located in the town of Gnowangerup in the Great Southern region of Western Australia. When she was 13 years old she was placed in a white family to clean their house. I never found out what happened to her in that family, how she was treated or how deep the trauma of having been taken away from her mother was, because she never talked to me about that. However, based on the fact that she had serious alcohol dependence which was the reason her children were taken away from her tells me – she never really recovered from it.*

*So, I was taken away from her as a baby and placed in a white family. She didn't want to give me away. It was only then when I was able to, reflecting on my pain, start thinking what she must have gone through. Stories of abuse you cannot talk about because you feel too ashamed, too vulnerable and too unprotected... Stories that stay unspoken because their sentences and words hurt as much as the deeds done to you. Stories you cannot tell because you feel by telling them you will fall apart, break into a million pieces and no one and nothing will be able to pick them up and put them together again...*

*So... this painting is about everything I don't know but I feel – the pain, the sorrow, sadness and grief but also hope and rare moments of happiness that the hope brings.*

Sharon

## 2021–22 Annual Report Snapshot



5 recommendations from ACT Legislative Assembly Committees for increased funding to the ATOD sector following ATODA's submissions



38 references to ATODA's submissions and testimony in Reports tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly



\$13 million announced for the ATOD sector in the ACT Government's 2022-23 Budget



8 submissions to ACT Legislative Assembly inquiries and Australian Government consultations



99 out of 99 Australian Service Excellence Standards met, resulting in accreditation



3 appearances at ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry Hearings



109 participants in ATOD Information and Harm Reduction Training



1 co-authoring of the *Review of the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021*



11 meetings of the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group



11 meetings of the ACT ATOD Workers Group



800+ subscribers to ATODA's Sector and Research eBulletins



6187 hits on the ATODA website and 9982 hits on the ACT ATOD Services Directory



3 reports produced for the Capital Health Network



10 presentations to ATOD conferences and the ATOD sector

*ATODA members agreed "ATOD sector in the ACT is a stronger sector as a result of ATODA's activities."*

*ATODA's accreditation assessor noted that "ATODA continues to go from strength to strength to prevent or reduce alcohol or drug related harm among the community in the ACT."*

This snapshot was designed using assets from Freepik.com.

## Report from the Chair

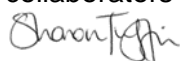
Reflecting on the past year it is true to say that it was another one of transition and change for the ACT community as a whole, and also for the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) sector. The societal response to the COVID-19 pandemic moved from one of anxiety and fear, to one where the virus is endemic in our community and is our new norm. The sector has again responded quickly and adeptly to the myriad of changes and challenges, continuing to deliver high quality care to the people it serves, through collaborative efforts with government, partners and other sectors.

During this period, significant progress has been made towards addressing the stigma and lingering impacts of the criminalisation of drug possession and use, that hinders drug treatment and harm reduction and ultimately impacts people's health and wellbeing. The ACT Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021 heard oral testimony from a range of witnesses, including ATODA, with the Select Committee releasing its report recommending several substantial reforms, including decriminalisation of small amounts of a wide range of drugs. Pleasingly, it also recommended that "The ACT Government should significantly increase its investment in alcohol and other drug services." Throughout the year, ATODA worked with its allies in the ACT and interstate to continue to advocate for the Select Committee's recommendations, involving numerous briefings, presentation of evidence and substantial media engagement by the sector.

The opportunities and risks associated with structural reform to our sector continued with the anticipated expiration of the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018–2021*. ATODA and the sector engaged closely with the ACT Government to propose reforms for the next iteration of the document. The ACT Health and Community Services Directorates also began transitioning their procurement processes to commissioning for services. As always, ATODA and the sector have actively engaged in this process, sought to minimise disruptions to service delivery, and maintained that the wellbeing of clients and the community should remain at the centre of policy and funding decisions. If done well, the process could enhance the Sector's adaptative capacity, in a rapidly changing health and social landscape, to meet community need.

ATODA is in a strong financial position, allowing the organisation to continue to progress key priorities in our Strategic Plan. As a result of good governance, prudent financial management and sound business development, the organisation strengthened its reserves and I extend my thanks and congratulations to the staff team, the Finance Committee and the Board for their contributions to this positive outcome. On behalf of the Board and the organisation I sincerely thank Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health, and her office, as well as colleagues in the ACT Health Directorate for their commitment and collaboration with ATODA, our members and the community again this year. We also thank our colleagues at the Commonwealth Department of Health and the Capital Health Network.

The professional and collegiate approach to governance from my Board colleagues has enabled us to maintain a clear focus on the purpose of ATODA, and the people our sector serves. I gratefully acknowledge the tireless work and collaboration of the sector, as we collaborate and innovate to best support the community, bed down reform and create opportunities for further policy and clinical advances. Finally on behalf of the Board I thank the ATODA staff team and CEO, Dr Devin Bowles, for another year of significant achievement and advocacy on behalf of the sector. The accomplishments set out in this Annual Report reflect the work and spirit of the team, the sector, our partners and collaborators and the people we serve.



Sharon Tuffin, Chair

## Report from the Chief Executive Officer

Achieving ATODA's vision for "a healthy, well and safe ACT community with the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms" requires participation of the whole community. Our sector in the ACT has long been characterised by a high degree of cooperation. One of ATODA's chief roles is to foster and facilitate connections among our members, and between our sector and others accessed by people who use drugs. For ATODA, strengthening relationships with our allies is both a goal in itself and one of the best tools we have to advance our vision. There is a depth of goodwill in the ACT, and by uniting with those who share our vision, the community can continue its track record of Australia-first ATOD policy and clinical development.

The ACT Health Directorate's invitation for ATODA to co-author the *Review of the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018–2021* is a clear demonstration of the strong and collaborative relationship between the sector and the Health Directorate. The review was a chance to focus on opportunities for the next iteration of the Drug Strategy Action Plan, which will guide and coordinate investment and action in our sector through 2026.

The ACT Health Directorate's new commissioning approach to partnering with NGOs was another opportunity for the sector to strengthen its relationship with Government. The commissioning process began this year for our sector. Commissioning relies on a good base of information to inform priorities. For our sector, this was bolstered by the Capital Health Network's grant enabling ATODA to develop strategic information about our sector. This included a Needs Assessment, as well as a Demand and Service Modelling Analysis and a Budget Remodelling Analysis. These were each undertaken in close collaboration with the sector, with the latter two being led by the Drug Policy Modelling Program at UNSW Sydney. ATODA also progressed the ACT AOD Workforce Profile, the early results of which began to inform several strategic processes. ATODA increased its participation in the academic community, with a peer-reviewed article and six peer-reviewed presentations, in addition to four presentations to other stakeholders.

Throughout the year, ATODA worked closely with our allies to advocate for the decriminalisation of possession of small amounts of the most common illicit drugs. Recognising the social determinants of health and the barriers experienced by people who use drugs to accessing services due to stigma, ATODA's advocacy spanned a wide range of topics, with submission topics ranging from Community Corrections to Discrimination Law Reform.

ATODA continued its ATOD education for workers in and out of the sector this year, including making available training for the ATOD workforce under the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy. Collaborating with other peak bodies, ATODA also trained people in allied sectors to better equip them to engage with people who use drugs.

I thank my colleagues at ATODA for their tremendous dedication, results-focus, and camaraderie over the year. I am fortunate to work with each of them. ATODA's accreditation this year is testament to their efforts. The ATODA Board continued its excellent leadership of the organisation and provided wise counsel throughout the year. ATODA's work has benefitted substantially from the direction and insights from the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives and Workers Groups and the sector more broadly. As a peak body, we rely on our members to guide our efforts. It remains a pleasure to learn from, and work within, this inspiring sector.



Dr Devin Bowles, CEO, ATODA

## About ATODA

The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) is the peak body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Our purpose is to lead and influence positive outcomes in policy, practice and research. We do this by providing collaborative leadership on the social determinants of harmful drug use; societal responses to drug use; and societal responses to people who use drugs.

We provide expertise in the areas of policy; sector workforce development and capacity building; research, data and evaluation; health services planning; coordination and partnerships; training and education; communication; information and resources.

Our vision is a healthy, well and safe ACT community with the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms. Underpinning our work is a commitment to health equity, the social and cultural determinants of health, and the values of collaboration, participation, diversity, human rights, social justice and reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

We work for better interaction and integration between alcohol, tobacco and other drug researchers, services, policy workers, practitioners, consumers and their friends and families in the ACT and region.

## Reporting on the Strategic Plan 2020–2023

ATODA's fourth strategic plan outlines the vision, values, purpose, strategic priorities and outcomes for the organisation from 2020–2023. In this annual report, activities are organised by their relationship to the strategic priorities, and to demonstrate ATODA's progress. In turn, the strategic priorities contribute to the strategic outcomes.

Strategic Priorities	Strategic Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Promote non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory language, policies, practice and research</li><li>2. Develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce</li><li>3. Develop and maintain the capacity of the sector</li><li>4. Strengthen research, evaluation, policy, practice and participation collaborations</li><li>5. Strengthen the development and influence of specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug expertise</li><li>6. Maintain and strengthen the viability and sustainability of the ACT alcohol tobacco and other drug peak body</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. High quality and coherent workforce, services, sector and system</li><li>2. Evidence-informed practice and innovation</li><li>3. Improved health and reduced drug related harms</li></ol>

## ATODA's Full, Associate and Individual Members

ACT Shelter  
Alcohol and Drug Services, Canberra Health Services  
Alcohol and Other Drug Programs, CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn  
Mr Gerard Byrne  
Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy  
Canberra Institute of Technology  
Canberra Recovery Services, The Salvation Army  
Directions Health Services  
Families ACT  
Family Drug Support  
Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform (ACT) Inc  
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation  
Health Care Consumers' Association of the ACT  
Hepatitis ACT  
Karralika Programs Inc  
Mr David McDonald  
Meridian  
Mental Health Community Coalition ACT  
Mental Health Foundation ACT  
Ted Noffs Foundation  
Toora Women Inc  
Volunteering ACT  
Wellways Australia Limited  
Woden Community Service  
Youth Coalition of the ACT

## ATODA Board

Board members were elected from the membership at ATODA's twelfth Annual General Meeting in November 2021.

<b>Names</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Appointed/Resigned</b>
Sharon Tuffin	Chair	Appointed (2 year term) at AGM 27/11/2020
Sue-Ann Polden	Deputy Chair	Appointed (2 year term) 29/11/2019 (Resigned 26 November 2021)
David Baxter	Deputy Chair	Appointed (2 year term) at AGM 26/11/2021
Bronwyn Hendry	Secretary	Appointed (2 year term) at AGM 27/11/2020
Gerard Byrne	Treasurer	Reappointed (2 year term) at AGM 26/11/2021
Rebecca Wood	Member	Appointed (2 year term) at AGM 27/11/2020
Daniel Ross	Member	Appointed (2 Year Term) at AGM 27/11/2020 (Resigned 30 June 2022)
Devin Bowles	Public Officer	Appointed (1 year term) at AGM 26/11/2021

## ATODA Staff

ATODA's staff team is made up of approximately seven full-time equivalent staff, with the following people contributing over the course of the year:

Annie Bleeker	Senior Training Specialist
Leanne Bourke	Junior Policy Administrator
Devin Bowles	Chief Executive Officer
Jeanette Bruce	Communications Manager
Dave Corby	Finance and Office Manager
Anne Giles	Senior Project Manager
Brigit Perry	Office and Project Administrator
Adam Poulter	Deputy CEO
Siobhán Reeves	Senior Policy Manager
Julie Robert	Communications and Project Officer
Anke van der Sterren	Senior Research Manager
Elisabeth Yarbakhsh	Workforce Development and Research Officer

## **Strategic Priority: a. Promote non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory language, policies, practice and research**

### **1. Engaged with the ACT Legislative Assembly**

ATODA proactively engaged with the ACT Legislative Assembly to promote policy and legislative change towards achieving the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms in the ACT community. Over 2021–22 this included, but was not limited to:

- Meeting with the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA;
- Meeting with the Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson MLA;
- Meeting with Michael Pettersson MLA, sponsor of the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021;
- Meeting with Johnathan Davis MLA, ACT Greens Spokesperson for Drug Harm Reduction;
- Meeting with other members of the Legislative Assembly, including the Opposition, to progress common interests.

ATODA also gratefully acknowledges constructive relationships with the offices and staff of Members of the Legislative Assembly, which provide additional avenues for the exchange of ideas. In addition, ATODA provided submissions and testimony at relevant ACT Legislative Assembly committee inquiries, including the Select Committee Inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021, the Select Committee Inquiry into the COVID-19 2021 Pandemic Response, the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing, and the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (see section e.1. for more detail).

### **2. Produced and distributed the ACT ATOD Sector News eBulletin**

The ACT ATOD Sector News eBulletin provides summaries of information and updates on important developments and events. The eBulletin reports on ATODA projects, ATOD resources, conferences, trainings, and other information relevant to ATOD and allied workers in the ACT. The ACT ATOD Sector eBulletin reaches a diverse range of people in the sector, from workers to researchers and policy makers. Twelve editions of the Sector News eBulletin were sent to subscribers throughout the 2021–22 financial year. In addition, five Alert eBulletins were distributed. The eBulletin is an important tool used by ATODA for information sharing and education of members and stakeholders.

### **3. Produced and distributed the ATODA Research eBulletin**

Eleven Research eBulletins were distributed over the year featuring new research findings and other research activities relevant to the ATOD sector and allied workers in the ACT and beyond. The ACT Spotlight remained one of the most popular elements of the Research eBulletin. Key issues of interest to our readers throughout the year included pill testing, drug decriminalisation, vaping and e-cigarettes, and funding to the ACT ATOD sector.

The Research eBulletin is an important source of sector-relevant research for our members, our stakeholders and the ATOD workforce more broadly. ATODA has maintained its commitment to presenting the most up-to-date research with an eye to promoting non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory language, policies, practices and research.

*ATODA gratefully acknowledges David McDonald's contributions to the Research eBulletin.*

#### **4. Maintained and commenced a redesign of the ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services Online Directory**



<https://directory.atoda.org.au/>

The ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services Online Directory (the Directory) is a resource designed primarily for AOD professionals to find services and programs available in the ACT ATOD sector. The Directory provides accurate and useful information about programs to assist AOD workers in providing support to service users and in making referrals.

In the 2021-22 financial year the Directory included 36 detailed program profiles, quick reference guides by both service name and service types, an interactive map of service locations and additional program profiles from allied sectors.

In May 2022 ATODA commenced a redesign of the Directory to streamline the updating process for AOD services and enhance the interface. Significant improvements and updates to the design, layout, search functionality, and general usability are all part of this process.

#### **5. Delivered Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Information and Harm Reduction Training to allied sectors**

ATODA delivered ATOD Information and Harm Reduction Training to the ACT youth, mental health and homeless sectors for the past ten years, through partnerships with the Youth Coalition of the ACT, Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT and ACT Shelter.

The training provides participants with improved knowledge of ATOD use in the ACT/Australia and harm reduction and safety information, as well as an opportunity to review attitudes towards people who use drugs and reconsider engagement strategies.

In 2021–22 ATOD Information and Harm Reduction Training was provided six times. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in the ACT, one training was delivered face-to-face and five trainings were delivered online. A total of 109 workers from 47 services/agencies participated in the training programs.

Satisfaction with the training courses was extremely high. Over 95% of participants reported that the training had been either very effective or effective at increasing their knowledge of ATOD information and harm reduction strategies. Almost all training participants (98%) indicated that they intended to implement something they had learned from the training into their work practice.

#### **6. Supported the University Drug and Alcohol Network and delivered the Drink in Check project**

With funding through a Local Drug Action Team (LDAT) grant from the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF), ATODA engaged with the University Drug and Alcohol Network (UDAN) to develop the Drink in Check project. Members of UDAN are from three ACT universities: the Australian Catholic University (ACU), the Australian National University (ANU), and the University of Canberra (UC).

The Drink in Check project increases knowledge and skills among university students in the ACT about alcohol related harms, screening tools such as the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) and interventions. The purpose of the project was to address and reduce the risk of alcohol-related harms and act as a preventive educational program. The

project involved developing and delivering a half day (3.5 hours) brief alcohol awareness and intervention training package. A total of three fully-subsidised training sessions were delivered, with 62 students trained. The students who received training delivered a combined total of 227 AUDITs and brief alcohol interventions.

## 7. Engaged with media, including directly and by promoting the voices of allies

ATODA engaged with several media platforms, including *The Canberra Times* and ABC News throughout the year to provide insight into drug legislation, COVID-19 impacts on AOD services and cannabis legislation in the ACT.

In July 2021 ATODA was quoted in *The Canberra Times* article about the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021, available at this link: <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7338966/calls-for-more-integrated-health-services-in-drug-decriminalisation-push/>.

In August 2021 *The Canberra Times* published an op-ed by ATODA about vaccination targets, available at this link: <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7396988/national-cabinets-80-per-cent-vaccination-target-is-a-mirage/>. A radio interview on 2CC on the same topic followed that evening.

ATODA featured in a September 2021 article in *The Canberra Times*, which highlighted the struggles of the Salvation Army AOD program due to COVID-19, available at this link: <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7412584/vulnerable-residents-reportedly-going-without-due-to-fear-of-breaching-lockdown/?cs=14225>.

In February 2022, ATODA's Drink in Check project featured in an article on the *Alcohol and Drug Foundation* Community Hub, available at this link: <https://community.adf.org.au/run-activities/stories/act-campus-drinking-cultures/>.



ATODA's Drink in Check project featured in an [article](https://community.adf.org.au/run-activities/stories/act-campus-drinking-cultures/) on the Alcohol and Drug Foundation Community Hub.

In May 2022 the ATODA CEO spoke on ABC Radio about cannabis legislation.

The ATODA CEO was interviewed in June 2022 as part of an ABC News article about a National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre study. The study found the ACT had the highest rate of drug-induced deaths per capita in Australia, available at this link: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-04/act-highest-rate-of-drug-induced-deaths-in-australia-research/101125712>.

Behind the scenes, ATODA also amplified the perspectives of our allies in the media, with a particular focus on the perspectives of people who use drugs and their families.

## **Strategic Priority: b. Develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce**

### **1. Delivered Safer Families: Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Training**

In 2020, ATODA was contracted by the ACT Health Directorate and the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety to work with ATOD specialist services to trial the ACT Government's draft Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework (DFV Framework) in the ATOD sector. This framework establishes a common approach to screening, assessing and managing domestic and family violence risk. The work also included providing staff within ATOD specialist services with training appropriate to the sector. The training aspect of the project extended into the 2021–22 financial year due to COVID-19 impacts.

ATODA engaged clinical consultants, 360Edge, to design and deliver a series of training workshops for the ATOD workforce, between June 2021 and April 2022. The provision of domestic and family violence (DFV) training specifically designed for workers in the specialist ATOD sector was welcomed by the sector. Workshops were well-subscribed (in total 95 clinical and non-clinical staff from seven ATOD treatment services completed the training), and engagement by participants was strong. Participants in the workshops improved their understandings of, and skills in, responding to people who are experiencing or using DFV, in ways that will enhance the effectiveness of their ATOD service delivery, with the aim of ultimately reducing harms from both DFV and ATOD use in the ACT. The Domestic Violence Crisis Service also provided locally relevant information as part of the training. Workshops had very positive evaluations from participants, and familiarity with DFV services increased 25% after the training.

### **2. Facilitated training under the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy**

The [ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy](#) aims to ensure the development and maintenance of a competent and professional specialist workforce in the ACT. It also aims to ensure that all ATOD workers in the ACT have a shared minimum knowledge and skill base.

The three main components of the Strategy are: 1) the AOD Skill Set (AOD specific units of the Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs); 2) the non-AOD units of the Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs; and 3) First Aid training. ATODA used its ongoing partnerships with AOD specialist industry providers including the Canberra Institute of Technology, St John ACT and Uniting RTO, to offer fully subsidised, high-quality training to eligible workers in the ACT.

A total of 61 scholarships were provided in the 2021–22 financial year, including 33 participants of the AOD Skill Set and 28 participants completing First Aid training. A mix of online and face-to-face learning in the AOD Skill Set was offered through Uniting RTO in this period. The training provider and course participants showed an admirable degree of flexibility, adaptability and good humour in the context of ongoing COVID-19 disruptions. On completion of training, eligible participants received a nationally recognised Statement of Attainment. All training was coordinated by ATODA and fully subsidised for participating ATOD workers.

### 3. Convened the ACT ATOD Workers Group

The ACT ATOD Workers Group (the Workers Group) is involved in the development, implementation, coordination, evaluation and promotion of key sector support activities for the ATOD sector in the ACT. The group identifies and seeks to respond to a range of issues relevant to frontline workers. The group continues to function as an essential component of the sector's governance and acts as a key advisory structure to ATODA.

ATODA invited guest speakers from a variety of services to speak to the Workers Group about different services in the ACT. For example Ben Matthews from the Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC) spoke one month, and Markus Fischer from Relationships Australia's Voices of Gambling Harm spoke at another meeting. The group discussed and implemented a number of diverse activities over the last 12 months with secretariat support provided by ATODA. Priorities included:

- ACT AOD Workforce Profile preliminary findings
- Options regarding the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy
- Updates and input to the redevelopment of the ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services Online Directory
- Resources for the sector, including ASSIST on Ice
- Testimonies from the Inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021
- The ACT Service Users Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (SUSOS) Co-Design Project, including the opportunities for workers to be part of the co-design process
- ATODA's submission to the National AOD Workforce Development (WFD) Strategy

During 2021–22 the Workers Group also revisited their [Terms of Reference](#) to ensure that the Group was continuing to meet the sector's needs.

*ATODA gratefully acknowledges the input and support of members of the ACT ATOD Workers Group.*

### 4. Progressed the ACT AOD Workforce Profile Report

The ACT AOD Workforce Profile (the Workforce Profile) is a three-yearly collaborative activity conducted across all specialist AOD services, including ATODA. The most recent ACT AOD Workforce Profile, the sixth profile since 2006, was undertaken between 20 May and 22 July 2021.

Profile data was collected by administering two surveys at each of the participating non-government and government specialist AOD services in the ACT: a Worker's Survey administered to AOD workers; and an Organisation Survey completed by a manager or executive staff member at each participating specialist AOD service. Nine AOD organisations participated, and a total of 188 workers completed the individual Worker's Survey, with most completed online (offered for the first time in 2021).

The Workforce Profile monitors and demonstrates outcomes relating to workforce qualifications, remuneration, capacity and training, and identifies areas for further development and investment. It also incorporates measures of worker wellbeing—including physical and psychological wellbeing, job satisfaction, stress and burnout—and for the 2021 survey included a number of questions about the impact of COVID-19 and the 2020 bushfires on AOD practice and worker wellbeing. Many of the findings can be compared over time to the results from the previous surveys.

## Strategic Priority: c. Develop and maintain the capacity of the sector

### 1. Submitted to the ACT Budget Consultation 2022–23

ATODA provided a written submission to the ACT Budget process, 2022–23, through the ACT Government’s community sector consultation process. ATODA’s submission noted the ATOD sector’s important contribution to the wellbeing of the ACT community, particularly to those vulnerable to lower levels of wellbeing in relation to health outcomes and inclusion and belonging outcomes, as described in the ACT Wellbeing Framework. The submission also detailed the urgent need to meet the Government’s election commitments to ATOD services in the 2022–23 Budget and recommended an increase in investment in the ATOD sector. This was informed by recent modelling specific to the ACT that indicate up to 4,750 more people need treatment than are currently being treated through existing services, with an investment gap of approximately \$24 million per annum. ATODA recommended increased funding of \$12m in 2022–23 as part of a scaled approach to meet this investment gap. ATODA’s submission is accessible on the ACT Budget Consultation website available at this link: [https://www.budgetconsultation.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1965091/011.-ATODA-ACT-Budget-Submission-2022-23.pdf](https://www.budgetconsultation.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1965091/011.-ATODA-ACT-Budget-Submission-2022-23.pdf).

On 29 July 2022 the ACT Government announced increased investment in the sector of approximately \$13 million through the 2022-23 Budget over the forward estimates. ATODA’s response to this funding announcement is available at this link: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Media-Release-ATODA-Welcomes-ACT-Governments-Increased-Alcohol-and-Other-Drug-Investment.pdf>.

ATODA’s 2021–22 Budget submission was referred to as an example in ACTCOSS’s guidance to the community services sector for 2022–23 Budget submissions.

### 2. Delivered three Capital Health Network Projects: Needs Assessment, Demand and Service Modelling and Budget Remodelling Analyses

ATODA was commissioned by the ACT’s local Public Health Network, the Capital Health Network (CHN), to deliver three projects in 2021–22:

#### **Maintaining and Strengthening Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug Services for the ACT Community Needs Assessment Analysis, 2022–2025**

The AOD Needs Assessment considered priority AOD service needs for the ACT community. This report informed the three-year overall assessment of health needs in the ACT undertaken by the CHN. The ATOD sector was the only sector given the opportunity to develop their own needs assessment. The Needs Assessment is available at this link: [https://www.chnact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CHN\\_AOD-2021-ATODA-Needs.pdf](https://www.chnact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CHN_AOD-2021-ATODA-Needs.pdf).

#### **Demand and Service Modelling Project**

Demand and service modelling specific to the ACT using the Drug and Alcohol Service Planning Model (DASPM) indicated that in the ACT up to 4,750 more people need treatment than are currently being treated through existing services, with an investment gap of approximately \$24 million. The project was supported by the Drug Policy Modelling Program (DPMP), UNSW Sydney. The DASPM findings were summarised in

more detail in ATODA's 2022–23 Budget submission which is available at this link: [https://www.budgetconsultation.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1965091/011.-ATODA-ACT-Budget-Submission-2022-23.pdf](https://www.budgetconsultation.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1965091/011.-ATODA-ACT-Budget-Submission-2022-23.pdf).

### **Budget Remodelling Analyses**

The Budget Remodelling Analyses considered unit costs for specialist ATOD treatment types currently funded by the CHN (supported by the DPMP, UNSW Sydney).

All three projects were guided by a dedicated Stakeholder Advisory Group convened by ATODA. Members of the Group included the CHN, the ACT Health Directorate, the DPMP, and Executives from specialist ATOD services in the ACT.

The projects were strategically important because of their capacity to influence the development of the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan* and the ACT Government's commissioning process for AOD services.

*ATODA appreciates the ongoing collaboration between the specialist ATOD sector in the ACT and the CHN.*

### **3. Collaborated with the ACT Health Directorate to co-author the *Review of the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021***

Over 2021–22 ATODA engaged regularly with the ACT Health Directorate and the ATOD sector regarding the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021* (DSAP). This included consultation on the *Draft ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022–2026*. These Action Plans are key strategic documents for the ACT, and articulate how the ACT plans to implement the *National Drug Strategy 2017-2026*.

In particular, ATODA co-authored with the ACT Health Directorate and Associate Professor Anna Olsen, the review of the ACT DSAP. The review focuses on how the next DSAP (2022–2026) can be improved.

ATODA also provided input on the *Progress Report for 2020-2021 of the ACT Action Plan*. ATODA facilitated ATOD sector-specific consultation on the next iteration of the DSAP, including a submission in response to the ACT Government's discussion paper in February 2022 and a dedicated workshop between the ACT Government and the ATOD sector in March 2022. ATODA will continue to work with the sector and the ACT Health Directorate on the next iteration of the DSAP expected to be finalised in late 2022.

### **4. Influenced the ACT Government's approach to commissioning**

During 2021–22 ATODA worked closely with the ACT Health Directorate on communications and consultations regarding the commissioning of ATOD services. Specialist ATOD services' grants were extended by 18 months to December 2023 to allow for the collaborative co-design process. In February 2022 the ATOD sector participated in a number of workshops organised by the ACT Health Directorate to inform their priorities for commissioning of ATOD services from 2023 onwards. The workshops covered five key themes: youth, women and families, people with lived experience and peer representatives, AOD and mental health, and AOD specialist services. ATODA also facilitated officials from the ACT Health Directorate, including the Commissioning area, to provide updates to the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group.

ATODA was also key in the peaks commissioning process that was completed by 30 June 2022. As a result of that process ATODA was funded specifically as a peak from 1 July 2022 onwards (previous funding has been largely project-based).

## **5. Administered the ACT Government's sector stimulus funding**

The ACT ATOD sector received stimulus funding during the COVID-19 pandemic in both 2020–21 and 2021–22, to support COVID-19 responses and responsiveness in non-government organisations that deliver specialist AOD services. ATODA administered this funding according to an agreed needs assessment with the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group. Following an Expression of Interest process, ATODA distributed the COVID-19 Sector Support Stimulus Funding 2021–22 to seven AOD service providers in February 2022. The total funding amount of \$160,000 (GST exclusive) was distributed across eleven projects addressing the following focus areas:

- Enhancing and expanding AOD services to meet surge needs and flow-on effects associated with the COVID-19 pandemic
- Supporting AOD worker/practitioner wellbeing initiatives
- Supporting workers and services users through provision of technology to enable service delivery/participation in AOD treatment and support services.

Projects included brokerage support, online training videos, wellbeing programs, a harm minimisation day program, integrated comorbidity training, and expansion of a mobile primary health clinic. ATODA on behalf of the ATOD sector thanks the ACT Government and in particular our ACT Health Directorate colleagues for this funding and for working in close partnership with the sector during a particularly challenging time.

## **6. Convened the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group**

The Specialist ACT Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Executives Group (the Executives Group) is convened by ATODA and is a group for Executives of specialist non-government and government ATOD services in the ACT. It provides a mechanism for information-sharing and collaborative decision-making at an Executive level, both between Executives of ATOD services themselves, as well as between Executives and ATODA as the peak body. It also provides a space for key issues of collective interest to be progressed, as well as a means by which external stakeholders can provide information to Executives by invitation to attend an Executives Group meeting.

The Executives Group met eleven times over the 2021–22 financial year. Over this period ATODA arranged for relevant ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services officials to present at Executives Group meetings regarding commissioning, the review of the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan*, and Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services (MHJHADS). In 2021–22 the Executives Group provided particular input into the following:

- The *AOD Services Plan* under the *Territory Wide Health Services Plan 2021-2026*
- An AOD Needs Assessment for the Capital Health Network
- COVID-19 Stimulus Funding arrangements for the ATOD sector
- An ACT AOD Demand and Service Modelling project for the Capital Health Network
- Commissioning of ATOD services in the ACT
- COVID-19 related contingency arrangements, particularly to support service users impacted by the August to October 2021 lockdown.
- ATODA's submission to the ACT Government 2022–23 Budget

- The *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan* (DSAP) Review and the DSAP Progress Report
- The implementation of the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy
- The refresh of the ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services Online Directory
- The SUSOS Co-Design Project
- ATODA's submissions to relevant Legislative Assembly Committees and other consultation processes

During 2021–22 the Executives Group revisited their Terms of Reference to ensure that the Group was continuing to meet the sector's needs. The Executives Group Terms of Reference are available on the ATODA website at this link: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ACT-ATOD-Executives-Group-Terms-of-Reference-Endorsed-28-March-2022.pdf>.

*ATODA gratefully acknowledges the input and support of members of the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group.*

## **7. Administered the We CAN (nicotine replacement therapy) Program**

The We CAN Program—Communities Accessing all-types of Nicotine replacement therapy—aims to reduce smoking among people utilising specialist AOD non-government organisations in the ACT by providing free access to 8–12 weeks-worth of any types of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) through vouchers redeemable at partnering community pharmacies, complemented by smoking cessation advice and support. The Program is managed by ATODA, funded by the ACT Health Directorate, and is implemented in partnership with specialist AOD non-government organisations and community pharmacies.

The Program enables best practice smoking cessation clinical treatment to be implemented as part of routine AOD treatment and support to this population with extremely high smoking rates—77 % of people accessing specialist AOD services are using tobacco (data from the 2018 ACT SUSOS). The implementation of tobacco screening, brief intervention and the provision of NRT through the We CAN Program is consistent with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Guidelines for Supporting Smoking Cessation.

The We CAN Program provides vouchers through seven specialist NGO AOD services, and partners with six community pharmacies to provide smoking cessation support to specialist AOD service users. Between January and June 2022, around 280 vouchers were 'in-the-field'—that is, they were either being used by service users or they were being held by services to provide to service users.

The delivery of this program is consistent with the ACT Government's priority of "developing approaches to reduce smoking rates among high-risk population groups". Around one in ten people who smoke in the ACT are accessing specialist alcohol and other drug services. The provision of best practice nicotine dependence treatment and smoking cessation support—such as the support delivered through the We CAN Program—within these services has the potential to support 10% of ACT smokers to make quit attempts. This would have a real impact on life-expectancy in the ACT. Analysis of data from the Program, however, shows that the current funding received by ATODA is sufficient to provide vouchers to only around 3-4% of smokers who are accessing these services.

ATODA wishes to thank the workers in the AOD sector who are implementing the We CAN Program with service users, and the pharmacists and staff from the community pharmacies who provide NRT and smoking cessation support: Capital Chemist Dickson; Capital Chemist Tuggeranong Square; Capital Chemist University of Canberra; Capital Chemist Kingston; Chemist on Northbourne; and Erindale Pharmacy.

ATODA continues to provide leadership in advocating for and building capacity around nicotine dependence treatment and smoking cessation support for people experiencing disadvantage. During 2021–22, ATODA joined the ACT Health Tobacco and E-Cigarette Community of Practice, and presented on the We CAN Program to that group. ATODA also presented on smoking cessation issues to the 2021 APSAD Conference, and to the Mental Health Carers Conference. A student project supervised by ATODA staff has analysed the survey and monitoring data from the pilot of the We CAN Program (July 2015–March 2017).



## Strategic Priority: d. Strengthen research, evaluation, policy, practice and participation collaborations

### 1. Participated in the Non-Government Organisation Leadership Group

ATODA participated in the ACT's Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Leadership Group, which provides an opportunity for coordinated and informed engagement between NGOs, the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce. ATODA contributed to discussions on a wide range of topics, including ongoing adaptation to COVID-19 and the commissioning of NGO-delivered health services.

### 2. Progressed the development of new ACT Service Users Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (SUSOS) indicators

The Service Users' Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (SUSOS) has been undertaken every three years since 2009 across all specialist alcohol and other drug treatment services. It is a single day census that collects information on the perspectives of service users on the nature and quality of the AOD services they access by assessing their levels and patterns of satisfaction. It also builds a picture of the self-reported experiences of using AOD services; the outcomes from utilising these services; and of the characteristics of people accessing the services. A link to the report of the most recently completed SUSOS is available here: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Monograph-Series-Nine-SUSOS-2018-v1.0.pdf>

During 2020, ATODA recognised that the current SUSOS tool requires updating to more fully explore and capture experience-perspectives of people accessing AOD services. This has led to the development of a project to more actively involve AOD service users in a co-design process to re-develop the SUSOS 'from the bottom up', alongside other stakeholders, such as service providers and policy makers.

The SUSOS Co-design Project is being undertaken as a partnership between ATODA and the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA), other ACT AOD services, the ACT Health Directorate, the Capital Health Network, and the School of Population Health, UNSW Sydney. All stakeholders, including AOD service users, are being represented on the Project Advisory Group. ATODA received one-off resourcing from the ACT Health Directorate to cover additional costs associated with the SUSOS Co-design Project, and the implementation of the new questionnaire.

### 3. Progressed peer reviewed articles

ATODA began placing greater emphasis on publishing in the academic literature to increase the reach, recognition and impact of ATODA's research, as well as initiate or enhance ATODA's scholarly relationships.

The *Drug and Alcohol Review* published an article in April 2022 that was co-authored by ATODA's Senior Training Specialist Annie Bleeker titled 'The Overdose Response with Take Home Naloxone (ORTHN) project: Evaluation of health worker training, attitudes and perceptions'.

The article is available at this link: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dar.13474>

ATODA staff commenced preparation of several other peer-reviewed articles.

#### 4. Delivered conference presentations

During 2021–22 ATODA staff presented a total of six papers at two national and one local conference:

van der Sterren, A, J Robert & D Bowles, 'Understanding alcohol and other drug workforce capabilities and needs to enhance agility', paper presented at the PHAA Population Health Congress, online, 23–24 September 2021.

van der Sterren, A & D Bowles, 'Mapping alcohol and other drug service users experiences to improve service planning', paper presented at the PHAA Population Health Congress, online, 23–24 September 2021.

van der Sterren, A & J Robert, 'Pathways to recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce: an analysis of the ACT AOD Qualification Strategy using workforce profile data', paper presented at the APSAD Conference, online, 8–10 November 2021 [Note that this presentation was part of a symposium – 'The Work Won't Do Itself': a Critical Discussion of AOD Workforces'—which was led and chaired by ATODA and included papers from four other AOD Peak organisations].

van der Sterren, A & D Bowles, 'Prioritising populations to increase smoking cessation: targeted nicotine dependence treatment within alcohol and other drug services', paper presented at the APSAD Conference, online, 8–10 November 2021.

Poulter, A & D Bowles, 'Enquiry into decriminalisation of illicit drugs – an opportunity to align policy with evidence-based practice', paper presented at the APSAD Conference, online, 8 – 10 November 2021.

van der Sterren, A, 'What can carers do to support people living with mental ill health who smoke?', paper presented at the Caring Together Conference (Mental Health Carers Conference), Canberra, 18 February 2022.

#### 5. Participated in the National Naloxone Reference Group

ATODA participated, alongside representatives from CAHMA and the ACT Health Directorate, in bi-monthly meetings of the National Naloxone Reference Group to discuss issues and challenges around the development and growth, implementation, delivery and evaluation of naloxone distribution strategies in Australia.

#### 6. Participated in the ACT Justice Reform Group

ATODA continued to participate in the ACT Justice Reform Group (JRG), convened by the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS). As described on their website, the JRG is:

“ A cross-sectoral community agencies' forum with a focus on effective integration and support for people involved in the criminal justice system, and provides a forum for community sector input to scrutinising and informing development of the criminal justice system in the ACT. ”

ACT Justice Reform Group

ATODA engaged with this Group in relation to the Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), the availability of ATOD treatment at the AMC, and the decriminalisation of drugs in the ACT.

## 7. Participated in the Drug Treatment Working Group

ATODA continued to participate in the Drug Treatment Working Group (convened by the ACT Health Directorate) to collaboratively support the implementation of the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List (DASL), also known as the ACT Drug and Alcohol Court. In particular, ATODA continued to advocate for future evaluations of the DASL to properly consider therapeutic outcomes and processes, including the Court's engagement with specialist ATOD service providers. ATODA also continued to advocate for proper costings of ATOD treatment delivered through the DASL, particularly in the context of the tender for Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services to support the DASL, released in March 2022.

ATODA's position regarding the DASL was set out in ATODA's submission in November 2021 to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Inquiry into Community Corrections. ATODA's submission was informed by input from ATOD providers who are members of the Drug Treatment Working Group. The submission detailed opportunities to improve the functioning of the DASL and is available at this link:

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1917445/Submission-016-ATODA.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1917445/Submission-016-ATODA.pdf).

## 8. Participated in the ACT Tobacco and E-Cigarette Community of Practice

ATODA continued its involvement in quarterly meetings of the ACT Tobacco and E-Cigarette Community of Practice. This group brings together government and community partners to facilitate communication and collaboration to strengthen tobacco prevention and smoking cessation strategies across the ACT. ATODA presented on the We CAN Program at the March 2022 meeting.

## 9. Co-founded the Housing for Health Group

ATODA's members have long highlighted the substantial barriers to housing faced by many people who use drugs, with particular challenges in accessing public and community housing. ATODA joined with a range of other health organisations and housing organisations to form an advocacy group – Housing for Health. As noted in its Terms of Reference:

**“** *This group believes that safe, secure, and adequate housing must be considered a key component of health promotion and/or disease prevention. This group aims to achieve better health outcomes for individuals with complex needs, particularly those at risk or homelessness or in unsafe housing in the ACT.* **”**

Housing for Health Group

## Strategic Priority: e. Strengthen the development and influence of specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug expertise

### 1. Provided submissions to ACT Government inquiries and relevant consultation processes

ATODA made six submissions to ACT Government inquiries and other relevant consultation processes in 2021–22, in addition to providing testimony related to submissions made in 2020–21.

#### **Inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021**

ATODA provided witness testimony to the Select Committee at a public hearing in July 2021 responding to specific questions from the Committee in relation to ATODA's earlier written submission (available at:

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1779334/Submission-27-Alcohol,-Tobacco-and-Other-Drug-Association-ACT-ATODA.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1779334/Submission-27-Alcohol,-Tobacco-and-Other-Drug-Association-ACT-ATODA.pdf).

- ➔ Many recommendations of the Select Committee's Final Report (tabled 30 November 2021) reflected recommendations made in ATODA's submission. ATODA's submission and testimony combined were referenced more times in the Report than from any other stakeholder, and was quoted in the tabling speeches. The Final Report is available at:

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/1908789/Report-Inquiry-into-the-Drugs-of-Dependence-Personal-Use-Amendment-Bill-2021-with-dissenting-report.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1908789/Report-Inquiry-into-the-Drugs-of-Dependence-Personal-Use-Amendment-Bill-2021-with-dissenting-report.pdf).

ATODA released the following joint press releases in relation to the Inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021:

- Welcoming the release of the Final Report and its recommendations (with the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)), available at: <https://www.actcoss.org.au/news-events/media-release/joint-media-release-report-recommends-harm-reduction-and-investment>
- Welcoming the ACT Government's tabled response to the Final Report that reiterated its commitment to progressing the legislation (with ACTCOSS and CAHMA) available at: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Media-Release-ACTCOSS-welcomes-welcomes-Government-commitment-to-drug-law-reform-9-June-2022.pdf>.

#### **Review of ACT health programs for children and young people**

ATODA provided witness testimony at a public hearing to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing in September 2021. This was in relation to ATODA's earlier written submission available at:

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/1799079/05-Alcohol-Tobacco-and-Other-Drug-Association-ACT-ATODA.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1799079/05-Alcohol-Tobacco-and-Other-Drug-Association-ACT-ATODA.pdf).

- ➔ ATODA's submission and testimony was quoted several times in the Committee's Final Report tabled 3 May 2022, available at: [https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1998153/HCW-Committee-report-V5-Tabling-3-May-2022.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1998153/HCW-Committee-report-V5-Tabling-3-May-2022.pdf). The ACT Government response is not yet available.

## **Inquiry into the COVID-19 2021 pandemic response**

ATODA made a written submission to the Select Committee in November 2021, available at: [https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/1904376/Submission-22-Alcohol-Tobacco-and-Other-Drug-Association-ACT.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1904376/Submission-22-Alcohol-Tobacco-and-Other-Drug-Association-ACT.pdf). ATODA's submission highlighted the critical role the ATOD sector has played in facilitating the ACT Government's public health response, and made a number of relevant recommendations related to engagement, capacity-building, collaboration and investment.

- ➔ The Select Committee drew heavily on ATODA's submission for Recommendation 23 of its Final Report (tabled 2 December 2021, available at: [https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/1910132/Report-Inquiry-into-the-COVID-19-2021-pandemic-response-.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1910132/Report-Inquiry-into-the-COVID-19-2021-pandemic-response-.pdf).)

“  
*Recommendation 23: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government disseminate lessons learnt on the effective partnership between the ACT Government, Capital Health Network and the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) sector in reaching priority populations with the broader NGO sector.*”

### Select Committee Inquiry into the COVID-19 2021 pandemic response

- ➔ The Government Response (tabled 22 March 2022) agreed with Recommendation 23—the Response is available at: [https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1973029/COVID-19-Report-on-the-Inquiry-into-the-COVID-19-2021-Pandemic-Response-GR-tabled-22-Mar-2022.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1973029/COVID-19-Report-on-the-Inquiry-into-the-COVID-19-2021-Pandemic-Response-GR-tabled-22-Mar-2022.pdf). ATODA is working with the ACT Health Directorate and CAHMA on sharing lessons learned regarding reaching priority populations.

## **Inquiry into Community Corrections**

ATODA's written submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (November 2021) focussed on opportunities to improve the functioning of the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List (DASL), given specialist ATOD treatment providers in the ACT are a critical part of the DASL. ATODA's submission is available at: [https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1917445/Submission-016-ATODA.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1917445/Submission-016-ATODA.pdf).

ATODA also provided witness testimony at a public hearing in February 2022.

- ➔ The Standing Committee's Final Report, tabled on 27 July 2022, made recommendations regarding eligibility and appropriate funding for the DASL, as articulated in ATODA's submission. The Report is available at: [https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/2048737/JCS-Report-9-Inquiry-into-Community-Corrections.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2048737/JCS-Report-9-Inquiry-into-Community-Corrections.pdf). The ACT Government response is not yet available.

## **ACT Government's Discrimination Law Reform consultation**

In January 2022, ATODA made a submission to the ACT Government's Discrimination Law Reform Project Discussion Paper, which focused on opportunities to reduce discrimination against people who use drugs and to support peer workers. Following the release of the Public Exposure Draft of the Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022, ATODA made a supplementary submission in July 2022. Both submissions are available at: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Discrimination-Law-Reform-ATODA-Submission-08.07.2022-1.pdf>.

- ➔ The Listening Report from the consultation (tabled 7 April 2022) noted two of ATODA's recommendations, and is available at:

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1984850/YourSay-Listening-Report-Discrimination-Law-Reform.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1984850/YourSay-Listening-Report-Discrimination-Law-Reform.pdf).

## **Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre**

In February 2022, ATODA made a submission to the Office of Inspectors of ACT Correctional Services Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre—available at: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Healthy-Prison-Review-2022-ATODA-Submission-15.3.2022.pdf>. ATODA's submission made five recommendations, including: prioritising the development and implementation of a comprehensive drug strategy; reviewing the existing ATOD treatment available; implementing an inclusive engagement process with specialist ATOD services and other stakeholders to address specific needs of detainees; and promoting smoking cessation within the prison. The Final Review is not yet available.

## **2. Provided submissions to relevant Australian Government processes**

In the 2021-22 financial year, there were two relevant Australian Government consultation process in which ATODA participated.

### **National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Strategy**

ATODA's February 2022 submission to the review and revision of the National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Strategy focussed on the importance of a revised and goal-orientated strategy to ensure a sustainable skilled workforce. It is available at: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ATODA-Submission-AOD-WFD-Strategy-Discussion-Paper-28.2.22.pdf>. The consultation process has not yet concluded.

### **Draft National Tobacco Strategy 2022-2030**

ATODA's submission to the Australian Government Department of Health consultation process in March 2022 encouraged the revision of the Strategy to better promote equality and health equity of subpopulations to reduce smoking rates, and is available at: <http://www.atoda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ATODA-Survey-response-to-National-Tobacco-Strategy-2022-2030-24-March-2022.pdf>. The Strategy has not yet been finalised.

*ATODA acknowledges the input of its members, the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group, the ACT ATOD Workers Group and other stakeholders to ATODA's submissions to ACT and Australian Government inquiries and consultation processes over 2021–22.*

## **3. Maintained strong relationships with ACT Government**

ATODA continued to work closely with the ACT Health Directorate, in particular the AOD Policy team. Regular engagement between the AOD Policy team and ATODA has resulted in more flexible and timely responses to sector issues and improved opportunities for sharing on-the-ground insights relevant for policy and legislative reform. Priority topics have included peaks commissioning; ATOD sector commissioning; COVID-19 adaptations and sector stimulus funding; relevant ACT Legislative Assembly inquiries (see section e.1.); the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan*; workforce development; and drug law reform.

ATODA also strengthened its relationship with the ACT Community Services Directorate (CSD) over this period, through proactive engagement in forums between the community sector and CSD, and successfully applying for specific grant funding from CSD for 2022–23.

#### **4. Participated in the State and Territory Alcohol and Other Drug Peaks Network and Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council**

ATODA participated in monthly meetings of the State and Territory Alcohol and Other Drug Peaks Network, which brings together CEOs from all Australian jurisdictional peak bodies in the ATOD sector to progress issues of mutual interest and concern. Priority topics included the extension of the National Ice Action Strategy (NIAS) funding, indexation for ATOD treatment services and the need for improved national governance arrangements.

The Network is closely associated with the newly-funded the Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC), the national peak body. AADC's founding members include each state and territory peak body for the ATOD sector (including ATODA), other national peak bodies relating to the ATOD sector, and professional bodies for those working in the ATOD sector. ATODA attended the AADC's regular meetings.

#### **5. Participated in the Peaks Capacity Building Network**

ATODA participated in monthly meetings of the Peaks Capacity Building Network (PCBN), which brings together representatives from each of the state and territory AOD peak organisations. The PCBN provides a centralised point for sharing information and resources and leveraging capacity to respond to national workforce/sector development requirements of the AOD sector in relation to the complex needs of service users and AOD services. It provides an opportunity for building broader, including national, responses to capacity building priorities in the AOD sector, through joint identification of issues, networking and coordinated planning. ATODA led and coordinated contributions from five state and territory peaks (including ATODA) to deliver a symposium on AOD workforce issues at the 2021 APSAD Conference: "The Work Won't Do Itself": a critical discussion of AOD workforces'.

## Strategic Priority: f. Maintain and strengthen the viability and sustainability of the ACT alcohol tobacco and other drug peak body

### 1. Achieved accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards

Where possible, it is best practice in the NGO sector to be accredited to demonstrate continuous quality improvement. Specific to the AOD sector, a National Quality Framework (NQF) was developed in 2018 to provide national agreement on a quality benchmark for delivery of AOD treatment services. All AOD treatment service providers are required to hold accreditation that meets the NQF from 29 November 2022. While ATODA is not required to be accredited, to demonstrate leadership in the sector ATODA decided to seek accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES), as the ASES are endorsed by the NQF and recognise the unique characteristics of the Community Services Sector a set of bench-marked community service standards.

During the accreditation process, ATODA identified the need for a number of new policies and procedures as well as revisions to the Governance Manual. The on-site assessment for ATODA's accreditation took place on Monday 20 June 2022. The Accreditation Assessment Report was received by ATODA on 5 July 2022, which stated that ATODA met 99 of 99 ASES indicators. ATODA was awarded full accreditation against the ASES Certificate for three years, from 20 June 2022 to 20 June 2025. It was particularly encouraging that the assessor noted in the Accreditation Assessment Report:

“*Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs continues to go from strength to strength to prevent or reduce alcohol or drug related harm among the community in ACT. The peak body is regarded as a leader in the sector by member organisations and stakeholders, and achieves a great deal despite the relatively small size and funding. The wellbeing of people who use alcohol or other drugs in the area clearly drives the Board, managers and staff, and volunteers in their mission. The organisation is a strong advocate for service development in the sector, appropriate legislative reform, and focused on preventing or reducing alcohol or drug related harm for people.*”

Assessor  
Australian Service Excellence Standards

### 2. Maintained a surplus over the financial year

ATODA maintained a surplus over the financial year, enabling continued financial stability for the organisation.

### **3. Participated in the ACT Government’s Peaks Commissioning process and entered into a new ACT Government contract**

Over 2021–2022 the ACT Health Directorate and ACT Community Services Directorate embarked on a new commissioning process for peak bodies in the health and community services sectors. This co-design process acknowledged the leadership role that peaks play in the sector and positioned peaks to collaborate with the ACT Government on the commissioning process for their respective sub-sectors. ATODA actively participated in forums between peaks and the ACT Government. ATODA influenced the definition and accepted roles of a peak body under the contracts, enhancing flexibility for peaks, with the definition as follows:

“ *A peak body is a representative non-government organisation, the primary purpose of which is to provide membership engagement and support coordination, advocacy and representation, information dissemination services, relevant research, policy and sector development services for the Represented Group and other interested parties.* ”

#### **ACT Health and Community Services Directorates**

In June 2022 ATODA entered into a new five-year grant with the ACT Government that aligns with this agreed understanding of peak functions, and moves away from project-specific funding. The recognition of the unique role peak bodies play in supporting the ACT community was an important achievement for the NGO sector.

### **4. Supervised interns and students**

In November 2021 ATODA engaged with the University of Canberra (UC) to recruit a student intern. This was ATODA’s first intern in several years, and her area of study was psychology. She contributed largely to the Drink in Check project development and implementation. As a result of her high standard of work whilst on her placement, ATODA offered her a position and she accepted in February 2022.

In February 2022 ATODA engaged with UC again to recruit a second student intern. The intern’s area of study was design and she assisted across a variety of projects, including the branding of the Drink in Check project, templates for ATODA’s sector and research bulletins, and preparing an acquired artwork for inclusion in ATODA’s publication.

In the 2021–22 financial year, ATODA staff supervised four projects for the Australian National University (ANU) Medical School’s Population Health Evaluation and Policy Projects (PEPP) course. Some of the students are working towards submitting related articles for publication in academic journals.

### **5. Conducted the annual ATODA Member Feedback Survey 2022**

In 2021–22 ATODA undertook its first annual ATODA Member Feedback Survey. Sixteen of ATODA’s 28 member organisations or individuals completed the online survey, providing valuable feedback on how ATODA had performed as the peak body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) sector over the 2021 calendar year.

ATODA’s members who responded to the survey overwhelmingly agreed that the ‘ATOD sector in the ACT is a stronger sector as a result of ATODA’s activities.’ This was an encouraging result and was reflected in answers showing that members highly rate ATODA’s effectiveness in performing as a peak body, undertaking valuable projects and activities, communicating with members and meeting its strategic priorities. Future Member Feedback Survey’s will allow ATODA to measure its performance across time.

## 6. Engaged with funders

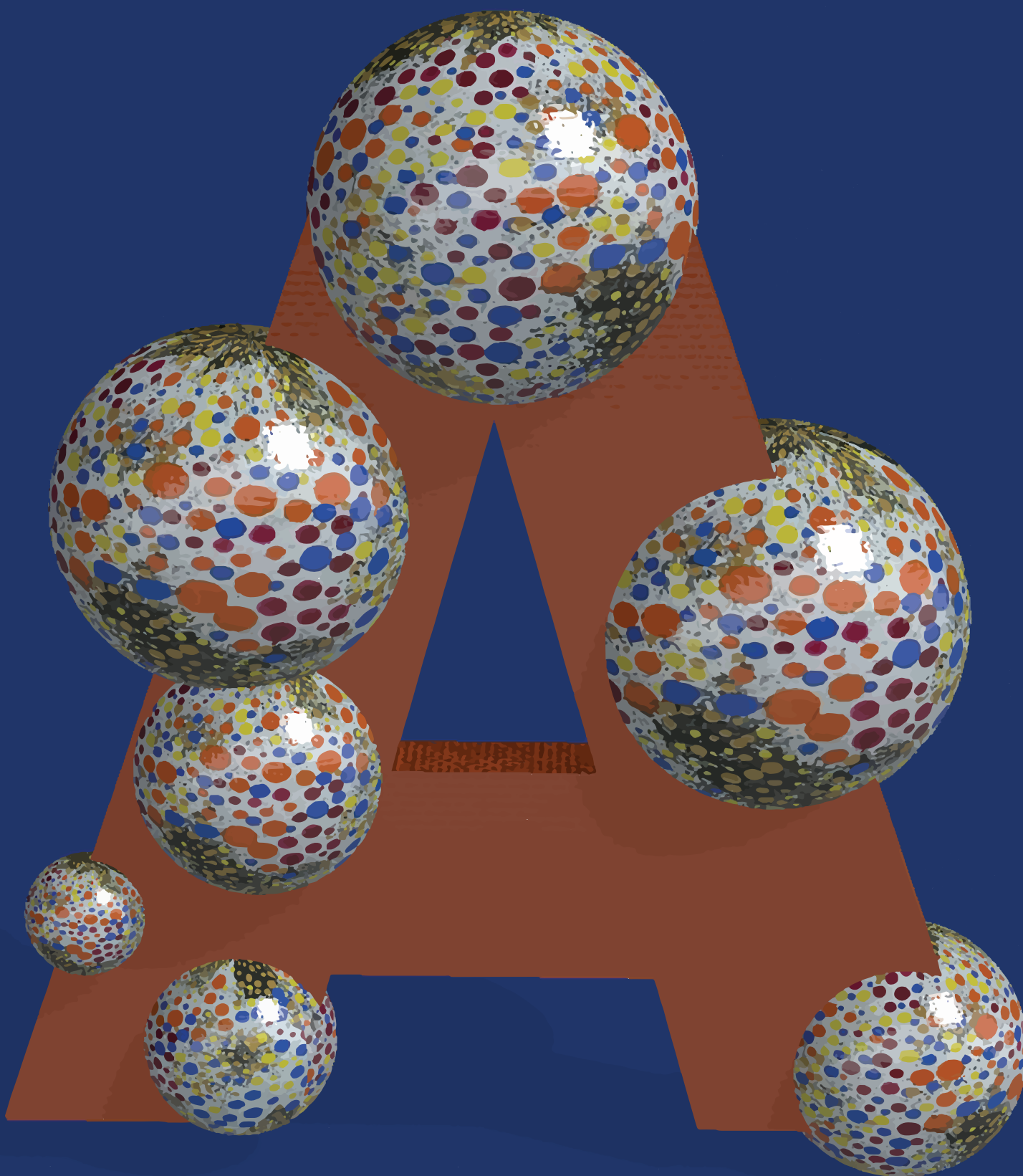
Over the financial year, ATODA was funded by the following:

- ACT Health Directorate
- ACT Community Services Directorate
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Capital Health Network
- Department of Health, Australian Government
- Members of ATODA

ATODA continued to proactively engage with these key funders to strengthen dialogue around policy and practice developments and deepen partnerships with these funders.

During this period ATODA sought to further diversify its sources of funding and was successful in receiving grants to support and enhance the valuable work of the sector and its allies.





**ATODA**

Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug  
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