

ATODA

Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug
Association ACT

ATODA
Annual Report

2022-23

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT

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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). ATODA's vision is a healthy, well and safe ACT community with the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms. Underpinning ATODA's 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.

ATODA's purpose is to lead and influence positive outcomes in policy, practice and research, as the peak body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT. These outcomes flow from initiatives in prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, treatment, peer services, and continuing care.

ATODA provides collaborative leadership for intersectoral action on the social determinants of harmful drug use, and on societal responses to drug use and to people who use drugs. ATODA works to provide alcohol, tobacco and other drug related 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.

About the Artwork

ATODA is proud to feature this artwork as part of its corporate identity in published content. The work was also showcased as part of the Art from the Heart of Canberra project, an exhibition of artworks created by people with lived experience of drug and alcohol use.

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.

Title:

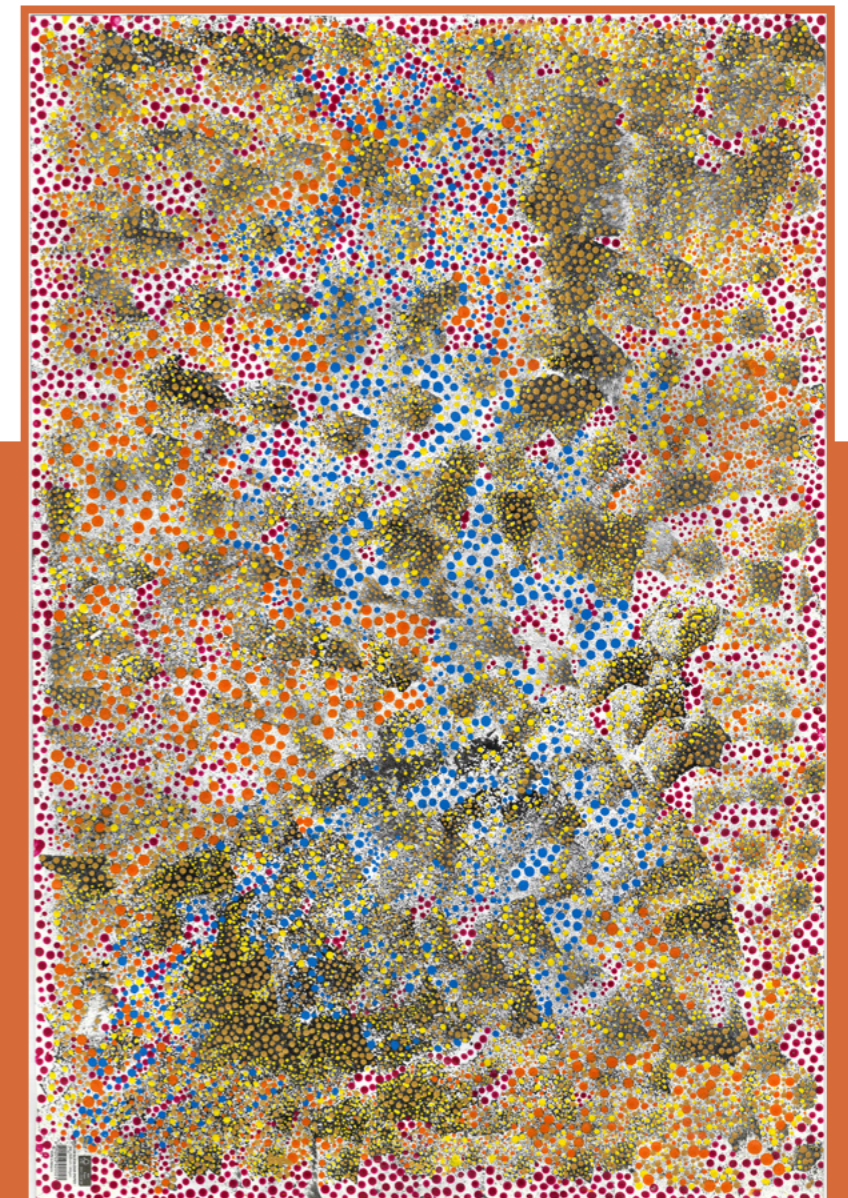
Unspoken History, Map of Pain

Artist: Sharon

Date: 2020



To learn more, scan the QR code



Report from the Chair

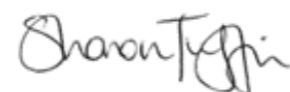
Over the past 18 months, the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) sector has been at the forefront of significant policy and legislative changes within the ACT. It has been a time of tremendous excitement with the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill, among other initiatives, Inquiries and reviews providing an opportunity to raise the voices of service users as well as organisations, confirming this as a health and human rights issue.

ATODA has made strong progress against the Strategic Plan priorities, supported the ATOD sector as we came out of the pandemic and moved into a significant amount of work with the ACT Government on their large-scale commissioning of health services. The role of the peak body has been essential, and the ATODA team have provided an important conduit for services and service users through various workshops, forums, consultations and reviews as can be seen through the Annual Report. ATODA is a trusted partner of services and government, and plays an important role in bringing evidence, information and insights together for transparent and sensible decision making.

We thank the ACT Government and other funding bodies for their support. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my Board colleagues for their outstanding contribution and commitment to the work of the peak body, and its good governance. They do this as volunteers, with a commitment to ensuring ATODA is operationally viable, and is both effective and impactful in our work with government, members and the community.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the exceptional work of the ATODA team. On behalf of the Board, I acknowledge Dr Devin Bowles and the team for their outstanding work, as well as continuing to progress important initiatives whilst the Board was completing the recruitment and appointment of our new CEO, Ms Anita Mills. I would especially like to thank Anke van der Sterren, Siobhán Reeves, and Susan Helyer for their leadership in both progressing work but also providing stability for the team and the sector during that time.

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 and organisations we serve.



● Sharon Tuffin



Report from the Chief Executive Officer

It is my pleasure to report on the achievements of ATODA in the 2022-2023 financial year. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the contribution and leadership of Dr Devin Bowles, who resigned from his CEO position with ATODA in April 2023. This was a significant period of change and influence for ATODA, and I look forward to leading the organisation through to our next stage of advocacy, growth and member engagement.

During 2022-2023 ATODA advocated on a number of key areas that will significantly impact on the sector in various ways over the coming years. A significant achievement was the passing of the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021 through the ACT Legislative Assembly. ATODA has been at the table every step of the way to ensure this reform is implemented effectively, the community understands what the changes mean and that a robust evaluation framework is in place.

ATODA has also been actively engaged with ACT government and our membership throughout the various iterations and stages of the ATOD commissioning cycle. We will continue to support ATOD services as we move towards the investment and transition phases in the next year.

The ATODA website and Service Directory underwent a refresh and update in 2023, and I hope that ATODA members and the broader community find our websites easier to navigate as a result. We continued to deliver a range of training to the ATOD sector under the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Qualifications Strategy as well as ATOD content training to allied health and community partners including the Youth Coalition and Mental Health Community Coalition.

Our financial position is stable, with solid foundations to continue to deliver on our core business and seek out opportunities for growth. The past year saw ATODA being funded as a peak body for the first time. We welcome this recognition of the important work we do to represent the expertise and skill of the ATOD sector in the ACT.

We continued to build strong relationships across the sector through hosting meetings of the ACT ATOD Workers Group and enhancements to the Service Users Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey. This year, ATODA also made significant steps towards our commitment towards reconciliation with the establishment of a Reconciliation Working Group and first steps towards developing a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Finally, I am pleased to note that our 2023 member survey results indicated a high degree of satisfaction and positive engagement from the ATODA membership. This includes 100 percent agreement with the statement that the ATOD sector in the ACT is stronger as a result of ATODA's activity. I look forward to continuing to represent and advocate on behalf of ATODA's members to ensure that the ACT ATOD sector is well resourced, and our voices are heard on decisions that affect service delivery and the broader community that we engage with and support.



● Anita Mills



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

a. Promote non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory language, policies, practice and research



b. Develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce



c. Develop and maintain the capacity of the sector



d. Strengthen research, evaluation, policy, practice and participation collaborations



e. Strengthen the development and influence of specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug expertise



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



Strategic Outcomes

1. High quality and coherent workforce, services, sector and system

2. Evidence-informed practice and innovation

3. Improved health and reduced drug related harms

ATODA's Full, Associate and Individual Members

- ACT Shelter
- Alcohol and Drug Services, Canberra Health Services
- 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
- Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
- Health Care Consumers' Association of the ACT
- Hepatitis ACT
- Karralika Programs Inc
- Marymead CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn
- Mr David McDonald (Lifetime Honorary Member)
- 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's work would not be possible without the support of our members. 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 Board

Board members were elected from the membership at ATODA's thirteenth Annual General Meeting in November 2022.

Name	Position	Appointed/Resigned
Sharon Tuffin 25/11/2022	Chair	Re-appointed (2 year term) at AGM
David Baxter 26/11/2021	Deputy Chair	Appointed (2 year term) at AGM
Bronwyn Hendry 25/11/2022	Secretary	Re-appointed (2 year term) at AGM
Gerard Byrne 26/11/2021	Treasurer	Re-appointed (2 year term) at AGM
Vanessa Gstrein 25/07/2022	Member	Appointed (1 year term) at AGM, extended to AGM 2023
Thomas Booth 28/03/2023	Member	Appointed until AGM 2023
Devin Bowles 26/11/2022	Public Officer	Appointed (1 year term) at AGM, resigned 24/04/2023

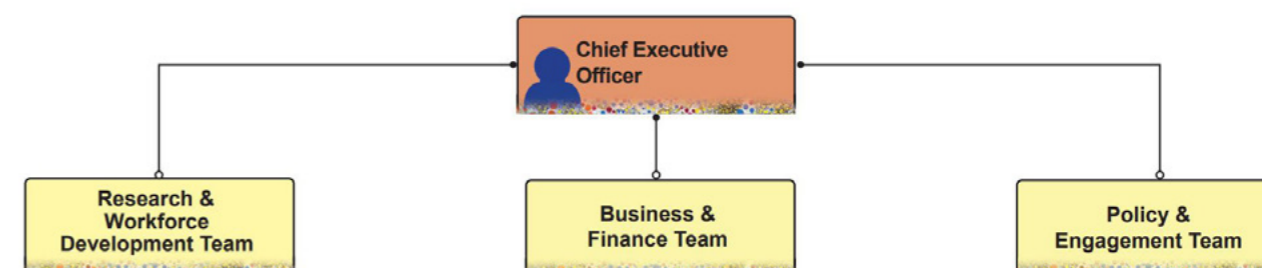
ATODA Staff

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

Name	Position
Annie Bleeker	Senior Training Specialist
Leanne Bourke	Policy and Communications Officer
Devin Bowles	Chief Executive Officer
Jeanette Bruce	Communications Manager
Dave Corby	Finance and Office Manager
Susan Helyar	Interim Chief Executive Officer
Brigit Perry	Operations and Membership Support Officer
Siobhán Reeves	Policy and Engagement Manager
Tess Rogel	Business Manager
Anke van der Sterren	Research and Sector Capacity Building Manager
Elisabeth Yarbakhsh	Workforce Development and Research Officer

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA)

Organisational Structure [as of August 1 2023]



Strategic Priority

- a. Promote non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory language, policies, practice and research



1. Engaged with the ACT Legislative Assembly

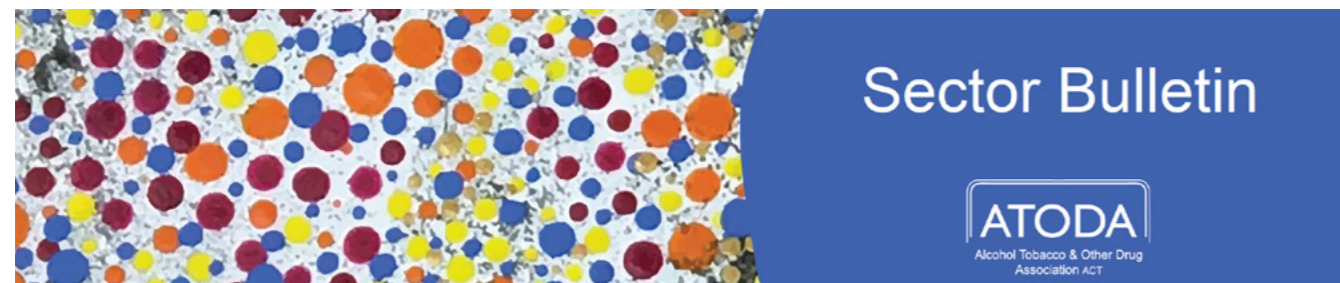
ATODA proactively engaged with the ACT Legislative Assembly to promote policy and legislative change towards achieving the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms in the ACT community. Over 2022-23 this included, but was not limited to, meetings with the Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Justice Health, Minister for Human Rights and the Attorney General, and also meetings with the spokespersons for Police and Emergency Services, Corrections, Health, Drug Harm Minimisation, and the Night Time Economy. ATODA 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. See [page 36](#) for more detail.

2. Produced and distributed the ACT ATOD Sector Bulletin

The ACT ATOD Sector Bulletin provides summaries of information, important developments, events, reporting on ATODA projects, resources, conferences, funding opportunities and other information relevant to ATOD and allied workers in the ACT. The ACT ATOD Sector Bulletin has over 840 subscribers and reaches a diverse range of people in the sector, from workers to researchers and policy makers. Twelve editions of the Sector Bulletin were sent to subscribers throughout the 2022-23 financial year. In addition, nine Alert Bulletins were distributed. The Bulletin is an important tool used by ATODA for information sharing and education of members and stakeholders.

At the outset of 2023 ATODA commenced an 'ATOD Provider Spotlight of the Month' in the sector bulletin, providing an opportunity for the ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT to provide relevant information and updates related to their service for the broader sector.



3. Produced and distributed the ATOD Research Bulletin

Throughout the 2022–23 financial year, ATODA continued to support the capacity of the sector to engage thoughtfully with the evidence around alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, treatment and harm reduction. Towards this end, ATODA produced 11 ATOD Research Bulletins, collating the most up-to-date research, underpinned by a commitment to non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory language, policies, practices and research. A total of 110 research articles, 95 reports and 13 webinars were circulated to a subscriber list of over 800 readers from the ATOD and allied sectors in the ACT and beyond.

Some of the key themes that elicited significant interest from readers include: the interface of mental health and ATOD treatment services; training of the lived experience workforce; First Nations self-determination in ATOD policy; support for families of drug users; cannabis reform; and emerging evidence on e-cigarettes.

Readership of the ATOD Research Bulletin grew significantly through the year, reflecting the high levels of engagement that ATODA's research activities generate.



4. Redesigned the ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Program Directory

The ACT Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Program Directory (the Directory) was initially developed in response to a need identified by the ACT ATOD workforce. The Directory is a resource designed primarily for AOD professionals to find services and programs available in the ACT ATOD sector. There are over 40 specialist alcohol and other drug programs in the ACT.

In December 2022, ATODA commenced a significant redesign of the Directory, with a goal of improving access to information and communication about the diverse range of ATOD programs available across the ACT. The redesign aimed to support workers to make referrals, increase cross and intra-sectoral knowledge and foster collaborations. The first iteration of the Directory was well-received and identified a need to make the Directory more accessible for consumers.

In 2023, ATODA consulted with the ATOD workforce, consumers, and representatives of consumers of ATOD services to identify the needs of consumers and their family and friends in relation to information, support and services on the Directory. The consultation process resulted in substantial enhancements to the Directory, including program details such as, treatment duration and goals and accessibility information such as associated fees; improved program search functionality; and a streamlined updating process. It also included the addition of a decision tree flowchart for individuals who use drugs and their families and friends to access relevant ATOD related information, support, and services. The second iteration of the Directory launched in June 2023.



To visit the Directory, Scan the QR code or go to:

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

Old Directory

New Directory

New search function

Search the ACT ATOD Program Directory by key word or program name OR use the tick boxes below

Age

- All ages
- Under 18
- 18-25 year old
- 26+

Specific Group

- All groups
- Men only
- Women only
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific
- Families and friends

Treatment Types

- Aftercare
- Case management
- Counselling
- Day program
- Information and education (only)
- Needle and syringe program
- Outreach
- Pharmacotherapy
- Residential treatment
- Specialist ATOD primary health care
- Withdrawal management (detoxification)
- All treatment types

5. Delivered ATOD information and harm reduction training to allied sectors

ATODA delivered ATOD Information and Harm Reduction Training to the ACT youth, mental health and homelessness 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. Participants also received information on support and referral pathways for treatment in the ACT.

In 2022-23, the following activities occurred:

- Maintenance of partnerships with the Youth Coalition of the ACT, Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT and ACT Shelter for the delivery of training to prioritised workforces (youth, mental health and homelessness workers).
- 114 workers from a range of services attended the training.
- Across all training delivered over this reporting period, 100% of participants rated the training as either very effective or effective at increasing their knowledge, and 100% of training participants reported that they were intending to implement something they learned into their work practice.
- ATODA brokered a relationship with the ACT Child and Youth Protection Service and delivered three bespoke training programs to Foundation staff and Managers.

6. Supported the University Drug and Alcohol Network

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 a train-the-trainer model so that Universities in the ACT could deliver the Drink in Check project in house. Members of UDAN are from three ACT universities: the Australian Catholic University (ACU), the Australian National University (ANU), and the University of Canberra (UC). UDAN partners worked together with ATODA to recruit university wellbeing staff to participate in the training.

The outcomes from this train-the-trainer package included:

- The development of a Trainers Manual which included a PowerPoint presentation, with comprehensive trainers' notes, evaluation survey instruments, role-play demonstration, trainer's guide, etc.
- ATODA conducted two workshops and trained 28 residential and wellbeing staff and students from the Australian National University (ANU), the University of Canberra (UC) and Australian Catholic University (ACU).
- Pre-test scores averaged 57% and post-test scores 92%. Satisfaction with the training program was high.
- A short follow up survey (n=8) found that 100% of respondents intended to deliver the AUDIT to students. All respondents also intended to deliver the Drink in Check training within the next year.

What is a standard drink?
In Australia, one standard drink is equal to 10 grams of alcohol – standard drinks for beer, wine, and spirits are shown in the infographic below.

FURTHER INFORMATION
University of Canberra
Phone: (02) 6201 2351
www.canberra.edu.au
Australian National University
Phone: (02) 6125 2211
www.anu.edu.au
Canberra Alcohol and Drug Services
Phone: (02) 5124 9977
www.health.act.gov.au/services/alcohol-and-drug-services
Beyond Blue
Phone: 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au
ATODA Directory of Alcohol and Drug Services ACT
www.directory.atoda.org.au
Alcohol Think Again
https://alcoholthinkagain.com.au/
Drinks Meter app
www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au
Complete the AUDIT here
Download the brochure here:

drink in check

© ATODA 2022

Drink in Check brochure developed as part of the training package

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

Throughout the year ATODA's CEO engaged with several media platforms, including The Canberra Times, ABC News and Radio, Canberra Weekly, the Riotact, and La Vanguardia, a Spanish newspaper, to provide insight into relevant ATOD issues and priorities.



Radio	Topic	Month
ABC Radio	ATODA CEO was interviewed regarding the ACT Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List (DASL) evaluation report, and highlighted the role of the ATOD sector in supporting the DASL.	August 2022
ABC Radio	ATODA CEO was interviewed about the draft Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026 and the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021.	September 2022
ABC Canberra Mornings Radio	ATODA CEO was interviewed about e-cigarettes, including information about potential health-related harms from e-cigarette use and marketing towards young people.	November 2022
ABC Canberra Mornings Radio	ATODA CEO was interviewed about the newly released ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026 and supervised drug consumption rooms.	December 2022



Publications	Topic and link	Month
The Penington Institute	ATODA CEO commented on the demand for drug services in the ACT in the Penington Institute's August issue of The Bulletin (the link for this Bulletin is no longer available).	August 2022
The Penington Institute	ATODA CEO was referenced in the Cannabis in Australia: Technical Report by the Penington Institute. Dr Devin Bowles was referenced on pages 68-69 of the report about the ACT approach to cannabis regulation, and is available here .	December 2022



News articles	Topic and link	Month
The Canberra Weekly	ATODA was quoted about the increase in the ACT Government's budget for ATOD services, available here .	July 2022
La Vanguardia (A Spanish newspaper)	ATODA CEO was quoted on the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Possession) Amendment Bill 2022, available here .	November 2022
The Canberra Weekly	ATODA CEO was quoted regarding the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026, available here .	December 2022
Riotact	ATODA CEO was quoted about establishing a supervised drug consumption room in the ACT, available here .	December 2022
The Canberra Times	ATODA interim CEO was quoted about the allocated budget to the ACT's Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List (DASL), available here .	June 2023
Riotact	ATODA interim CEO was quoted following the announcement of the three year extension of the ACT's Drug and Alcohol Sentencing Court, available here .	June 2023
The Canberra Weekly	ATODA interim CEO quoted regarding the ACT Budget announcement, available here .	June 2023



Interviews	Topic and link	Month
ABC News	ATODA CEO was interviewed about the draft Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026 and the proposal of introducing a supervised consumption room, available to watch here .	September 2022

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.

ATODA also disseminates media releases to the ACT ATOD sector which reflect advocacy priorities for ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT which ATODA has progressed. This also includes contributing to media releases from other organisations as appropriate. Media releases over the 2022-23 period are below:

- ATODA Response to the ACT Government Budget 2023-2024 (27 June 2023)
- ATODA Welcomes the Extension of the ACT Drug and Alcohol Court (22 June 2023)
- ATODA Welcomes Commonwealth Investment in the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector (11 May 2023)
- ATODA Welcomes ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026 (8 December 2022)
- Minimising harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs [quoting ATODA CEO] (8 December 2022)
- Strengthening the law around e-cigarettes [quoting ATODA CEO] (24 November 2022)
- ATODA and AADC Welcome Passing of Drug Decriminalisation Legislation (20 October 2022)
- Minister for Health Media Release Announcing Consultation on the next ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan [quoting ATODA CEO] (12 September 2022)
- ATODA Welcomes Decriminalisation Legislation Debate (3 August 2022)
- ATODA Welcomes ACT Government's Increased Alcohol and Other Drug Investment (29 July 2022)

To view the media releases,
please see the ATODA website:

www.atoda.org.au

8. Developed Policy Position Statements

ATODA developed policy position statements with input from ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT and other relevant stakeholders, as a way of ensuring that the range of perspectives were understood and captured to inform ATODA's advice and advocacy. These statements have already proven valuable in concisely but comprehensively informing policy-makers and decision-makers about priority actions and concerns from ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT.

Four policy position statements have been completed:

- Involving People Who Use Drugs in Decision-Making Processes
- E-cigarettes
- Supervised Consumption Rooms
- Drug Checking

To view the policy position
statements, please see the
ATODA website:

www.atoda.org.au

Strategic Priority

b. Develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce



1. 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 (CIT), Uniting Vic. Tas and Canberra First Aid to offer fully subsidised, high-quality training to eligible workers in the ACT.

Eighteen students participated in the AOD Skill Set offered through Uniting Vic. Tas. ATODA continues to engage with our member services to support full participation in the Qualifications Strategy and to ensure training continues to meet the needs of the sector.

2. Convened the ACT ATOD Workers Group

The ACT ATOD 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.

In 2022 – 2023, 10 Workers Group meetings were convened with representation from 11 organisations across the sector. In 2022, face-to-face meetings reconvened, to great success. Key activities have included:

- a presentation from the ACT PACER team;
- discussion about improved referral processes;
- input to the *Alcohol, other drugs and gambling in the ACT: a cross-sectoral approach to harm minimisation* project; and
- advice to ATODA on development of a new professional development strategy.

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

3. Progressed the ACT AOD Workforce Profile Report

The ACT AOD Workforce Profile is a three-yearly collaborative activity conducted across all specialist AOD services, including ATODA.

Analysis of the 2021 Workforce Profile was completed, and the report published and circulated in September 2022 as ATODA Monograph Series, No. 10. ATODA had the opportunity to present findings of the Workforce Profile to the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group and other appropriate stakeholder forums and meetings. In particular, dissemination focused on the implications of the findings for policy, advocacy and workforce development priorities. Five conference papers were presented at the Population Health Congress and the APSAD annual conference. Insights from the 2021 Workforce Profile informed ATODA's project on co-occurring AOD and gambling harms.

Planning for the 2024 Workforce Profile has commenced.

Strategic Priority

c. Develop and maintain the capacity of the sector



1. Monitored progress against the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026

Over late 2022, ATODA provided detailed input as part of the ACT Health Directorate's consultation with the ACT ATOD sector on the development of the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026. ATODA welcomed the release of the 2022-2026 Plan and is pleased to be part of the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan Implementation Working Group. ATODA looks forward to expanded governance arrangements, including a Community of Practice, being established in 2023-24 and will continue to play an active role in holding the ACT Government to account for the agreed actions to be achieved by 2026.

2. Submitted to the ACT Budget Consultation 2023-24

In early 2023 ATODA made its submission to the ACT Budget 2023-24 Consultation Process (available [here](#)). ATODA 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 detailed the urgent need to increase core funding for specialist ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT and the need to fund a thorough evaluation of the implementation of the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Act 2022.

ATODA's response to the 2023-24 Budget (available [here](#)) welcomes the extension of the drug checking pilot, the expansion of the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List and continued investment into the Watson Health Precinct – growing residential rehabilitation infrastructure for young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ATODA also noted the need to address the gap in investment for ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT. ATODA will continue to actively participate in the Budget consultation process to advocate for increased investment in the ACT ATOD sector.

3. Influenced the ACT Government's approach to ATOD Services Commissioning

ATODA has played a key role over 2022-23 in facilitating the input and progressing questions for clarification from ATOD treatment and harm reductions services in the ACT with respect to the ACT Government's new commissioning approach. ATODA facilitated officials from the ACT Health Directorate (from both the ATOD policy team and the commissioning team) attending meetings of the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group as required to provide updates. ATODA also regularly communicated with the ACT Health Directorate about the commissioning process and related information and concerns to and from ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT.

ATODA advocated for the needs of ATOD treatment and harm reduction services with respect to commissioning through a range of forums, including the Health NGO Leadership Group, Commissioning Conversations, and meetings about commissioning convened by the ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS). ATODA inputted into the co-design workshops delivered by the ACT Health Directorate over October 2022, and reviewed and provided comment on the draft listening report and draft needs assessment. ATODA also participated in related commissioning processes that impact ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT, including commissioning for homelessness services, STI/BBV services, and mental health services, particularly with respect to co-occurring harms.

4. Convened the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group

The Specialist ACT Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) 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.

Eleven meetings of the Specialist ACT ATOD Executives Group were held during 2022-2023, alongside communications outside of those meetings on strategic planning, policy and workforce development priorities. This included in particular input regarding the development of the Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026, the ATOD Services Commissioning process, submissions into relevant ACT Legislative Assembly inquiries, the SUSOS Co-design project, the implementation of the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Action 2022, the interface between the ATOD and mental health sectors, draft KPI specifications for ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT, the AOD and Gambling in the ACT Research Project, the Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Treatment Services consultations, and other practice and policy initiatives. ATODA also arranged for relevant ACT Health Directorate officials to present at Executives Group meetings, primarily regarding ATOD Services Commissioning and the interface between the ATOD and mental health sectors.

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

5. Contributed to AOD and gambling evidence

ATODA received funding through the Gambling and Racing Commission's Gambling Harm Prevention and Mitigation Fund to undertake Stage 1 of the project *Alcohol, other drugs and gambling in the ACT: a cross-sectoral approach to harm minimisation*. The project has sought to understand how ATOD services and gambling support services in the ACT are responding to co-occurring substance use and gambling harms in the treatment setting, with the aim of developing training and resources for service providers.

The project had three stages:

- completing a scoping literature review to establish the intersections between substance use and gambling related harms and to identify what constitutes current best practice in responding to co-occurring harms (including, in the analysis, identifying systemic barriers to the development and institution of best practice approaches to co-occurring harms);
- consulting with the AOD and gambling support sectors to confirm the scope of co-occurring harms in the ACT; to identify how services are currently addressing the issue of co-occurring harms; and to identify perceptions of systemic barriers to instituting best practice approaches to co-occurring harms; and
- undertaking an environment scan to determine the current availability of training in co-occurring AOD and gambling harms for workers in the AOD and gambling support sectors in the ACT and elsewhere.

The following recommendations have been identified as a result of this project:

- in collaboration with identified facilitators, adapt and/or develop training to support workers in the ACT ATOD sector to better understand gambling harms and acquire a suite of tools for screening/assessment and referral;
- in collaboration with identified facilitators, adapt and/or develop training to support workers in the ACT gambling support sector to better understand substance use harms and acquire a suite of tools for screening/assessment and referral;
- develop a training workshop on co-occurring harms that brings together both the ATOD and gambling support sectors to acquire skills in responding to co-occurring harms and facilitate cross-sectoral communication; and
- collate and adapt existing resources to develop an ACT-specific guide (resource) outlining harms, screening / assessment, treatment options and referral pathways (and including development of new / tailored resources to address identified gaps) for workers in the ATOD and gambling support sectors.

ATODA is scoping with relevant stakeholders opportunities to take forward these recommendations.

6. 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 ATOD 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 using funding received from the ACT Health Directorate, and is implemented in partnership with specialist ATOD non-government organisations and community pharmacies.

The Program enables best practice smoking cessation clinical treatment to be implemented as part of routine ATOD treatment and support to this population with extremely high smoking rates—77 percent of people accessing specialist ATOD services are using tobacco (data from the 2018 ACT Service Users Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (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 ATOD services, and partners with six community pharmacies to provide smoking cessation support to specialist ATOD service users. ATOD services provided approximately 142 vouchers in 2022-23. Participating services continue to report high satisfaction with the access to NRT support for their clients.

ATODA wishes to thank the workers in the ATOD 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. ATODA continues to promote the We CAN Program and smoking cessation issues more generally at the ACT Health Tobacco and E-Cigarette Community of Practice.



Strategic Priority

d. Strengthen research, evaluation, policy, practice and participation collaborations



1. Delivered alcohol primary prevention training

ATODA secured a second Local Drug Action Team (LDAT) grant from the Alcohol and Drug Foundation to deliver alcohol prevention training in conjunction with the Peaks – including Youth Coalition of the ACT, Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT and ACT Shelter. ATODA worked with the Peaks to develop a half day training package for workers in the youth, mental health and housing sector. The training package was delivered in May to each of the different sectors. The training program included information about:

- the effectiveness of brief interventions in reducing alcohol and other drug use;
- detailed information about the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) which was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to reduce risky drinking; and
- comprehensive information about alcohol and its harms so that workers could deliver the AUDIT and a brief intervention about alcohol to the clients who may be at risk of harm through their use of alcohol.

A total of 58 participants registered for three half day trainings and 52 participants attended the training.

Pre and post evaluation forms were completed during the training program and resulted in significant increases in alcohol knowledge and confidence in workers being able to deliver the AUDIT to their clients. The average pre-test and post test scores on alcohol knowledge increased from 54% (10.8/20) to 87% (17.3/20). Ninety-six per cent of participants reported the training had provided them with the skills and confidence to deliver the AUDIT and deliver a brief intervention about alcohol to their clients. Post training evaluation feedback from participants was extremely positive with over 80% of participants rating the training as excellent.

2. Co-designed the new ACT Service Users Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (SUSOS)

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. The survey is a single point-in-time collection of information on service users' experiences of accessing ATOD services, perspectives of the quality of these ATOD services, and assesses levels and patterns of satisfaction and self-reported outcomes.

During 2022 – 23, ATODA implemented a significant SUSOS enhancement project to improve the relevance of the survey through a codesign process involving service users, peer workers, service providers and policy makers/funders. A service user- and peer-dominated Project Advisory Group has provided guidance on the Project. Twelve focus group discussions were held with service users in groups that reflected shared demographics (e.g. women; aged over 40 years; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background) or service-use characteristics (e.g. accessing harm reduction services or opioid maintenance therapy or outreach services; in active ATOD treatment). Participants were asked to identify key elements of positive experiences of ATOD service use, with prompting questions used to further elucidate these elements. Focus groups were also held with service providers and the ATOD Policy section at ACTHD. The SUSOS Codesign Project received ethics clearance.

Through the process of codesign and significant input from, and testing by, stakeholders, the new SUSOS survey focusses on experiences, rather than just on satisfaction. The SUSOS includes new questions and themes that were discovered through the codesign process involving strong participation by service users themselves. This was a world-leading and innovative process. A number of elements of ATOD service user experience that have not previously been adequately reflected in existing measures were identified, including: a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of safety—physical, emotional, cultural, and gendered safety; feeling respected, and not stigmatised; feeling empowered to participate actively in treatment and support; and having access to workers with lived experience of ATOD use.

ATODA implemented the SUSOS in the field over May to August 2023. ATODA thanks the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) for partnering on this project, providing valuable advice and support throughout the design and implementation of the survey. The data will be analysed and reported in 2023-24.

Papers based on the codesign process and findings of the SUSOS Codesign Project, were presented at two conferences: the Harm Reduction International Conference, and the conference of the Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies.

3. Presented at a number of academic and international conferences

During 2022-23 ATODA staff presented a total of nine oral presentations and four posters at six conferences:

Harm Reduction International Conference 2023



- Bowles, D. 'Creating a jurisdictional ecosystem to optimise harm reduction policy and practice'. Oral presentation, Melbourne, 17 April 2023.
- van der Sterren, A., Yarbakhsh, E., Gough, C., Nikolic, N., Wang, D., Munday, T., SUSOS Codesign Project Advisory Group, Nathan, S., Rawstorne, P., Bowles, D. 'Reducing harms through collaboration: co-designing a service user experience survey'. Poster, Melbourne, 18 April 2023.

Australasian Society on Alcohol and other Drugs 2023



- van der Sterren, A., Yarbakhsh, E., & Bowles, D. (2022). 'Understanding, utilising and supporting the contributions of AOD workers with lived experience'. Oral presentation, Darwin, 12 October 2022.
- Bowles, D., Reeves, S. 'Legislative reform to eliminate discrimination against people who use drugs'. Oral presentation, Darwin, 12 October 2022.
- Yarbakhsh, E., van der Sterren, A., & Bowles, D. (2022). 'Recruitment, retention and wellbeing in the alcohol and other drug sector'. Oral presentation, Darwin, 10 October 2022.
- Bowles, D., Yarbakhsh, E., & van der Sterren, A. (2022). 'Rising educational attainment in the alcohol and other drug sector: evidence and implications'. Poster, Darwin, 10–12 October 2022.
- Bleeker, A., Bourke, L. 'Drink in Check – Tackling on-campus drinking cultures'. Poster, Darwin, 10–12 October 2022.



Population Health Congress 2022

- Yarbakhsh, E., Bowles, D., & van der Sterren, A. (2022). 'Providing AOD Services in Times of Crisis: A Tale of Workforce Resilience'. Oral presentation, Adelaide SA, 22 September 2022.
- van der Sterren, A., Bowles, D., Yarbakhsh, E., & Reeves, S. (2022). 'Re-imagining services to people experiencing AOD dependence: lessons from the pandemic response'. Oral presentation, Adelaide SA, 22 September 2022.

Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association 2023



- Bowles, D. 'Achieving drug decriminalisation amidst change: lessons for Victoria from the ACT'. Oral presentation, Melbourne, 8 February 2023.



Creating safe spaces

Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies 2023

- van der Sterren, A., Yarbakhsh, E., Gough, C., Nikolic, N., Wang, D., Munday, T., Nathan, S., Rawstorne, P., SUSOS Codesign Project Advisory Group, Bowles, D. 'Collaboration leads to innovation: including 'safety' as a previously under-explored theme of AOD service user experience'. Oral presentation, 12 May 2023.



Canberra Health Annual Research Meeting 2023

- Reid, C., Griffin, A., Kakani, M., Beteramia, D., Bowles, D., van der Sterren, A. 'Evaluation of a pilot to provide free nicotine replacement therapy in ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Services'. Oral presentation, 28 July 2022.

4. Participated in the National Naloxone Reference Group

ATODA participated, alongside representatives from the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy and the ACT Health Directorate, in bi-monthly meetings of the National Naloxone Reference Group. This Group met to discuss issues and challenges around the development and growth, implementation, delivery and evaluation of naloxone distribution strategies in Australia, including in relation to the national roll out of the Take Home Naloxone Program (from 1 July 2022).

5. Participated in the ACT Justice Reform Group

ATODA continued to participate in the ACT Justice Reform Group (convened by the ACT Council of Social Service), a cross-sectoral community agencies' forum with a focus on effective integration and support for people involved in the criminal justice system, and a forum for community sector input to scrutinising and informing development of the criminal justice system in the ACT. ATODA engaged with this Group in relation to key issues including; the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Possession) Amendment Bill 2022, the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List Evaluation, the Inquiry into dangerous Driving, the implementation of a smoking ban at the in Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and provision of related services, the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Government response to the Healthy Prison Review 2022, access to support pathways post-release for housing, accommodation, ATOD and other allied health services.

6. 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 services providers. Over this period ATODA also contributed to the statutory review of the DASL legislation, in consultation with DASL treatment providers and other members of the Drug Treatment Working Group.

7. 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.

Strategic Priority

e. Strengthen the development and influence of specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug expertise



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

ATODA made a number of submissions to ACT Government inquiries and other relevant consultation processes in 2022-23, in addition to providing testimony related to submissions made in 2021-22. This included:

- ATODA's submission and testimony to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Inquiry into Community Corrections in 2021-22 was quoted at length in the [ACT Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List \(DASL\) Process and Outcome Evaluation Final Report](#) released on 9 August 2022.
 - ATODA made a submission to (September 2022) and attended a hearing of (October 2022) the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Inquiry into Dangerous Driving. ATODA's submission focussed on the need for improved prevention of drink driving in the ACT; the opportunity to review drug driving policy in the ACT; and the ATOD sector's contribution to education and rehabilitation with respect to driving offences. ATODA's submission can be read on the ACT Parliament website, [here](#).
- ATODA also made a submission in January 2023 to the same Committee's Inquiry into the Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 presented 23 November 2022, which was related to issues covered by the Inquiry into Dangerous Driving. ATODA's submission to that Inquiry can be read on the ACT Parliament website, [here](#).
- ATODA made a submission to (December 2022) and attended a hearing of (February 2023) the Standing Committee on Public Accounts' Inquiry into Grants Management. ATODA's submission focussed on opportunities for increased co-design with the NGO sector and more flexible and proactive grants management processes. ATODA's submission is available [here](#).

- ATODA made a submission (January 2023) to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Inquiry into the Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. ATODA's submission focussed on the amendments related to a smoking ban at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and the need for evidence-based therapeutic support to assist with smoking cessation. ATODA's submission can be read on the ACT Parliament website, [here](#).
- ATODA made a submission to (March 2023) and attended a related hearing (July 2023) into the ACT Government's Budget consultation process (discussed above). ATODA's submission is available [here](#).
- ATODA made a submission to (April 2023) and attended a hearing (June 2023) of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Inquiry into Penalties for Minor Offences and Vulnerable People. ATODA's contribution focussed on the impact of fines and prosecution for non-payment of fines on vulnerable people, particularly people who use drugs, and alternative measures to fines. ATODA's submission can be read [here](#).

ATODA also engaged in a range of other ACT Government consultation processes (outside of ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiries) in order to influence and inform issues, policies and programs that affect the interests of ATOD treatment and harm reduction services.

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 Government inquiries and consultation processes over 2022-23.

2. Provided submissions to relevant Australian Government inquiries and consultation processes

In the 2022-23 financial year, there were two relevant Australian Government inquiries in which ATODA participated.

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- ATODA's Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Inquiry into the challenges and opportunities for law enforcement in addressing Australia's illicit drug problem – January 2023, available [here](#).
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- ATODA's Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework – June 2023, available [here](#).

ATODA also contributed to submissions made on behalf of the Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council at the national level. ATODA also inputted into other Australian Government consultation processes outside of inquiries – most notably the Therapeutic Goods Administration's consultation on proposed reforms to the regulation of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes, and the National Indigenous Australians Agency's Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alcohol and Other Drugs Treatment Services Initiative National Consultations.

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 Australian Government inquiries and consultation processes over 2022-23.

3. Maintained strong relationships with ACT Government Health Directorate

ATODA continued to work closely with the ACT Health Directorate, in particular the ATOD Policy team. Regular engagement between that 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.

ATODA also strengthened its relationship over this period with the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing in relation to the interface between the ATOD and mental health sectors, and with the ACT Community Services Directorate (CSD), through proactive engagement in forums between the community sector and CSD, particularly in relation to commissioning.

4. Participated in the State and Territory Alcohol and Other Drug Peaks Network

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. The Network is closely associated with the Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC), the national peak body. AADC's founding members comprise 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. Through this group ATODA participated in a number of collaborative activities including: advocacy on a national governance structure; advocacy on indexation for AOD treatment services; advocacy on statutory price reductions related to ODTP medicines; sharing learnings from ACT legislative reform; and attendance at meetings with representatives of the Department of Health and Commonwealth Government Ministers.

5. Participated in the Peaks Capacity Building Network

ATODA continues to participate in monthly Peaks Capacity Building Network (PCBN) meetings with rotating chairing to support collaboration and coordination nationally, to leverage expertise and ensure jurisdictional specific needs of the sector were met. The group is critical to the sharing of information across jurisdictions around projects with common objectives related to workforce development.

In 2022-2023 this has included, for instance, projects on: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce recruitment and professional development; promoting access for LGBTIQ+ service users; identifying and responding to specific professional development needs (for example, co-occurrence of gambling issues; domestic and family violence; Acquired Brain Injury); and projects to build peer workforce capacity.

6. Participated in the Policy Officers Network

The Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC) during this period established a national Policy Officers Network, which includes representatives from ATOD peaks around the country in addition to other key ATOD research institutions and aligned organisations. ATODA has participated in this Network to ensure that progressive ATOD reform in the ACT can inform the evidence base and related policy development in other jurisdictions.

7. Progressed advocacy in relation to the interface between ATOD and mental health

ATODA's advocacy regarding co-occurring harms and the interface between ATOD and mental health sectors has been a priority over this reporting period and was in direct response to the voices and needs of ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT. In 2022 ATODA reached out to the Mental Health Community Coalition to proactively jointly engage with the ACT Health Directorate and our respective members on forming an alliance of ATOD and mental health stakeholders that would proactively identify opportunities for increased collaboration and coordination between the mental health and ATOD sectors in the ACT, learning from initiatives and experiences in other jurisdictions. In June 2023 ATODA received funding from the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing to establish an alliance of ATOD and mental health providers and broader stakeholders that will:

- provide a forum through which key stakeholders from the health, community and social service sectors can develop a strategic approach to meeting the mental health and drug and alcohol needs and expectations of consumers;
- build a sustainable partnership of organisations in the ACT specifically funded to provide mental health and/or alcohol and drug services or commission such services; and
- recommend ways to achieve better outcomes for people experiencing co-occurring mental health and substance use issues in the ACT region, building on existing relationships, initiatives and programs.

This alliance will be established in 2023-24 and further detail will be provided in ATODA's next Annual Report. However this successful advocacy is an important outcome that ATODA achieved over 2022-23.

Strategic Priority

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



1. Maintained accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards

ATODA achieved accredited status against the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) in June 2022. The ASES are endorsed by the National Quality Framework for AOD Treatment Services, and while ATODA is not bound by the NQF, ATODA was keen to demonstrate leadership within the sector. ATODA is accredited to 20 June 2025 and is maintaining a process of continuous improvement ahead of that date.

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ATODA continues to go from strength to strength to prevent or reduce alcohol or drug related harm among the community in the ACT.

- Accreditation Assessor, 2022

2. Established the Reconciliation Working Group

ATODA established a Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) in October 2022 to aid in the development of ATODA's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and is responsible for providing advice to the ATODA CEO and Board on how ATODA will embed reconciliation across its work. The RWG convenes quarterly to review RAP actions and deliverables and is an ongoing group. A key responsibility of the ATODA Reconciliation Working Group is the development and implementation of this RAP in consultation with Reconciliation Australia and the ATODA Board.



3. Maintained a surplus over the financial year

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

4. Funded as a peak body as a result of the ACT Government's Peaks Commissioning process

In June 2022 ATODA entered into a new five-year grant with the ACT Government that aligned with a new 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, and to be funded as a dedicated peak was similarly an exciting step for ATODA. ATODA is funded to achieve the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1: The peak body's activity reflects a sound understanding of the issues that impact on the Represented Group
- Outcome 2: The Represented Group is supported, informed, engaged and empowered.
- Outcome 3. The voices and/or needs of the Represented Group are heard and/or reflected in the Recipient's policy advice and systemic advocacy.
- Outcome 4: the peak body has influence on issues, policies and programs affecting the interests of the Represented Group, including through research and engagement.

For ATODA, as the peak body for ATOD treatment and harm reduction sector in the ACT, the Represented Group is ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT. ATODA's work also supports and elevates the interest and needs of people accessing ATOD treatment and harm reduction services in the ACT and allied stakeholders.

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The ATOD Sector in the ACT is a stronger sector as a result of ATODA's activities.

- 100% of ATODA members who responded to ATODA's Membership Engagement Survey in 2023

5. Supported internships and student placements

In the 2022-23 financial year ATODA staff supervised 3 interns from the University of Canberra across 2 projects. The Drink in Check project (see [page 17](#)) was one of the projects that interns worked on, and was a highly successful project, with high satisfaction with training and materials. In the 2022-23 financial year, ATODA staff supervised 3 projects for the Australian National University (ANU) Medical School's Population Health Evaluation and Policy Projects (PEPP) course. Students are working towards submitting related articles for publication in academic journals.

6. Conducted annual ATODA Member Feedback Survey

Over May-June 2023, ATODA surveyed its members in relation to its engagement and effectiveness as a peak body. 80% of respondents were organisational members. The results were;

- 100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that ATODA had made effective progress against ATODA's strategic priorities as identified in the ATODA Strategic Plan 2020-2023.
- 100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the ATOD sector in the ACT is a stronger sector as a result of ATODA's activity.
- 100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that ATODA's activity reflects a sound understanding of the issues that impact on ATODA's members.
- 100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that through ATODA's activity, ATODA's members are supported, informed, engaged and empowered.
- 89% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the voices and needs of members are heard and reflected in ATODA's policy advice and systemic advocacy.
- 100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that ATODA influences issues, policies and programs affecting the interests of ATODA's members.

ATODA has implemented a range of actions in response to the survey findings, and acknowledges the contribution of members to the activities detailed in this Annual Report. Future Member Feedback Survey's will allow ATODA to measure its performance across time.

7. Engaged with funders

Over the financial year, ATODA received funding from the following:

- ACT Health Directorate
- ACT Community Services Directorate
- ACT Gambling Harm Prevention & Mitigation Fund
- Department of Health, Australian Government
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation

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

8. Refreshed website presence

ATODA launched a new ATODA website in mid-2023.



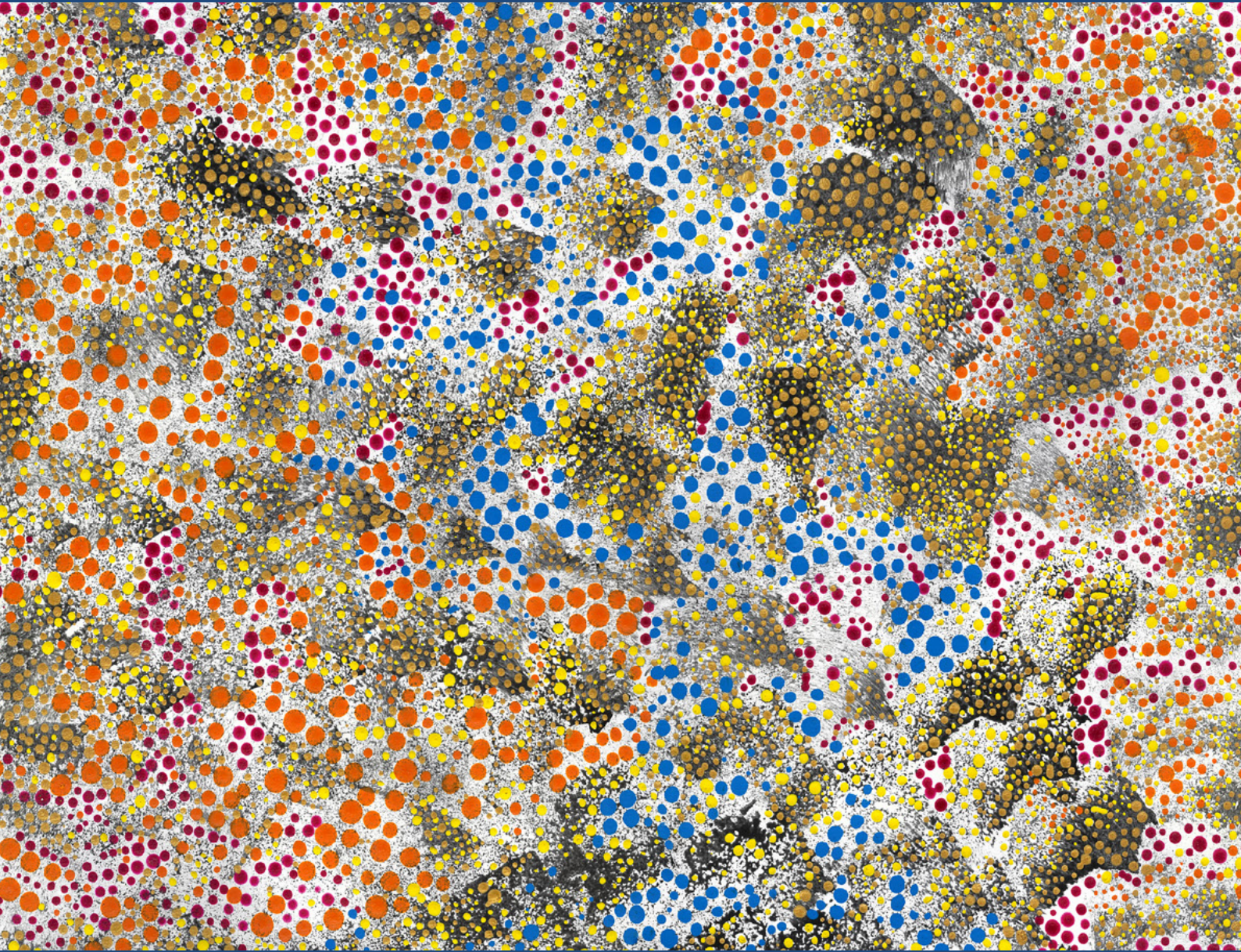
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ATODA

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