

# Strategic Plan 2020-2023

**ATODA**  
Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug  
Association ACT

At its November 2023 meeting, the ATODA Board approved the extension of the Strategic Plan to December 2024.

This document, the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT's (ATODA) fourth strategic plan, outlines the vision, values, purpose, strategic priorities and outcomes for the organisation from 2020 – 2023.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ATODA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands of the ACT and region and pays its respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging.

ATODA is committed to advancing self-determination and reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

ATODA acknowledges its members and stakeholders for their ongoing contributions to our community and our organisation.

This strategic plan has been developed with oversight by the ATODA Board and input from various mechanisms including ATODA reference groups, a member and stakeholder survey, and a number of strategic planning consultation workshops.

## VISION

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

## VALUES

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.

## PURPOSE

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.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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

Stigma is a major barrier to people's participation in the community including accessing health and social services. The World Health Organization states that illicit drug dependence is the most stigmatised health condition in the world. Reducing stigma of drug use and discrimination against people who use drugs—within the health/social/justice sectors, media, research, policy and the broader community—will positively influence equity, access, participation, health and social outcomes for people who use drugs, their families and friends.

### b. Develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce

The ongoing development and maintenance of a highly skilled and professional specialist alcohol, tobacco and other drug workforce is an essential foundation of a high quality sector. The workforce is multidisciplinary, has high therapeutic optimism and works from a strong evidence base. The activities that support the development of this workforce will continue to be driven by the workers for whom these activities are developed.

### c. Develop and maintain the capacity of the sector

Central to the ACT alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector is the specialist alcohol and other drug service system. Specialist alcohol and other drug services, including treatment and harm reduction services, have continuously delivered sound client outcomes and are leaders in reducing drug related harms and improving the health and wellbeing of people in Canberra. The ACT's specialist alcohol and other drug services face significant challenges in relation to growing demand, increasing quality, increasing complexity, workforce

capacity and advances in interventions as well as communication systems and technologies. Significant sector support and capacity building activities have been collaboratively developed and are well established infrastructure of the sector.

A focus on the ongoing implementation and development of high quality capacity building activities will maintain and strengthen the ACT's best practice, integrated, coherent and specialist alcohol and other drug service system.

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

Strengthening collaborations between alcohol, tobacco and other drug research, evaluation, policy, practice and affected communities can enable: knowledge translation; evidence informed decision-making and practice; clinical leadership; better targeted services; meaningful engagement; and reduced policy and service delivery gaps.

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

ATODA, along with the sector, has developed significant and specialist expertise to inform alcohol, tobacco and other drug policy, practice and research in multidisciplinary fields including health, criminal justice, blood borne viruses and sexual health, mental health, homelessness and youth. In order for this expertise to be well utilised, respected and influential within the context of complex and dynamic policy and service delivery environments, it needs to be continuously developed, refined and appropriately deployed. It is important that the intersections between these issues are understood, articulated and responded to with a commitment to crosssectoral collaborations.

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

ATODA, as a small organisation, operates in a dynamic policy and funding environment; all with direct implications on capacity. In order for ATODA to maximise outcomes for its members, the sector and the community, adaptation and innovation is required to ensure the organisation maintains a strong financial position, good governance and organisational and staffing viability in the long-term. Securing ATODA's long term viability will have flow on benefits to the viability of the sector more broadly.

## **STRATEGIC OUTCOMES**

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

ATODA will deliver high quality services to its members and stakeholders. ATODA will also support and lead the workforce, services, the sector and system to develop, implement, innovate and evaluate high quality alcohol, tobacco and other drug policy, practice and research. Quality, in this context, incorporates a range of interacting factors related to service consumer participation and outcomes, workforce development, collective impact, standards and processes.

### **2. Evidence-informed practice and innovation**

ATODA will demonstrate evidence-informed practice in its activities, including through evaluating this strategic plan. ATODA will also support and lead the workforce, services, sector and systems to generate evidence and implement and evaluate evidence-informed practice. Evidence-informed practice, in this context, means ensuring that practice is guided by the best available research, evaluation, lived experience and practice wisdom. ATODA will also facilitate innovation across the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector, responding with alacrity to emerging needs and opportunities.

### **3. Improved health and reduced drug related harms**

ATODA acknowledges the specialist and unique role of the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector (policy, practice, research, people who use drugs and affected communities) as collaborators and leaders in improving health and reducing drug related harms. The mechanisms by which this occur are diverse, and ATODA will continue to prioritise activities that are effective and demonstrably reduce harms from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in the ACT.