

Outcomes, future directions and reflections on the Opioid Dependence Treatment Program National Consensus for Action: A roundtable on Australian opioid dependence treatment

Chair: Chris Gough

Chair's email: chrisg@cahma.org.au

Authors:

Chris Gough¹, James Poole¹, Suzanne Nielsen^{2,18}, Annie Madden³, Craig Rodgers⁴, Ele Morrison⁵, Anke van der Sterren⁶, Melanie Walker⁷, Kate Senior⁸, Anna McVinish^{9,10}, Suzie Hudson^{11,12}, Michael Christmass¹³, Paul Dessauer^{12,14}, Darren Smyth¹⁵, Michele Campbell¹⁶, Zoe Berternshaw², Alison Ritter¹⁷, Elizabeth Baxter¹⁸.

¹Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA), Canberra, Australia, ²Monash Addiction Research Centre, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, ³Harm Reduction Australia (HRA), Melbourne, Australia, ⁴Alcohol and Drug Service, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, Australia, ⁵Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL), Melbourne, Australia, ⁶Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association (ATODA), Canberra Australia, ⁷Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC), Canberra, Australia, ⁸Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA), Adelaide, Australia, ⁹SESLHD Drug and Alcohol Services, Sydney, Australia, ¹⁰Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, Sydney, Australia, ¹¹Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs, NSW Ministry of Health, Sydney, Australia, ¹²National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), Sydney, Australia, ¹³Next Step Drug and Alcohol Service, Perth, Australia, ¹⁴Peer Based Harm Reduction WA (PBHRWA), Perth, Australia, ¹⁵Northern NSW Local Health District, NSW Health, Sydney, Australia, ¹⁶Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA), Sydney, Australia, ¹⁷Drug Policy Modelling Program (DPMP), Sydney, Australia, ¹⁸Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and Other Drugs (APSAD), Sydney, Australia.

Aim: This panel explores work conducted on the APSAD *Opioid Dependence Treatment Program National Consensus for Action: A roundtable on Australian opioid dependence treatment* event held in Canberra in September 2026. The APSAD symposium for 2026 took the form of a consensus building event designed and implemented by a multidisciplinary group of individuals and organisations concerned at the current state of opioid dependence treatment in Australia. This panel will look at what outcomes were achieved by the forum and whether the vision of achieving broad consensus across consumers, clinicians, advocates and researchers was successful. Further, the panel will look at whether the consensus statement was useful in driving system change, albeit at this early stage. The panel will then go on to discuss future possible directions for the consensus statement and consensus group and explore the utility of such a consensus building process for driving change in entrenched issues which lack prioritisation and resourcing by decision makers.

Panellist 1: James Poole

Panellist 1 email: jamesp@cahma.org.au

Panellist 2: Annie Madden

Panellist 2 email: annie.madden@harmreductionaustralia.org.au

Panellist 3: Suzanne Neilsen

Panellist 3 email: suzanne.nielsen@monash.edu

Panellist 4: Craig Rodgers

Panellist 4 email: craig.rodgers@svha.org.au

Panellist 5: Ele Morrison

Panellist 5 email: elem@aivl.org.au

Detailed Description of Topics to be Discussed:

This panel will discuss the process of building consensus and the results of the Opioid Dependence Treatment Program (ODTP) roundtable, including what consensus was reached and what advocacy goals and actions were formalised and agreed. Lastly future directions and process reflections will be discussed.

Different aspects of these topics will be explored from the perspective of the core interest groups which formed the consensus statement: advocates and peak bodies; researchers; clinicians; consumers.

Discussion Section:

The aim for those attending the symposium is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the (ODTP) consensus statement along with associated goals and actions. Delegates will learn how their discipline fits into the consensus and why the consensus statement matters in their work. Attendees will leave with an understanding of the agreed priorities for ODT in Australia and how their work can link into driving system change. The audience will have the opportunity to ask questions about why the consensus was reached, and how specific aspects of ODT valued by different stakeholders fit into the consensus framework. The audience will be empowered to drive change and push for quality improvement in ODT systems across Australia.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

CG and JP are employed by the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) inc. which receives funding from the ACT Government and the Capital Health Network. PD is employed by Peer Based Harm Reduction WA inc. which receives funding from the WA Health Department and the Mental Health Commission of WA. Harm Reduction Australia has received untied educational grants from Camurus and Indivior. KS has received speaking honoraria from Camurus and Indivior.