

MEDIA RELEASE

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**ALCOHOL AND DRUG FOUNDATION WELCOMES
REPORT RECOMMENDATION TO DECRIMINALISE ILLICIT DRUGS IN NSW**

The [Alcohol and Drug Foundation](#) welcomes and supports the recommendation to decriminalise illicit drugs in New South Wales, outlined in the report into [The NSW Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice'](#).

The report, which was released on Thursday, outlines more than 100 recommendations which are now being considered by the New South Wales Government.

Chief Executive Officer, Dr Erin Lalor AM, said she was pleased that the report acknowledges the serious health and social impacts linked to the criminalisation of low-level personal drug use.

“Having a criminal record for possessing or using small amounts of illicit drugs can lead to a number of negative outcomes including incarceration, tarnished relationships, stigmatisation and restrictions on employment and travel. These outcomes can ruin or be hugely disruptive on a person’s life,” Dr Lalor explained.

She commended the report’s recommendation to implement a model of [decriminalisation](#), in conjunction with increased resourcing for specialist drug assessment and treatment services.

“The decriminalisation of illicit drugs should be accompanied by investment in, and pathways to, early intervention support and access to evidence-based treatment for all people who need it,” Dr Lalor remarked.

Dr Lalor applauded the report for calling out the need to address and reduce the damaging stigma associated with illicit drug use.

“Stigma can make people who use, or have used illicit drugs, feel unwelcome and unsafe. This can stop them from connecting with the services they need, which can negatively impact on their health, wellbeing, employment and relationships,” Dr Lalor said.

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation also welcomes the report’s recommendation to support and expand community-led initiatives aimed at responding to the local drivers of drug use.

“Communities play an important role in identifying and preventing local alcohol and other drug-related issues,” Dr Lalor noted.

“Long term investments in evidence-based community-led prevention initiatives are critical in building a healthier Australia,” Dr Lalor said.

“We encourage all governments to take an evidence-based approach when responding to alcohol and other drug-related issues in our communities,” Dr Lalor added.

For free and confidential drug information or support, people can visit www.adf.org.au or call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s DrugInfo line on 1300 85 85 84. The non-judgmental service provides the facts about alcohol and other drugs, advice on how to support loved ones, and connects people with relevant health and support services in their state and territory.

For further information, please find the below Alcohol and Drug Foundation resources:

Decriminalisation vs legalisation <https://adf.org.au/talking-about-drugs/law/decriminalisation/>

Position Paper: Drug Law Reform

https://cdn.adf.org.au/media/documents/ADF_PositionPaper_druglawreform.pdf

Stigma and people who use drugs <https://adf.org.au/insights/stigma-impact/>

Prevention: communities are key <https://adf.org.au/insights/prevention-communities-key/>

Drug facts: crystal methamphetamine (‘ice’) <https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/ice/>

ENDS

For media enquiries please call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s media team on 0430 948 380 or email media@adf.org.au

The Power of Words: There’s power in the language we use to talk about alcohol and other drugs, and people who use alcohol and other drugs. Stigmatising language can negatively impact on a person’s health, wellbeing and relationships. Using person-centric language, instead of focusing on an individual’s substance use, has the power to reduce stigma and improve health and social outcomes. For a guide to using non-stigmatising language, please see the [Power of Words](#) or the [Mindframe Guidelines](#).

About the Alcohol and Drug Foundation: Celebrating 60 years of service to the community, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation is one of Australia’s leading bodies committed to preventing and minimising alcohol and other drug harms in communities around the nation. The Foundation reaches millions of Australians in local communities through sporting clubs, workplaces, health care settings and schools, offering educational information, drug and alcohol prevention programs and advocating for strong and healthy communities.