



MEDIA RELEASE

Protecting the vulnerable and ensuring outcomes: why standards are important for alcohol and other drug and gambling services

Around 200 people from the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) and gambling services sectors are attending an online event being hosted by the Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC) and Alliance for Gambling Reform (AGR) today to talk about the importance of implementing formal standards for services. The event comes in the wake of several high-profile cases across the country where clients were harmed by unregulated services.

Speakers at today's online event include: Rebecca Lang, CEO, Queensland Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (QNADA); Jill Rundle, CEO, Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA); Rob Stirling, CEO, Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA); and Carol Bennett, CEO, AGR.

"The National Quality Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services was endorsed by the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum back in 2019. It provided a timeframe of 3 years for State and Territory governments to implement the Framework within their jurisdictions. However, the previous Australian Government then did away with the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum – along with other key national governance structures for the AOD sector – and without any formal oversight, it's impossible to know what proportion of unregulated AOD treatment services around the country are now adhering to the standards," explained Rebecca Lang, CEO of QNADA.

"Just last month, the Government of Western Australia released its response to the Education and Health Standing Committee Report on the [Inquiry into the Esther Foundation and unregulated private health facilities](#). The McGowan Government is set to change how private health services are regulated in WA to adequately protect vulnerable people. In particular, the Inquiry also highlighted the need to ensure that adequate government funding is provided so that people seeking AOD treatment are able to access quality services," said Jill Rundle, CEO of WANADA.

"In the gambling services area, there are a smattering of services and no national strategy, quality framework or specific accreditation to ensure adequate service standards for people seeking help for gambling harm. The lack of access to – and variable quality of – gambling harm services in Australia are serious concerns that need to be addressed by all levels of government," said Carol Bennett, CEO of AGR.

The [full program](#) and [registration link](#) for today's online event are on the AADC website at: <https://aadc.org.au/news/>. The event runs from **1pm – 2:15pm AEST**.

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