Review and Revision of the National Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Workforce Development (WFD) Strategy:

***Discussion Questions***

These Discussion Questions represent key priorities and issues for stakeholder consideration for the review and revision of the National AOD WFD Strategy. A comprehensive Discussion Paper and Executive Summary are also available [here](https://nceta.flinders.edu.au/stakeholder-consultations/national-aod-wfd-strategy-stakeholder-consultation).

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| Given the breadth of topics addressed in this paper, submissions welcome to address **some or all** of the Discussion Questions,  and/or to address other issues of importance and relevance.  Guide lists have been included to reduce respondent burden, but additional suggestions are welcome, as are submissions focussed on a particular topic(s) or issue(s) as relevant to stakeholder groups. |

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| Submissions may be written or in the form of an audio/video recording  Please email **written submissions** to [ncetaconsultation@flinders.edu.au](mailto:ncetaconsultation@flinders.edu.au) and include a coversheet available from <https://nceta.flinders.edu.au/stakeholder-consultations/national-aod-wfd-strategy-stakeholder-consultation>  Please contact NCETA if you wish to provide a video/audio submission  (a confidential upload link will be provided)  **Submissions are due by 5pm CST Monday 28th February 2022** |

All materials are available to download from <https://nceta.flinders.edu.au/stakeholder-consultations/national-aod-wfd-strategy-stakeholder-consultation>

* Discussion Paper
* Executive Summary
* Discussion Questions
* Submission coversheet

**Discussion Questions**

**GENERAL WFD QUESTIONS**

**Discussion question 1: What are the priority WFD issues that have emerged since the first Strategy (2015-2018)?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Changing service delivery models including as a result of COVID-19
* The need for more specialised skill sets to address complex presentations
* Growth in the proportion of the service delivery system provided by the NGO sector
* Growth in digital and online service provision
* The need for greater capacity building to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workforce
* Stronger emphasis on integration of the peer/lived experience workforce into service provision
* Increasing recognition of the importance of consumer representation and participation service delivery
* A larger number of early career workers in the AOD sector and the concomitant ageing of the workforce
* The need to address AOD workers’ wellbeing, and strategies to address stress and burnout
* Ongoing challenges related to stigma of AOD work, which may impact worker wellbeing, recruitment and retention

**Discussion question 2: What are the priority actions to improve WFD at the a) systems, b) organizational, and c) individual worker levels in the short-medium (3-5 years) and longer (6-10 years) terms?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Reviewing and improving funding models to ensure AOD services have optimal support for capacity building and effective service delivery
* Addressing remuneration and other employment conditions for AOD workers to achieve parity with similar sectors (e.g., mental health)
* Development of a national AOD workforce census to guide workforce planning and WFD
* Development and promotion of recruitment pathways into the AOD sector from related fields (e.g., public health, community services)
* Building and supporting structured career pathways within AOD organisations and the sector in general, including pathways into leadership and management roles
* Implementing programs and strategies to increase the accessibility of professional development, clinical supervision and practice support for the AOD workforce
* Developing and implementing public campaigns to address stigma associated with AOD use and AOD work

**Discussion question 3: Thinking about specialist AOD workers:   
(a) What are the priority WFD issues for AOD specialist workers?   
(b) What WFD goals should be set for improving WFD outcomes for this group (i.e., what should be we aiming for?)   
(c) What are the major steps in the short-medium and longer term to achieve these goals?**

Priorities for specialist AOD workers could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Access to clinical supervision and practice support
* Increased accessibility and support for accessing advanced training (e.g., funding support for backfill costs)
* Programs to address wellbeing (e.g., burnout), including addressing secondary stigma that may be associated with AOD work
* Strategies to build and improve career development pathways

**Discussion question 4: Thinking about generalist workers:   
(a) What are the priority WFD issues for generalist workers?   
(b) What WFD goals should be set for improving WFD outcomes for this group (i.e., what should be we aiming for?)   
(c) What are the major steps in the short-medium and longer term to achieve these goals?**

Priorities for generalist workers could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Integration of AOD content into pre-employment training at vocational and tertiary levels
* Increased accessibility to AOD-related training and professional development for established workers
* Strategies, programs and support to facilitate integrated care that incorporates AOD professionals and organisations
* Targeted professional educational campaigns to address stigma and discrimination that may be associated with AOD use and AOD work

**PRIORITY GROUPS**

**Discussion question 5: Thinking about the workforce groups who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:**

(a) What are the priority WFD issues for these workers?

(b) What WFD goals should be set for improving WFD outcomes for this group (i.e., what should be we aiming for?)

(c) What are the major steps in the short-medium and longer term to achieve these goals?

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Culturally safe training and support mechanisms
* Availability and accessibility of education, training and professional development for new and established workers
* Programs and actions to address the wellbeing

**Discussion question 6: Thinking about other the workforce groups with unique needs (e.g. rural, regional and remote workers, peer workers, law enforcement and corrections workers):**

(a) What are the priority WFD issues for these workers?

(b) What WFD goals should be set for improving WFD outcomes for this group (i.e., what should be we aiming for?)

(c) What are the major steps in the short-medium and longer term to achieve these goals?

(d) Are there Australian or international examples of effective WFD for these groups that could be replicated/adapted?

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Availability and accessibility of education, training and professional development for new and established workers
* Strategies needed to support the recruitment and retention of workers
* The need for training and professional development to develop particular knowledge, skills or abilities
* Programs and actions to address the wellbeing of these workers that meets their unique needs

**Discussion question 7: What WFD strategies for the AOD workforce will best support and ensure effective service delivery for client groups who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander? What are the immediate priorities for attention and action in this area?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Systems, organisational and individual strategies that meet the requirements of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care National Standards for Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (hereafter ‘Aboriginal’) and promote:
  + Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff
  + A welcoming and safe environment that quickly establishes if clients identify as Aboriginal
  + Flexible service delivery options
  + The use of practice strategies that engage Aboriginal people and their families
  + Community consultation and engagement and understanding local history and protocols

**Discussion question 8: What are the key WFD strategies for the AOD workforce will best support and ensure effective service delivery for client groups with specific and unique needs (e.g., younger or older people, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, clients with complex needs)? What are the immediate priorities for attention and action in this area?**

Important issues could include strategies that (but aren’t limited to):

* Encourage awareness of additional barriers to accessing AOD services these groups experience
* Promote access and equity to services
* Prioritise diversity in the recruitment of workers into the AOD workforce
* Ensure the comprehensive implementation of diversity training in AOD organisations
* Collect data about diverse populations

**INTEGRATED CARE**

**Discussion question 9: How can integrated care with other sectors (e.g., mental health) best be achieved in practice to support clients with multiple and complex needs? Are there Australian or international examples of best practice in this area that could be replicated?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Upskilling AOD workers in responding to other health issues and upskilling generalist and specialist workers from other sectors to respond to AOD problems
* Promoting within-service holistic wrap-around client care and / or improving collaboration between AOD and other health services (no wrong door)
* Promoting and supporting client empowerment, individualised, client-driven treatment and being comorbidity-prepared
* Screening at health system entry points for substance use problems

**FUNDING MODELS RETENTION AND TRAINING**

**Discussion question 10: Considering funding models and arrangements in the AOD sector: (a) What are the priority WFD funding issues for the AOD sector? (b) What are the immediate priorities for attention and action in relation to WFD-related funding? (c) What types of funding models would best support the capacity and effectiveness of the AOD workforce?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Activity-based funding models adversely impacting WFD resources (particularly the additional WFD costs associated with providing services in rural and remote areas)
* WFD implications of funders moving to outcomes-based funding approaches
* Meet e-health and enhanced service integration challenges
* Approaches to reduce the stigma experienced by AOD clients attending specialist and non-specialist services

**Discussion question 11: Considering recruitment and retention in the AOD sector: (a) What are the key issues and challenges? (b) What are the immediate priorities for attention and action? (c) What initiatives would best support effective recruitment and retention in the AOD sector?**

Priority actions could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Reviewing and addressing remuneration, especially for frontline workers, to achieve greater parity with similar sectors (e.g., mental health)
* Supporting and increasing the capacity of AOD organisations to ensure adequate resourcing and staffing
* Developing and promoting clear AOD career steps and pathways
* Developing and promoting entrance pathways into AOD work, incorporating training and credentialling pathways
* Supporting programs to orientate, train and develop workers new to the AOD sector
* Increasing availability and accessibility of professional development opportunities
* Implementing strategies and programs to reduce stigma associated with AOD work

**Discussion question 12: What substances should be considered of particular concern for the AOD sector at the current time and into the future and what are the implications for AOD WFD to ensure effective responses?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* The impact of enhanced real time monitoring of Schedule 8 and relevant Schedule 4 medicines on treatment demand
* Increased cocaine use, either on its own or in combination with alcohol (the cocaethylene effect)
* Increased supply and use of drugs such as Ecstasy which may have been stockpiled as a result of Covid 19-related reduction in demand
* Increased use / misuse of gabapentinoids in response to concerns related to prescribing opioids
* Increased use of fentanyl, fentanyl analogs and other novel synthetic opioids on their own or to adulterate heroin
* Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB) (and its precursors, gamma-butyrolactone [GBL] and 1,4-butanediol [1,4-BD]).

**Discussion question 13: Should minimum educational qualification standards for specialist AOD workers be implemented in all jurisdictions?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* What level should minimum educational qualification standards for specialist AOD be at?
* Should minimum educational qualification standards for specialist AOD workers be nationally consistent?

**Discussion question 14: How well is the current vocational education system meeting the needs of the AOD workforce and sector? What are the immediate priorities for action in this area?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* How accessible are the current AOD vocational qualifications (Cert IV/ Diploma I AOD, AOD skills set)
  + What are key barriers to workers gaining these qualifications?
  + How can accessibility be improved?
* What are the major gaps in the current set of AOD qualifications that impact on workers’ capacity and effectiveness?
  + Are there particular skill sets that need to be added?
  + Are there particular areas of knowledge that need to be added?
* How well is competency-based training meeting the needs of the AOD sector and consumers?
  + Are there other training approaches/modalities that are needed to complement a competency-based approach? What might this look like?

**Discussion question 15: What are the key issues and challenges for professional development (PD) in the AOD workforce? This may include issues related to accessibility, quality, modalities (e.g., supervision, training), content (e.g., priority KSAs) or other matters.**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Strategies to increase accessibility of PD, for example:
  + Scholarships and other programs to reduce financial burden on workers and organisations
  + Increasing the availability of online delivery
  + Funding programs to support regional and remote workers to access face-to-face training (e.g., travel, accommodation and backfill costs)
  + Development of a centralised register of professional development opportunities
* Development and support of other approaches to PD that extend beyond training, such as professional placements, conference attendance and mentoring
* Conduct of a national review of AOD professional development programs and opportunities to identify major gaps and strategies for improvement

**DIGITAL AND ONLINE PLATFORMS**

**Discussion question 16: What WFD strategies will best support AOD services, workers and clients to engage effectively with digital and online service provision? What are the immediate priorities for attention and action in this area?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Elements of service delivery that work particularly well (or particularly poorly) when delivered remotely
* Specific client/consumer groups for whom remote service delivery is particularly beneficial (or particularly inappropriate)
* The ideal ratio of remote: face-to-face service delivery and how this should this be established for different groups
* Key infrastructure changes/upgrades that are needed to support increased remote service delivery
* Training priorities for upskilling staff to effectively utilise new technologies
* The barriers preventing more effective use of new technologies, and how they can be addressed

**DATA SYSTEMS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**Discussion question 17: To what extent is the development of a national AOD workforce data collection a priority (e.g., an AOD workforce census)? How could this data collection be integrated with, and leverage, existing jurisdictional AOD workforce data collections? What existing data collections could be used to monitor progress?**

Important issues could include (but aren’t limited to):

* The current gaps in workforce data at a national and jurisdictional level that impact on WFD planning and implementation
* The extent to which a national data collection could add value to existing jurisdictional data collections
* The potential for greater coordination across jurisdictional data collections to enhance comparability of data
* The parameters and scope of a potential national data collection (e.g., frequency of data collection, essential data to be collected)

**Discussion question 18: What are the priority actions for effective and timely monitoring and implementation of the revised Strategy?**

Priority actions could include (but aren’t limited to):

* Development of an implementation plan
* Development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation plan
* Additional consultations with national and jurisdictional stakeholders to address monitoring and implementation

**FINAL**

**Are there any other questions or comments?**