

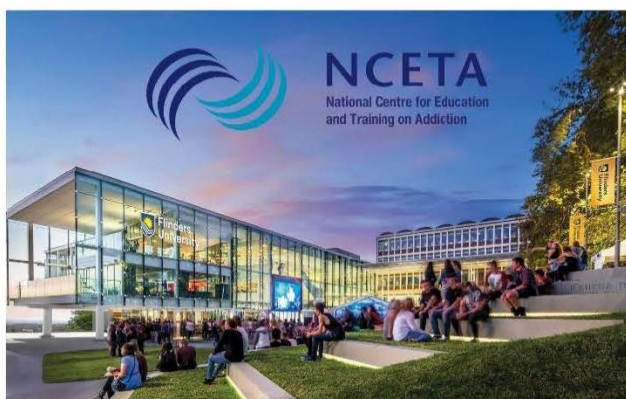
NCETA Strategic Plan 2025 – 2028

Updated 29 September 2025

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National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

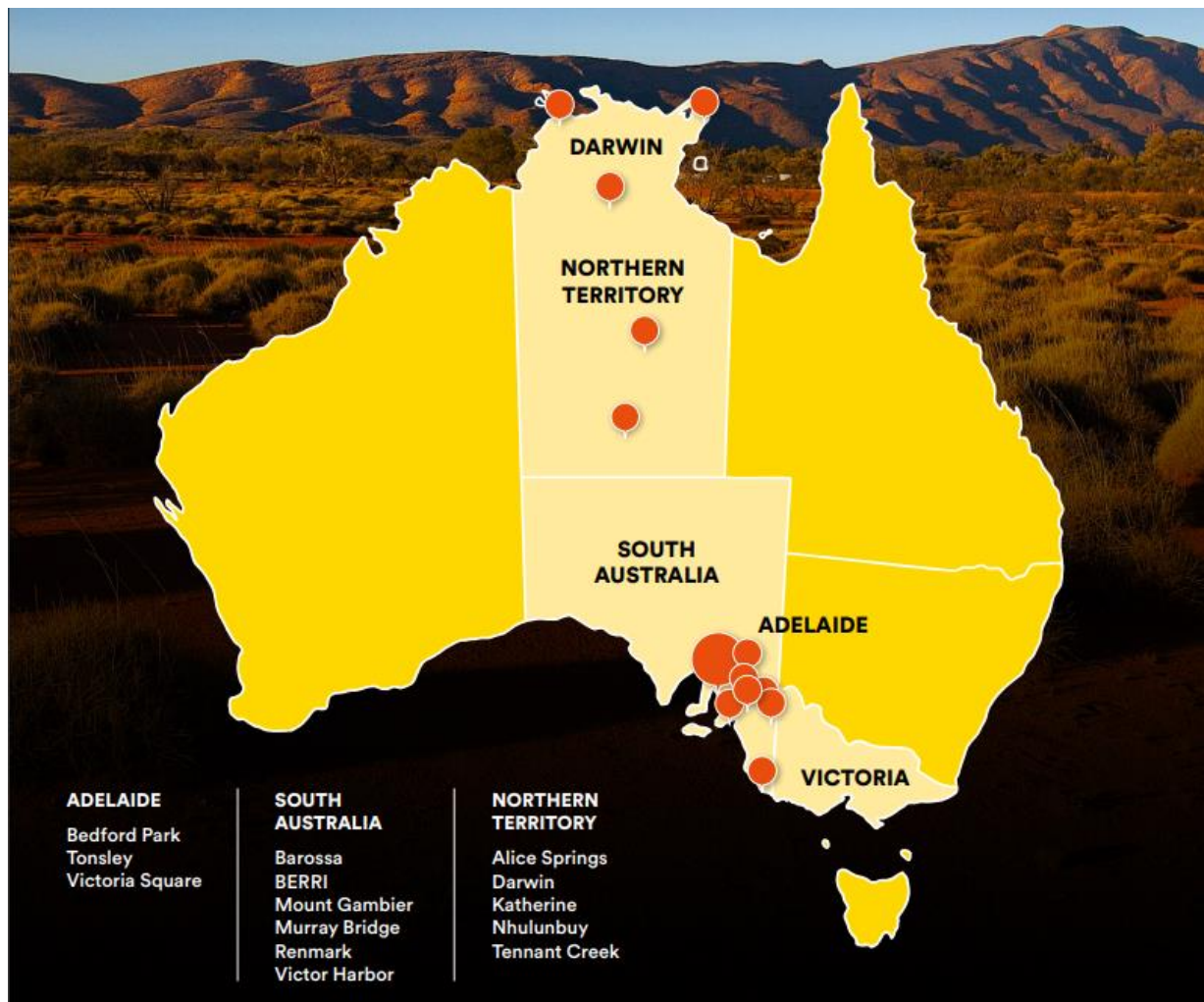


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Acknowledgement of Country

Flinders University acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which its campuses are located. These transverse songlines across the Traditional Lands of Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South East, First People's of the River Murray and Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman, and Yolngu people.

The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) is based predominantly on the Bedford Park campus and we acknowledge that we are on unceded Kurna yerta. We honour Elders past, present and emerging of all the countries on which Flinders campuses are located.



Message from our Director and Chair

NCETA has a proud history that extends over 30 years of conducting impactful research to improve public health and practice in alcohol and other drugs (AOD). Having commenced in 1992, our areas of focus have continued to evolve in line with needs of the community and the AOD sector. NCETA's research spans the continuum from prevention through to treatment and includes workforce development. We have a strong emphasis on translational research to inform policy and practice.

This strategy has been based on many conversations that we have had and will continue to have with the AOD sector. We are proud of our achievements over the past 30 years and are well positioned to continue building the evidence base to reduce AOD related harms. We work to strengthen the capacity of the AOD workforce, promote evidence based best practice, and identify and respond to emerging trends.

NCETA's reputation as a leader in the AOD workforce has continued to grow and we are recognised as being at the forefront of AOD workforce research and development and workplace AOD issues. The current Strategic Plan consolidates the achievements from the previous Strategic Plan and continues to firmly establish workforce development research and evaluation as our core business.

NCETA is committed to working in partnership with a range of key stakeholders and other research centres to improve health, safety, wellbeing and related outcomes for people who use drugs and the AOD workforce.

On behalf of the NCETA Strategic Advisory Board and team, we are pleased to present the 2025-28 NCETA Strategic Plan.



Professor Jacqueline Bowden
Director



Dr Robert Stirling
Chair, Advisory Board

About us

A centre of excellence

NCETA is an internationally recognised research centre that works as a catalyst for change in the AOD field. We are nationally recognised for our work in relation to:

- AOD workforce research and development
- Effective AOD preventive health strategies
- Evidence-based treatment
- Research translation.

Our purpose

To conduct and disseminate world class research that advances knowledge, innovation, and evidence-based practice to minimise harms associated with AOD use.

We envision a world where our research **informs policy and practice, builds capacity** in the workforce, and **empowers communities** to proactively prevent and address AOD harms.

Our values

1. **Excellence and innovation:** We pursue ethical, rigorous and forward-thinking research.
2. **Community centred:** We put communities at the heart of our work.
3. **Transparency:** We engage the public to increase awareness and reduce stigma.
4. **Collaboration:** We work across disciplines and with stakeholders to achieve shared goals.
5. **Impact:** We ensure our work informs and leads to meaningful change in policy and practice.

Our approach

Alignment with other strategies

This strategy and the associated work of NCETA has been developed to align with:

- Australia's National Drug Strategy 2017-2026 and sub-strategies; the National Alcohol Strategy 2019-2028 and National Tobacco Strategy 2023-2030
- National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- AOD goals for various Australian jurisdictions, particularly South Australia
- Flinders University Public Health Discipline Group Strategy 2030.

Our role

NCETA works in partnership with a range of stakeholders in AOD-related fields to build the capacity of health and human services sectors, organisations and individuals to prevent and respond to AOD-related issues.

This work may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Consulting with key stakeholders and representative bodies
- Coordinating or contributing to formal partnerships
- Providing project management and evaluation
- Conducting, commissioning or collaborating on research
- Developing and testing interventions
- Translating and disseminating research findings
- Assisting stakeholders to undertake research on AOD-related workforce development
- Educating stakeholders, the generalist workforce, and the community about AOD related issues
- Identifying, developing, and implementing effective preventive health strategies.

Our stakeholders

NCETA engages with a wide range of organisations and workers who address AOD-related issues in the government, non-government, and community-controlled sectors. These include:

1. Specialist AOD workforce:
 - AOD specialist workers
 - Peer workers and workers with lived-living experience
 - Indigenous AOD workers.
2. Generalist AOD workforce:
 - Preventive health workforce
 - Health workers (including medical practitioners, mental health professionals nurses, social workers, counsellors and psychologists)
 - Welfare professionals (including social workers, youth workers and other community-based workers)
 - Volunteer workers engaged in a range of community groups (e.g. parent and family groups, church groups, counselling support groups)
 - Police and law enforcement professionals
 - Education sector including teachers and other education professionals
 - Governments and departments (including health, work safety and child protection)
 - Workplaces, organisations and industries.
3. Researchers within and outside of academia
4. Policy makers
5. Media and journalists
6. The general public.

Our strategic priorities

Priority 1: Strengthen the evidence base to prevent AOD harms in Australia and internationally

Our research on primary and secondary prevention is important for developing evidence-based strategies that effectively reduce AOD harms. We aim to provide insights into risk factors (particularly at the population level), intervention effectiveness, and emerging trends - guiding policy and practice to improve public health outcomes.

Priority actions will include:

- Identifying, developing and evaluating effective interventions to prevent AOD harms including preventing or delaying use, reducing harmful use and ending use (particularly with tobacco)
- Working with end users to develop research agendas that will inform policy
- Working to build community knowledge of AOD harms and reduce harmful use

Priority 2: Strengthen capacity in Australia's AOD services and specialist and generalist workforces

We undertake research to strengthen Australia's AOD workforce by providing a robust and comprehensive evidence base that addresses complex substance-related questions. We recognise that the AOD workforce is not restricted to AOD specialist workers but also includes anyone who works with AOD issues as part of their role. This includes medical specialists, nurses, social workers, police, teachers, bar staff, managers and occupational health and safety officers. Our approach is evidence-based and we research a wide range of individual, organisational, structural, social and systemic factors that can impact on the ability of the workforce to effectively and efficiently respond to AOD issues.

Priority actions will include:

- Understanding key stakeholders' research needs and international gaps in evidence
- Developing and implementing a short-, medium- and long-term research strategy that is prioritised according to emerging trends and/or aligns with needs of the sector

Priority implementation activities will include:

- Providing training to specialist and generalist workforces
- Identifying and influencing the high-level systems that shape the workforce (e.g. legislation, policy, resources)
- Generating evidence to inform the development of resources/tools that support and improve worker wellbeing and individual performance (e.g. education, training, best practice guidelines)

- Working to increase Flinders University's educational offerings in AOD.

Priority 3: Build strong partnerships and collaborations

We acknowledge that partnerships are vital for bringing together diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives, leading to more innovative, comprehensive and translatable findings. Collaboration enhances the reach and application of research outcomes, making them more impactful for communities, priority groups (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or high prevalence groups) and policymakers.

Priority actions will include:

- Building strong partnerships and collaborations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups
- Building and growing national and international research partnerships
- Building new collaborations with Flinders University teams (including Rural and Remote Health, Statewide Gambling Therapy Service, Institute for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health and Paramedicine)
- Strengthening partnerships with the AOD workforce including through NCETA's AOD workforce reference groups, Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL) and other representatives of the lived-living experience workforce, and AOD peaks
- Engaging with policymakers and NGOs across Australia to ensure NCETA's work is responsive to emerging policy priorities.

Priority 4: Disseminate our research

We see a core function of the centre as disseminating our research findings to reach a broader audience, maximising reach and impact, and ensuring findings are accessible to diverse audiences, including academics, practitioners, policymakers, people who use alcohol and other drugs, and the public. We aim to use varied platforms including peer-reviewed journals, conferences, social media, and community presentations tailored to different stakeholders' needs.

Priority actions will include:

- Increasing our contributions to the scientific literature by increasing our peer-reviewed publications in first quartile (Q1) journals
- Sharing our work with the AOD sector through policy and practice briefs, webinars and presentations, social media, and tailored training
- Building community understanding of AOD issues by engaging with media, social media, and community presentations.

Priority 5: Build a strong sustainable team

A strong team fosters collaboration, diversity of thought, and shared expertise, which enhances the quality and impact of our research and teaching. It also provides mentorship, support, and resilience, allowing our team to be sustainable and tackle large and complex challenges.

Priority actions will include:

- Attracting, nurturing, and retaining world class academics into NCETA
- Facilitating a culture of shared success by celebrating achievements
- Diversifying and increasing sources of research funding
- Increasing the integration of perspectives from people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander into NCETAs research and outputs
- Developing our early career researchers and building a strong cohort of HDR students to grow Australia's AOD research capacity.

