



THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP

Minister for Ageing

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Consortium to launch cannabis control, prevention centre

A national consortium led by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) has been selected to establish the National Cannabis Control and Prevention Centre, the Minister for Ageing, Christopher Pyne, announced today.

Mr Pyne, who also has responsibility for illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco policy, said the centre would play an important role in providing information, particularly to young people, on the risks associated with cannabis use.

“It will also support the health sector and other services that work with people with cannabis-related problems and their families,” he said.

“I’m particularly pleased that a group of high-calibre organisations such as ORYGEN Youth Health, Ted Noffs Foundation and Lifeline Australia will throw their collective weight behind the goals of the centre.

The Australian Government is providing more than \$12 million over four years for the centre, which is part of the Government’s national illicit drug strategy, *Tough on Drugs*.

“This centre will support innovative approaches to delivering treatment for people with cannabis problems, including dependency, as well as providing education about the dangers of cannabis use,” Mr Pyne said.

“While drugs like ‘ice’ and ecstasy often dominate the headlines, cannabis remains the most commonly used illicit drug in Australia. It is a harmful and addictive drug.

“There is also general agreement that cannabis use is a risk factor for poor mental health, particularly among those that may have a genetic predisposition to mental illnesses.

“While I’m encouraged by the decrease in cannabis use from almost 18 per cent of the population in 1998 to about 11 per cent in 2004, it continues to cause problems for those dependent on it, their families and the broader community.”

“The Australian Government is committed to raising the community’s awareness of the dangers of cannabis, and I congratulate the consortium and look forward to its work on this important matter,” he said.

Details on the consortium members are attached.

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Details of the consortium members:

- **NDARC** is the coordinating and lead agency for the National Cannabis Control and Prevention Centre. The agency is an internationally recognised research centre of excellence with a multidisciplinary team experienced in medicine, psychology, social science.
- **The National Drug Research Institute (NDRI)** is a well-established and respected organisation with a strong reputation for research into the prevention of harmful drug use. The institute has expertise in areas that include prevention strategies in Indigenous communities; school and community-based interventions; cannabis-related matters; and public health promotion and information campaigns.
- **ORYGEN Youth Health** operates a comprehensive specialist youth mental health service that is integrated with an extensive research program. The model aims to tackle the challenges in providing quality services to young people with emerging mental disorders (including co-morbid substance use disorders).
- **The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)** is an internationally recognised research centre that works as a catalyst for change in the alcohol and other drugs field. NCETA promotes workforce development principles, research and evaluation of effective practices.
- **The Ted Noffs Foundation (TNF)** provides essential services for young people and their families experiencing drug- and alcohol-related difficulties. TNF is a leader in the delivering of youth drug and alcohol residential programs, through its holistic approach to enhancing the quality of life for young people.
- **The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)** is the national centre for the analysis and dissemination of criminological data and information. The institute has high quality research personnel who have extensively researched and are highly familiar with drug law enforcement, crime prevention and the criminal justice system.
- **Lifeline in Australia** provides a 24-hour counselling service. Every year almost 500,000 calls are taken by the line, which is staffed by 5,000 trained volunteers around Australia. Lifeline also has particular experience through operating specialist help lines such as the Violence Against Women. Australia Says No (VAW.ASN) Helpline for the Office for Women for over two years.