



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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INQUIRY INTO DRUG LAW REFORM – A ROAD MAP FOR GOVERNMENT

Windana welcomes the release of the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Report on the Inquiry into Drug Law Reform (the Report)

The Report details a range of recommendations which reflect on the breadth of substance use related issues across the community. The recommendations provide a foundation to inform future reform of laws as they relate to substance use.

In particular, we wholeheartedly support the recommendation seeking to reduce criminal prosecution for possession of small quantities of illicit substances and enhance various diversionary schemes.

Ms Nicole Steers Acting CEO of Windana, says, 'many of our service users are drawn into the justice system on matters relating to possession generating greater stress and hardship for our clients and at times, impacting upon their recovery. While we recognize the harms that can occur from substance use, we also note that these harms can be exacerbated through involvement with the justice system.'

Many Windana service users are working hard to complete various court orders and improve their circumstances with the support of our dedicated staff.

Ms Steers continues, 'in light of the many challenges in achieving successful outcomes for our service users, the expansion of diversionary schemes should be supported. We also strongly support the recommendations relating to combatting harmful stigma towards those engaged in substance use.'

The Report highlights the need for improved data systems which can inform drug research and policy, as well as the development of real time monitoring and warnings on hazardous psychoactive substances.

Ms Steers says, 'At Windana, we are working hard to enhance our data systems to measure outcomes so we can better engage in service planning; we therefore support the endeavor to enhance alcohol and other drug data systems. We also note the increased harms apparent with the use of various 'party drugs' and would urge government to build in data systems which can enact an early warning in cases where extremely hazardous specific substances are in the street based market.'

The report contains a range of recommendations relating to alcohol and other drug treatment including the need to address the needs of specific populations, workforce, mapping capacity and gaps and the need for support to the sector in response to real time prescription monitoring. In light of the six month wait times for some treatment types, addressing treatment demand and sector capacity should be a leading priority.

About Windana:

Windana is a leading Melbourne-based drug and alcohol treatment provider specialising in holistic, client-focused recovery services including residential and supportive community-based recovery and rehabilitation, as well as medically supported withdrawal programs in addition to its pioneering evidence-based, non-medical treatment programs.

For further information:

Nicole Steers, Manager Business Development and Operations

Windana Drug and Alcohol Recovery Inc

E: Nicole.Steers@windana.org.au

T: 0428 741 433