



Alcohol and Other Drug Policy Unit  
Policy and Government Relations  
ACT Government Health Directorate  
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**Submission to the Draft Strategic Framework for the Management of Blood Borne Viruses in the Alexander Maconochie Centre 2012-2014**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express support for the *Draft Strategic Framework for the Management of Blood Borne Viruses in the Alexander Maconochie Centre 2012 – 2014*. The Youth Coalition of the ACT also supports the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association's (ATODA) comprehensive submission to the Framework.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT is the peak youth affairs body in the ACT. Comprised of 90 members, programs, and individuals the Youth Coalition is responsible for representing and promoting the interests and wellbeing of people aged between 12 and 25 years and those who work with them.

The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT Government advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on youth issues as well as providing information to youth services about policy and program matters.

A key role of the Youth Coalition is the development and analysis of ACT social policy and program decisions for young people and youth services. The Youth Coalition facilitates the development of strong linkages and promotes collaboration between the community, government and private sectors to achieve better outcomes for young people in the ACT.

The Youth Coalition commends the ACT Government for taking the necessary steps to implement a comprehensive and evidence-informed approach to preventing and managing blood borne viruses in the ACT's adult prison.

In particular we express our support for the equipment exchange program based on a 'one for one' medical model as outlined in Actionable Priority Area 1c "Detainees have regulated access to sterile injecting equipment" (p.8).

The provision of sterile injecting equipment in prisons has been introduced in 12 countries, where it has been the subject of extensive evaluation. The results have demonstrated:

- Reduced rates of needle stick injuries among corrections staff and reduced likelihood of contracting a BBV among those who sustain a needle-stick injury;
- Reduced BBV transmission rate amongst injecting drug users in prisons; and
- Improved uptake of appropriate treatment amongst people who inject drugs in prisons.

Almost all ACT prisoners will return to the communities from which they came, most having been incarcerated for less than six months. The clear implications of this are:

- Prisoner health is public health - including the effective and evidence-based prevention and reduction of disease transmission, such as the blood borne viruses HIV and Hepatitis C;
- Prisons have both a responsibility and opportunity to improve the health of our community through improving the health of our prisoners; and
- Prisons present important, and often rare, opportunities to engage in the prevention, treatment and management of the health problems with some of our community's most stigmatised, marginalised and disadvantaged members.

The Youth Coalition would welcome the opportunity to work with the Alcohol and Other Drug Policy Unit to support the youth sector to have input into the further development of the *Draft Strategic Framework for the Management of Blood Borne Viruses in the Alexander Maconochie Centre 2012 – 2014*.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 6247 3540 or at [director@youthcoalition.net](mailto:director@youthcoalition.net) if you wish to discuss this letter further.

Sincerely,



Emma Robertson  
Director  
Youth Coalition of the ACT  
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31 October 2012