

Australian definition of recovery

Effective policy and practice requires clarity about what is meant by 'new recovery' in relation to drug and alcohol issues in Australia.

A new recovery definition and supporting principles should therefore be tailored specifically for Australia.

A definition applicable to Australia should reflect the holistic approach evident in our national drug strategy (supply, demand and harm reduction).

The following definition and supporting principles are proposed:

"Recovery is a voluntary self-determined process toward minimisation or cessation of drug-related harms. This involves fostering healthy supported connections, such as with self, family, peers and community, and is premised upon fair access to pre-requisites for wellbeing."

- Recovery is a reflexive, change process with boundless initiating causes. It involves hope and aspirations for development, not just of individuals, but also of wider social networks including communities.
- Recovery involves perseverance in individuals and families because setbacks are natural. Health should be protected before and throughout a recovery journey.
- Australian recovery is a non-prescriptive form of harm reduction, fostering improved health and wellbeing, with cessation of alcohol or other drug use a common aspiration and outcome.
- There are many sources and pathways of recovery. Recovery should be self-determined, rather than being imposed by others.
- Recovery empowers and develops individuals, families and communities.
- Recovery involves development of individuals' and communities' social capital, including access to housing, education, work and healthy relationships with others and self. It needs to be holistic and involves macro-to-micro environmental factors.
- Recovery is fostered by peers, families and allied institutions within communities, as Australian people need to have opportunities for a fair go at the essentials of life.

Questions to be considered

- How can the discussion paper, Australian Drug Policy: harm reduction and 'new recovery', be improved? (For example, which themes need to be further developed?)
- Is there a need to have a definition of recovery in Australia?
- If so, how could the proposed definition and principles concerning recovery be improved?
- What other key questions need to be addressed?

Please comment on the proposed definition and principles, and also consider the questions.

Please email comments and feedback to info@anex.org.au, before 4pm, May 16, 2012.