

# DIRECTIONS ACT

## Media Release

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### **The launch of a holistic health service**

This morning at 9.30am the ACT Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher MLA will launch the Althea Wellness Centre at DIRECTIONS ACT in Woden. The Althea Wellness Centre is a culmination of two years of work following a vision to provide people who use drugs and alcohol access to excellent medical health care. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing has funded the project for 3 years.

The Althea Wellness Centre is located in the heart of the Woden, within the old Woden Police Station. The bars of the building have been removed and now the clinic operates in the area which once held people in cells..... the irony is not lost on many of the clients accessing the new health service.

The Althea Wellness Centre will assist people from every walk of life, who have drug and alcohol issues, in particular those who do not have access to a general practitioner. The model of care is holistic, integrated and respectful to their needs.

‘What we know is that many people who have substance use issues do not access regular medical assistance and care,’ says Carol Mead, Executive Director. ‘They fear discrimination and have often had difficulties with gaining respectful and appropriate care in the past.’

Althea Wellness Centre is changing the landscape of primary and secondary care in Canberra for people with alcohol and other drug issues and their immediate family. People are relieved to have clinicians who understand the issues and they don’t have to hide the truth about their issues. This is a relief to many of our clients.

‘This is a superb example of community in action,’ said Gerard Rees, President, ‘We saw the need, consulted with our clients, applied for funding and built a purpose built clinic. We are understandably very proud of our achievement.’

### **Althea Wellness Centre – from bars to a place of healing**

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