

Media Release

AER Congratulates Ian Webster for Prime Minister Accolade At National Drug and Alcohol Awards

26 June 2009: The Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AER) applauds former Chairman and current Director, Professor Ian Webster AO, for winning the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence and Outstanding Contribution to Drug and Alcohol Endeavours at the National Drug and Alcohol Awards.

The award, which selects an individual who has made a significant commitment and contribution to reducing the impact and negative effects of drug and alcohol use, was announced on Friday night at a Gala Dinner during the culmination of Drug Action Week, held in the Great Hall of Parliament House in Canberra. As the most prestigious award of the night, the Prime Minister's Award is selected by the PM himself, once all nominations have been received.

Professor Webster was recognised for his tireless work with AER and other not-for-profit organisations. Currently a consulting physician at Liverpool Hospital, Emeritus Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales, and Chief Patron of the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia, Webster also continues to chair a number of social health organisations. His previous research and publications have covered preventive medicine, medical practice, ageing, disability, homelessness, alcohol and other drug problems, suicide prevention and social issues in health.

Current AER Chairman, Scott Wilson acknowledged the significance of Professor Webster's long term contribution to the Foundation and his ongoing work in the health and social sector.

"On behalf of AER, I commend the Prime Minister for his choice of Ian as the recipient of this year's PM Award," said Wilson. "The alcohol and drug prevention sector has benefited greatly from Ian's extensive knowledge and his profound contribution to our sector throughout his extensive career. AER is proud to have Ian's ongoing involvement in its activities as we continue the work that Ian established under his chairmanship of AER in addressing alcohol and drug consumption issues in Australia."

During his seven years as Chairman of AER, Professor Webster oversaw the successful funding of more than 950 funding projects covering 700 organisations

around Australia, 30% of which are Indigenous. Prior to joining the AER, Webster worked in the health sector for more than 30 years, helping those in disadvantaged communities.

Among his other honours, Webster received the Honour Role at The 2006 National Drug and Alcohol Awards, became a Life Fellow with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (2006), named Life Governor, Community Health and Tuberculosis Australia (2003) and Life Member, Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia (2002).

Now in its sixth year, The National Drug and Alcohol Awards honour Australian achievements to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug use and harm. The Awards incorporate a range of award categories, reflecting the diversity of the sector. The collaborating organisations are pleased to represent the alcohol and other drugs sector and acknowledge the support of the Prime Minister.

“The Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation have been a major sponsor and supporter of the National Drug and Alcohol Awards since its inception,” said AER Chairman Scott Wilson. “I commend and congratulate all those who have made valuable contributions to research and practice within the Drug and Alcohol Sector both at a community and national level.”

- Ends -

Further information: Amanda McGregor – 02 9270 0242 or mobile: 0411 222 311

About the Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation (AER): AER is a not-for-profit company established in 2001 with a mandate to 'change the way we drink'. AER was initially established with funding from a federal government grant and is now a perpetual trust. AER has built up a comprehensive understanding of the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector and is a leading grant giving body for community groups and programs within the alcohol sector. Through donations, grants and utilisation of the perpetual trust: AER seeks to prevent alcohol and licit substance abuse especially amongst disadvantaged, indigenous and young people; to support evidence-based treatment, research and prevention programs in the AOD sector; and to highlight the dangers of licit substance abuse and promote the responsible consumption of alcohol within the community. AER has funded more than 850 programs throughout Australia (30% of which are within the Indigenous community) including numerous programs which contribute to shifting community attitudes towards a responsible approach to alcohol consumption. For further information: <http://www.aerf.com.au>