



Alcohol, Tobacco and other  
Drugs Council Tasmania Inc.

## MEDIA RELEASE

30 August 2017

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### Global campaign to understand and end overdose

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania is calling for an end to drug-related discrimination and stigma, in light of International Overdose Awareness Day.

‘Time to remember, time to act’ is the catch-cry of the campaign, which aims to highlight that overdose deaths are preventable.

International Overdose Awareness Day will take place on Thursday, August 31, and events will be held around the world to raise awareness and display solidarity with those who have lost loved ones to overdose.

Deaths due to accidental overdose increased significantly in Australia from 2004 to 2014, reaching 1137 in 2014. This represents a 61 per cent increase in one decade. It is important to challenge stereotypes around the issue and understand the facts, for example: Australians aged between 40 and 49 are the most likely to die of a drug overdose. Many different types of drugs, including prescription drugs, can lead to overdose.

ATDC Acting Chief Executive Officer Dr Jackie Hallam said by knowing how to act in the instance of someone experiencing an overdose, Tasmanians could save lives.

“It’s also important to understand the link between stigma and overdose,” Dr Hallam said.

“When people are ashamed of their use, they hide it ... they use alone in secret, which increases the risk of death dramatically,” she said.

“Also, stigma means that people are reluctant to seek treatment. It’s time we understand drug use as primarily a health issue, and bring people into our treatment system without fear of judgment and labels.”

International Overdose Awareness Day has been coordinated by the Pennington Institute since 2012. The day began in Melbourne in 2001.

The ATDC is the peak body representing the interests of community sector organisations (CSOs) that provide services to people with substance misuse issues in Tasmania.

Dr Jackie Hallam is available for interview on Thursday, August 31. To arrange, contact Tamara McDonald by phone on 0477 130 005 or on email at [tamaram@atdc.org.au](mailto:tamaram@atdc.org.au). For more information about International Overdose Awareness Day, visit <https://www.overdoseday.com/>