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Alcohol, Tobacco & other
Drugs Council Tas Inc.

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April Bulletin

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ATDC Conference

ATDC Conference 2014 Reminder



The preliminary program for the conference is now available at the conference web site. Please check the site for updates by [clicking here](#).

From the CEO's Desk

From the CEO – April 2014

You would be hard pressed to find anyone working in the alcohol and drug sector that didn't recognise the greatest burden of disease and social harm in our community are caused by the misuse of alcohol and tobacco. We have ample evidence to support our efforts in preventing the uptake of tobacco use, and similarly evidence to support the need to change our consumption patterns in relation to alcohol. That said, we also know it is important not to lose sight of the impact of illicit drug use so in coming months, I will keep you informed of the progress made in developing Tasmania's first Illicit Drug Action Plan. As a member of the advisory group developing this plan for the Tasmanian government, I am keen to hear your views on the issues we must focus on.

One thing I do hear routinely from ATOD service providers is that the sector is committed, to not only providing quality treatment and intervention to those already experiencing harm, but also to the need to build on our existing initiatives in the area of prevention and health promotion. For this reason it is pleasing that I can report that the first meeting of the AOD Sector Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention (PPEI) Implementation Advisory Group will be convened this month.

The PPEI Advisory Group's principal aim is to progress the Strategic Framework **Everybody's Business**. Supporting the PPEI lead body (the Drug Education Network), the membership of the group, which includes community sector, government and consumer representatives, will seek to identify and suggest whole of government priorities for consideration in future planning.

In terms of planning, I am looking forward to working with the newly elected Liberal Government and the new Health Minister, the Honourable Michael Ferguson. Whilst we saw several pre-election commitments to supporting the community sector, there has been no specific reference to the issues confronting ATOD services or Tasmanians who experience harm from substance use. We know there is a need to increase access to all types of treatment types and to improve regional access. This is an opportunity for government to genuinely consult with the ATOD community sector in relation to developing the solutions we need.

What better way to rekindle your passion for working in the sector than to attend the **ATDC 2014 Conference**. This will give you a chance to hear from some fantastic speakers, to network with the movers and shakers of our field and generally to enjoy the company of good people. I hope you can shift those few things in the diary that are holding you back from registering, convince the finance officer this is the "must be at" professional development event for this year and do this for yourself!

'til next time,
Jann Smith

Consumer Engagement

A bouquet for Holyoake

Congratulations to Holyoake for receiving an Exceeded in their Quality Assurance process for Confirming Client's Rights.

It is really positive to see this level of commitment to client's rights occurring in the ATOD sector.

Sector Update

Nominations are invited for the 2014 Tasmanian ATOD Awards.

There are many exceptional people and initiatives working to promote health and prevent harms associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD). The Tasmanian Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Awards (the Awards) aim to recognise, promote and reward outstanding practice in the ATOD field in Tasmania.

The Awards acknowledge and celebrate the professionalism of those within the sector and the importance to the broader community of the work undertaken. It is the ATDC's aim that these awards contribute to further enhancing the profile of the sector in the eyes of those working within it, as well as those outside it.

Nominations are invited for the categories of:

- Excellence in Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Work Award
- Early Career Award
- Outstanding Contributions Award
- Emerging Researcher Award

Nominations close 28 April 2014.

[Click here](#) for the Awards information and nomination package.

ATDC Stakeholder Survey 2014

On Thursday 27 March the ATDC Stakeholder Survey for 2014 was circulated to everyone on the ATDC stakeholder database.

By completing the survey you enable us to continue to build our effectiveness as the Peak Body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs sector.

This year's survey asks respondents to:

- assess our performance against the goals in the 2011-14 ATDC Strategic Plan
- identify future policy and strategic priorities for the organisation
- comment on key ATDC communication channels such as the website, eNews and social media.

It takes about ten minutes to complete the survey and there is a chance to win a double pass to the movies. The survey closes on Wednesday 30 April 2014.

Easing Cannabis Withdrawal

A world-first study led by the National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC) at UNSW has revealed a breakthrough for dependent cannabis users that has been shown to provide significant relief from withdrawal symptoms.

The study used a cannabis based medication called Sativex (Nabiximols). This medication, administered by a mouth spray, is also available in Canada, Spain and the UK as a pain reliever for multiple sclerosis

patients.

The double blind randomized control study was conducted in two New South Wales Inpatient treatment services. There were 51 DSM IV diagnosed cannabis dependent clients involved in the study.

The study found that treatment using Sativex significantly reduced the overall severity of cannabis withdrawal when compared to the placebo medication. Benefits included a reduction in withdrawal related irritability, depression, and cannabis cravings. Limited, but still positive effects were also found in the areas of sleep disturbance, anxiety, appetite loss, physical symptoms, and restlessness.

The study also found that patients treated with Sativex remained in treatment longer and reported no greater levels of intoxication than the group that received the placebo. Both groups showed reduced cannabis use at follow up, with no advantage of Sativex over placebo for self-reported cannabis use, cannabis-related problems or cannabis dependence.

The full findings of this study have been published in the international psychiatry journal, [JAMA Psychiatry](#).

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Upcoming Training, Events & Conferences

Working with Offenders: Winterschool at UTas

This unit is designed to introduce students to the issues and processes associated with working with offenders, particularly those under the authority of corrective services in prison and community corrections.

For more information please [click here](#).

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Pay it Forward Breakfast – Thursday 24 April 2014

All profits will be going to Legacy as a Pay it Forward gesture supporting ANZAC day.

\$30 per person or \$240 for a table of 8.

[Click here](#) to register your attendance at the breakfast.

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Telephone: 03 6231 5002 **Postal Address:** PO Box 4702, Bathurst Street PO, Hobart TAS 7000

E-mail: reception@atdc.org.au **Web:** www.atdc.org.au **Facebook:** [ATDC](#)

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