

Regional ATDC Member Meetings Summary of Outcomes June 2015

Meeting Overview

In June the ATDC held the second series of ATDC member meetings across the state. Jann Smith, ATDC Chief Executive Officer, and David Gardiner, Policy and Research Officer, facilitated the meetings that were held on:

- Tuesday 9 June at Youth, Family and Community Connections in Burnie
- Wednesday 10 June at Anglicare in Launceston
- Thursday 11 June at the Salvation Army Bridge Centre in New Town.

During the meetings the groups considered the redrafted RAMMs terms of reference as well as recent developments in relation to the National Ice Taskforce, the upcoming methamphetamine training, the 2015-16 Tasmanian State Budget, and the joint project between the ATDC and Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania that has been funded by the Department of Social Services.

Strategic and Local Issues

The ATDC discussed a number of recent operational and strategic developments with members.

Role and Function of the RAMMs

During the meetings the terms of reference (ToR) for the RAMMs were discussed. It was noted that the revised ToR were less formal than the original ToR that were prepared at the start of 2014. Meeting participants reflected that they enjoyed the informal and semi-structured nature of meetings and the capacity to identify agenda items on the day of the meeting. Attendees agreed that the Regional ATDC Member Meetings (RAMMs):

- provide members with a flexible and informal opportunity to raise local issues relating to service delivery or policy matters
- ensure the strategic direction and planning of the ATDC continues to be informed by the membership
- enable the ATDC to appropriately represent the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in advocacy to the Australian, State and local government
- enable networking between member organisations
- provide an interface between the government and community sector providers
- enable members to identify and progress action on shared issues and initiatives which impact on the delivery of alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) services in their region
- enable the consistent flow of information and updates from the ATDC to members
- promote better coordination and integration of programs and services.

The redrafted ToR will be made available on the ATDC website together with the summary of meeting outcomes and other related documents.

Tasmanian State Budget 2015-16

The Tasmanian State Government announced that it would provide \$4.8 million, over four years to tackle the problem of Ice and other drugs in Tasmania. This funding will be used to implement recommendations from the review into drug use in the North West, which was released in November 2014.

Specific initiatives include:

- the opening of 12 new residential rehabilitation beds available for clients across the State with a priority of establishing a residential rehabilitation program for clients based in the North West
- employment of new specialist consultation liaison staff within Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) based in Launceston and Ulverstone to work across the North and North West. These staff will work with the broader health system and community services
- new transport options to improve access for North and North West clients to the southern specialist Inpatient Withdrawal Unit when appropriate
- supporting communities and current service providers, including assistance for health promotion, prevention and early intervention strategies, such as raising community awareness and improving health and health policy literacy.

The ATDC has also been advised by the Department that either a consultant or an employee will be engaged to undertake a service mapping exercise to support the planning work of the AOD Expert Advisory Group.

During the Regional meetings it was also noted that the Budget Papers include performance measures and targets for the pharmacotherapy program at 800 and the withdrawal unit occupancy rate at 50%. The Budget Papers are clear that these measures and targets will be reviewed following the release of the final One Health System White Paper.

ATDC members noted that now that the State Budget has been finalised that the Department should be issuing contracts to organisations.

National Ice Taskforce

During May the National Ice Taskforce conducted a number of consultations across Australia. The ATDC was fortunate to participate in two formal stakeholder consultations that were conducted. On Tuesday 5 May the ATDC participated in a national teleconference with peak AOD bodies and the Taskforce and on Wednesday 27 May the ATDC participated in a face-to-face meeting that was held in Hobart with the Taskforce and many other key stakeholders. The face-to-face consultation was attended by a range of participants representing, police, justice and law enforcement, emergency medicine, paramedics, housing services, child and family service providers, alcohol and drug services, a drug user group, and prisons amongst others. Opinions were wide and varied but it was recognised that drug use is complex and requires a whole of system. It was understood that balanced investment needs to occur across the spectrum of services:

- primary prevention
- early intervention
- education
- community development
- treatment and rehabilitation
- law enforcement
- justice.

A number of the themes raised by the ATDC and AOD community sector organisations included:

- Investing in services for the longer-term and not with short-term contracts
- Ensuring that services are well integrated and coordinated
- Not stigmatising and judging people who use alcohol and other drugs
- Building and not undermining the capacity of workers within the AOD and related sectors.

The National Ice Taskforce is due to submit an interim report provided to the Prime Minister in June 2015 for subsequent consideration by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). A final report will be provided to the Prime Minister with a final strategy to be considered by COAG before the end of 2015.

The ATDC provided a short written submission to the National Ice Taskforce. A copy of the submission is available on the ATDC website.

Methamphetamine Training

The Alcohol and Drug Service provided funding to the ATDC to enable the provision of methamphetamine training across the state. The ATDC used the Regional meetings held in March as a basis for canvassing members about the format and content of the training so that it meets identified needs. The ATDC has worked with leading experts, LeeJenn Health Consultants, to develop a training program that will be delivered in Devonport on 7 July and Hobart on 9 July. The training has been structured so that it maximises up-skilling for workers from a range of areas including: AOD sector, housing and homelessness sector, mental health, police and justice, emergency medicine and psychiatry.

Interest in the training has been overwhelming and demand will not be able to be met by the places available. The ATDC is hopeful that further funding will become available following the evaluation of the training by participants.

Tasmanian Health Service

Meeting participants discussed the imminent establishment of the Tasmanian Health Service which will see the merging of the three Tasmanian Health Organisations from 1 July 2015.

There was also discussion about the Department's use of the draft Role Delineation Framework to propose that alcohol and drug services will increase from, no services at present, to Level 4 at the Mersey Community Hospital. It

was noted that the ATDC made a submission to the White Paper Exposure Draft and that concerns were raised about the increase in AOD service provision at the Mersey and potential impacts upon the community sector. The ATDC will continue to lobby for the use of the AOD Treatment Expert Advisory Group, to maximise community sector engagement in planning and priority setting.

Facilitating Collaboration with Neighbourhood Houses

Over recent years some Neighbourhood Houses have reported an increase in people presenting with alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) related issues. Some staff and volunteers in Neighbourhood Houses have suggested that having a greater understanding of how they can support people with these issues, and how they can connect people with specific professional support would be very beneficial. There are 35 Neighbourhood Houses spread across Tasmania.

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania was aware of these issues and in 2014 agreed to work with the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Council (ATDC) to help houses and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services to work together to improve support for Tasmanians affected by AOD issues. A grant application was submitted to the Australian Government Department of Social Services, and the ATDC has received funding for this project. Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania (NHT) is the peak body for Neighbourhood and Community Houses and Centres across Tasmania.

Essentially the project is about building connections between staff and volunteers in Neighbourhood Houses, and the workers in AOD organisations to:

- provide NH staff and volunteers with a basic understanding of alcohol and other drug misuse issues
- demonstrate the potential of houses as a neutral, safe and respectful environment in which to meet, for AOD sector workers
- provide NH staff and volunteers with information about appropriate referral pathways to AOD services
- provide expert support to houses when the need for local forums on a specific issue is identified
- provide ATOD related resources and information to houses.

A Project Advisory Group has been established to have input into the best approaches and activities to be conducted during the project. The Advisory Group includes a representative from Holyoake and a user of AOD services, and two members from Neighbourhood Houses. Project activities that are being considered include:

- annual bus tours across each of the three regions where NH workers will be taken on a tour of local AOD services and gain an overview of the AOD programs available
- joint training for NHT and ATDC members on topics identified by Neighbourhood House workers and volunteers.

The project is being collaboratively managed by Tamara Speed within the ATDC, who is working three days per week, and Jonathan Bedloe at NHT who is funded to work on the project one day per week.

The groups noted that for future regional meetings in 2015 we will attempt to have the RAMM coincide with a meeting at a Neighbourhood House within each of the three regions.



Alcohol, Tobacco and other
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Next Steps and Actions Arising

A small number of outstanding RAMMs actions are maintained on the list below:

- Coordinating an information session focused on driving and prescription drug misuse.
- Addressing the ongoing priority issue of post release and prison through-care options.
- Engaging with the Tasmanian Primary Health Network to consider ways to work with GPs and other primary care health professionals to reduce stigma and discrimination toward people who use drugs.