



Regional ATDC Member Meetings – March 2015

Summary of Outcomes

March Meetings

In early March the first series of ATDC member meetings for 2015 was held across the state. Jann Smith, ATDC Chief Executive Officer, and David Gardiner, Policy and Research Officer, facilitated the meetings that were held on:

- Monday 2 March at Youth, Family and Community Connections in Burnie
- Tuesday 3 March at Anglicare in Launceston
- Wednesday 4 March at the Salvation Army Bridge Centre in New Town.

The meetings provided a great opportunity to recap on activities that have occurred since the last series of meetings held in late 2014 and enabled participants to consider the year ahead for the ATOD sector. Discussion was wide ranging and covered matters that had arisen from previous meetings, such as:

- **Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) National Consultation**
In mid-December, Jann Smith, along with a small number of Tasmanian consumer representatives and other sector representatives attended a national consultation that was convened by AIVL, the Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League, regarding needle and syringe programs (NSPs). The consultation considered key issues relating to NSP access in regional and remote areas and highlighted the value of opportunistic brief interventions. The forum considered national and state legislative and regulatory barriers regarding the provision of needles and syringes. It was noted that under proposed amendments to the Public Health Act that Tasmania may shortly have some of the most nationally progressive legislation regarding the re-supply of injecting equipment by peer distributors.
- ***The Unintended Consequences of Pharmacotherapy Policy in Tasmania***
It was noted that it is not too late for members and stakeholders to advise Advocacy Tasmania Inc (ATI) of their organisation's formal endorsement of the recommendations contained within the position paper: *The Unintended Consequences of Pharmacotherapy Policy in Tasmania*.



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The ATDC updated members on a number of recent operational and strategic developments relevant to the sector.

Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention (PPEI)

The drafting of the PPEI Implementation Plan is continuing and arrangements are underway for a forum to be held in early May in Campbell Town to maximise engagement and broad ownership of the plan. Members were encouraged to take copies of a flyer that had been prepared and circulate them at their workplaces to enable staff with a genuine interest in PPEI to register their interest in attending the upcoming forum by contacting the ATDC.

ATDC Budget Priority Statement (BPS) for 2015-16

During the Regional meetings held in December 2014 the ATDC took the opportunity to consult with members regarding future priorities to inform the budget priorities statement for the ATOD sector. In late January 2015 the ATDC compiled the BPS and met with Michael Ferguson, Minister for Health and highlighted the twelve recommendations included within the submission. The BPS was also sent to the Premier, Treasurer, Attorney-General, Minister for Human Services and the Acting Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Some of the key recommendations within the BPS included:

- Funding a drug user organisation
- Conducting a review of the Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Program Policy and Clinical Practice Standards (TOPP)
- Funding a pilot needle and syringe exchange program within the prison
- Increasing access to needle and syringe programs
- Trialling a drink driving court within Tasmania
- Increasing investment in ATOD PPEI activities
- Increased access to Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) particularly for people within custodial settings and upon release from prison.

A copy of the ATDC BPS is available on the ATDC website.

Submission to the Rethink Mental Health Project Discussion Paper

In October 2014 the Department of Health and Human Services released the *Rethink Mental Health Project: A long term plan for mental health in Tasmania Discussion Paper*. The ATDC made a



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submission to the project and emphasised that the AOD sector provides specialist services for people with substance misuse issues and that not everyone who has an AOD issue has a mental health problem and not everyone with a mental illness has AOD issues. Because of this a key component of the ATDC submission focussed on the intersection/integration between the mental health and AOD sectors to meet the particular needs of people with co-existing mental illness and substance misuse issues (comorbidity). Other topics that were addressed in the ATDC submission included:

- The Service System
- Consumer and Carer Consultation and Engagement
- Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention
- Workforce Development and Capacity Building.

A copy of the full ATDC submission to the Rethink Mental Health Project is located on the ATDC website.

Submission to the One Health System Green Paper

Recently the ATDC responded to the Tasmanian State Government's Green Paper regarding the creation of a single Tasmanian health system from the current three Tasmanian Health Organisations. The Green Paper also included a number of supplementary documents regarding the sustainability of the health system, the health workforce, building a stronger community care system, emergency care and elective surgery.

The Green Paper included a number of questions and issues that invited responses and comments from the community, clinicians and interested stakeholders. The ATDC decided not to respond to all questions and instead focused on a number of key themes and made the following five highlights:

1. The commissioning of community sector alcohol and drug services should be transferred completely from the Alcohol and Drug Service to the Department of Health and Human Services.
2. It should be a priority under this review to deploy the Drug and Alcohol Clinical Care and Prevention (DA-CCP) modelling tool to identify the population needs for ATOD services in Tasmania.
3. Alcohol and other drug services are a specialist service type and must be integrated into the broader health and human service system where acknowledgement of the bio-psycho-social framework for treatment and support is central to policy and service system design.
4. Strong leadership will be required to effectively manage this transition and maintain a focus on the principles of the single health system as articulated in the Green Paper.



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5. It is essential that we adopt a health promotion, prevention and early intervention (PPEI) approach to ensure equity of access to health.

A copy of the full ATDC submission to the Green Paper is located on the ATDC website.

Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Preventative Health

The ATDC made a submission to the Select Committee on Preventative Health which is made up of members of both house of the Tasmanian Parliament and with representative of each of the major political parties. The ATDC provided highlighted:

- the broader impacts of the social determinants of health
- the specific impacts that elements such as stigma and discrimination can have on the lives of people who misuse alcohol and other drugs
- the need to invest in preventative health.

Tobacco Free Generation

In November 2014 the Hon Ivan Dean MLC introduced a Private Members Bill, The Tobacco Free Generation, to the Tasmanian Parliament. Essentially the Bill is being proposed in the form of amendments to the current Public Health Act. The amendments will:

- stop the sale of tobacco products to anyone born since the year 2000, the tobacco free generation.
- prevent the supply of tobacco products by licensed tobacco sellers, or their agents, to members of the tobacco free generation.
- provide (with penalty) that members of the tobacco free generations must not give false identification to tobacco sellers.
- not prevent members of the tobacco free generation from smoking, or attempting to purchase tobacco products.
- not penalise any member of the tobacco free generation for smoking.
- not prevent friends and family from giving tobacco products, such as a few cigarettes to members of the tobacco free generation, however, they must not sell tobacco products to them.
- not prevent "botting" of cigarettes by members of the tobacco free generation. They would be able to scrounge or borrow cigarettes, and would not be penalised.

The ATDC recently canvassed members to ascertain support for the Tobacco Free Generation. Opinions were divided and as a consequence it has not been possible to formulate a policy position to



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advocate on behalf of the entire sector. The ATDC will endeavour to keep members informed of developments regarding the Tobacco Free Generation.

Methamphetamine Training

In late November the Department of Health and Human Services released the *Review of Drug Use and Service Responses in North West Tasmania*. Recently the Alcohol and Drug Service approached the ATDC regarding the provision of methamphetamine training across the state. The Regional meetings provided an ideal opportunity to canvass members regarding the possible structure, format and content of any training so that it complements and builds upon training previously provided through the Salvation Army Bridge Program in 2013 by LeeJenn Health Consultants. Some of the ideas highlighted included:

- Providing three distinct tiers of training to respond to the different needs of new staff, longer-term workers and specialist workers (ie introductory level, intermediate, advanced).
- Training to meet the needs of staff within different settings ranging from AOD organisations to other organisations such as police, justice and mental health settings through to specialist acute settings such as hospital emergency departments and psychiatric wards.
- The input of consumers is to be highly valued.
- The training will need to be cross sectoral to build and strengthen relationships and knowledge.
- The need to provide training within all of the regions across the state was considered essential.
- The training will need to have an adequate lead time and be widely promoted to have a good take up rate.
- Training promotion and publicity resources will need to clearly identify what the training will cover.
- Content will need to be targeted at the different audiences and vary from information about the drug to its impacts and the challenges of working with clients and families affected.
- The need to focus on the provision of support to families and friends is fundamental.
- To maximise the likelihood of a client re-attending for treatment or support it is crucial to effectively engage and manage presentations of methamphetamine users whilst they are intoxicated.
- A key factor in addressing methamphetamine use will be in working with rural communities effectively.
- The training will need to be supported by evidence-based resources with information and take away materials such as best practice guidelines available to participants.



ATDC Constitutional Changes

The ATDC Board has requested a review and proposal for amendments of the organisation's constitution. During some of the member meetings it was mentioned that further information will be circulated which outlines the constitutional changes and their impact as well as the timing and process of the change.

Next Steps and Actions Arising

During 2014 the ATDC progressed most of the actions that were identified during the member meetings. At the end of the year there were a small number of activities outstanding and the ATDC will maintain these on a register of actions so that they are able to be progressed during 2015:

- 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.

June 2015 Meeting Dates

Location:	Burnie	Launceston	Hobart
Date:	Tuesday 9 June	Wednesday 10 June	Thursday 11 June
Time:	1:30pm – 3:30pm	9.30am – 11.30am	9.30am -11.30am
Venue:	Youth, Family & Community Connections 129 Wilson Street, Burnie	Anglicare 122 Elizabeth Street, Launceston	The Salvation Army Bridge Centre 63 – 68 Creek Road, New Town