



Alcohol, Tobacco and other
Drugs Council Tasmania Inc.

MEDIA RELEASE - for immediate release

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AOD SECTOR RESPONDS TO 'DRUG CRISIS' REPORTS

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council has responded to reports published in *The Mercury* on 6 August that a lack of secure accommodation is hampering the success of Tasmania's court mandated diversion program.

Chief Executive Officer, Alison Lai confirmed that waiting lists are a concern and but limited to those seeking access through the justice system.

"Waiting lists continue to be a challenge for Tasmanians seeking access to AOD treatment and support services across the State," Alison said.

"It's an issue that we commonly hear about and one that is impacting a range of services across our health system.

It's also an issue for Tasmanians from all walks of life, in all regions of the State particularly in our regional communities."

Alison stressed that timely access to treatment is vitally important to ensuring successful outcomes for those seeking assistance.

"Treatment is not something that can be 'rescheduled' when there are not enough services available and postponing treatment can derail someone's effort to seek support," she said.

"In collaboration with our members, we are currently working with the Tasmanian Government to review the profile and structure of alcohol and other drug services across our island and the current issues with waiting lists is a key aspect of this work.

In the meantime we encourage anyone who is seeking treatment for alcohol or other drugs to get in contact with their local GP or with one of our member organisations.

Because whilst there are waiting lists, this doesn't mean treatment is not available or no-one is accessing or receiving treatment.



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There are a number of options available across the State and we encourage people not to be discouraged from seeking support.”

Alison also highlighted that the term ‘addict’, which has been used in recent reports, is an outdated manner to refer to individuals who are experiencing substance dependence issues.

“The use of the term addict is no longer viewed as the appropriate manner to describe someone who may be struggling with alcohol, tobacco or other drugs,” she said.

Use of this word conjures up negative and incorrect images of people in our communities.

Those impacted by alcohol or drugs are everyday people and to refer to them as an addict is certainly no longer appropriate and we encourage the mainstream media to instead use terms such as someone with a ‘substance use issue’ or ‘substance dependence issue’.”

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Who is the ATDC? The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council is the peak body representing the interests of the community sector organisations that provide services to people with substance use issues in Tasmania. A membership-based, independent organisation, the ATDC advocates for adequate support and funding for the delivery of evidence-based alcohol, tobacco and other drug initiatives.