

MEDIA RELEASE

One step closer to a consumer organisation for Tasmanians who use drugs

Monday, 4 November 2019

Tasmania is one step closer to having a funded consumer representative organisation for Tasmanians who use drugs – a milestone that has been years in the making according to the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania.

Chief executive officer, Alison Lai said that a proposal to establish an independent consumer representative organisation had been submitted to the Tasmanian Government following extensive consultation.

"Tasmania is the only state or territory in Australia that doesn't have an independent organisation representing the perspectives of individuals who may use, or have family members or those caring for those who use drugs," Ms Lai said.

"Having an organisation that is able to represent the voices of these individuals is essential to ensure that we are developing services, and programs that are meeting the needs of those they are designed to assist."

"Through financial support provided by the Tasmanian Government, over the past 12 months we have consulted widely across the community, government and the not-for-government sector to determine the best approach and the creation of an independent organisation was the overwhelming preference."

Confirming that the proposed organisation would provide a voice for all Tasmanians across all categories of drug use, including illicit drugs, Ms Lai said that consumer representative organisations also had a critical role to play in addressing the damaging impacts of stigma and discrimination impacting those who use or are attempting to seek treatment and support for their drug use.

"Regardless of the type of substance, every Tasmanian has the right to provide feedback into the health services they receive," she said.

While the establishment of a consumer representative organisation would require a funding commitment from government at a time when health budgets were under pressure, Ms Lai was optimistic that their proposal would be considered seriously.

"Our members, and the people they support have been calling for this for over 10 years, and it continues to be the number one ask across our sector," she said.

"There is a high level of need for the services and with support across government for these services very strong, we will continue to advocate strongly for investment into the establishment of a consumer representative organisation."

[Click here to view the options paper summary](#)

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No Harm, No Discrimination

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Who are the ATDC? The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania is the peak body representing and supporting community organisations, and the people they assist, to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harm for all Tasmanians.

Our vision is a Tasmania without alcohol, tobacco or other drug related harm or discrimination.

LANGUAGE MATTERS – Language is powerful, especially when discussing alcohol and other drugs and the people who use them. Stigmatising language reinforces negative stereotypes. "Person-centred" language focuses on the person, not their substance use.

When reporting on people who use alcohol and other drugs....	
Try this 	Not this 
Substance use, non-prescribed use	Abuse, misuse, problem use, non-compliant use
Person who uses drugs	Drug user, drug abuser
Person with a dependence on....	Addict, junkie, druggie, alcoholic
Person experiencing drug dependence	Suffering from addiction, has a drug habit
Person who has stopped using drugs	Clean, sober, drug-free
Person with lived experience of drug dependence	Ex-addict, former addict, used to be a...

Please see the attached Language matters resource attached or at: www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/



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