

MEDIA RELEASE

Record alcohol sales during pandemic while more Tasmanians seek help

Friday, 12 February 2021

Record growth in alcohol turnover during the pandemic aligns with the emerging information that more Tasmanians having been seeking help for their drinking and other drug use, according to the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC).

Alcohol retailer turnover in Australia went up dramatically as the pandemic hit, remaining high for the rest of 2020, according to a [new report released yesterday by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education \(FARE\)](#).

ATDC chief executive Alison Lai is not surprised to see turnover increasing in all states and territories, including Tasmania.

"As soon as restrictions came in, we anticipated an increase as many of us turn to alcohol at times of stress, uncertainty and boredom," Mrs Lai said.

The ATDC warns that there are significant risks that come with increased alcohol consumption, but Tasmanians are seeking support.

"Alcohol dependence increases the risk of harm to your health as well as your relationships, so we are encouraged that an increasing number of Tasmanians are seeking help for their alcohol use.

"Our treatment services are already starting to feel the impact of the increase in alcohol consumption, as more and more people seek out help," Mrs Lai said.

While pleased that Tasmanians are seeking out help for their alcohol use, the ATDC warns that this must be met with increased funding for the services providing that support.

"These alcohol turnover figures confirm what we have been hearing from community, and put us on high alert to a continued increase in people seeking help, so we need to ensure the community-managed sector sees an increase in funding to provide that much-needed assistance.

"We are currently in discussions with the Tasmanian Government regarding the shortfall of funding and investment into community sector alcohol, tobacco and other drug services, and actively lobbying for an immediate injection of funds, particularly into counselling services.

"There are currently waiting lists across Tasmania for access to services, with some people having to wait over 6 weeks for access to counselling services, and up to three months to access residential rehabilitation.

"We're also aware that there's at least 500 Tasmanians currently waiting to access specialised treatment and support, and this is a critical issue that we need to address.



No Harm, No Discrimination

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“For many people, one of the hardest things to do is pick up the phone or walk through the door and ask for support.

“We must acknowledge the increases in alcohol sales and act to ensure that the Tasmanian community is provided with access to the services needed to assist those ready to start dropping their drinking levels, or any other issues with substance use as soon as they make that call,” Mrs Lai said.

Seek support

Alcohol and Drug Information Service - 1800 811 994

Family Drug Support - 1300 368 186

Alcohol and Drug Services - 1300 139 641

Tasmanian alcohol and other drug service directory – www.atdc.org.au/service-directory

Media Contact: Alison Lai, CEO – 0450 517 017

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 <i>Language matters</i> resource at: www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/	



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