



Meeting the Challenges: Investing in Communities and People

Budget Priority Statement 2021-22

No Harm, No Discrimination

atdc
Alcohol, Tobacco and other
Drugs Council Tasmania

As the Tasmanian alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) sector recovers from COVID-19 and readies itself for reform, there are **immediate opportunities** to make a difference.

The first priority is to **respond to the long standing demand for ATOD treatment, support and education delivered by Tasmanian community-managed organisations**. This demand has continued to increase over the last 12 months because of COVID-19. A significant number of Tasmanians are reaching out for support and the Tasmanian community-managed ATOD sector needs immediate support to respond to these requests within reasonable time-frames.

The second priority is to **ensure we involve people who use Tasmanian ATOD services in what we do and how we do it**. As the Tasmanian Government embarks on an ambitious 10-year program of reform for our sector, it is close to inconceivable that we would do this without a systemic mechanism to amplify the voice of lived experience, meaningfully. An independent consumer organisation for Tasmanians with a lived experience of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use will achieve this.

This submission is the result of many recent and past conversations. It also supports the health care reform priorities of the Tasmanian Government by keeping Tasmanians out of hospital by investing in community based treatment and support. In doing so it reflects the needs of the community-managed organisations delivering ATOD programs and services, while also seeking to elevate the voices of those who need their support.

Tasmanians drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and take drugs

For some, it may be the occasional drink or cigarette on a special occasion or it may be prescription medication to manage chronic pain. For others, their relationship with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs may be more complex, causing their drinking, smoking or other drug use to pose a health risk to themselves or those around them. For some, their drug use may involve substances that are not only considered dangerous, but also illegal. Despite the efforts of alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) promotion and prevention experts, the harms from problematic ATOD use in our communities are significant.

- Tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use collectively account for 16.5% of the total burden of disease in Australia.¹
- One in eight Tasmanians smoke tobacco daily, this is higher than most Australians.
- One in four Tasmanians consumed five or more drinks in one sitting, which is a clear marker to lead to health or social problems.
- In Tasmania, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs account for thousands of emergency presentations and hospital admissions every year.²
- In 2019-20 there were 1,542 drink driving offenders and 2,657 drug driving offenders caught breaking the law on Tasmanian roads.³
- Alcohol and illicit drug use also drive crimes such as burglaries, assaults and public disorder.⁴
- In 2019-20 there were 794 public assaults in Tasmania, and 3,576 family violence incidents in Tasmania.⁵

These figures don't account for the social and emotional toll that alcohol, tobacco and other drug dependence has on families and children across Tasmania. For many Tasmanians, treatment and support can turn this problem around, enabling Tasmanians to lead healthier, happier and more productive lives.

1 AIHW 2019, *Burden of tobacco use in Australia: Australian Burden of Disease Study 2015*. Australian Burden of Disease series no. 21. Cat. no. BOD 20. Canberra: AIHW.

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/burden-of-disease/burden-of-tobacco-use-in-australia/>

2 Siggins Miller, 2017, *A single Tasmanian alcohol and other drugs (AOD) service system framework: Final report*, accessed online 13/11/2018, found here:

https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/340129/Final_Report.pdf

3 *Tasmania Police, Annual Report 2019-20*, accessed online 10/3/2021, found here: https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/DPFEM63777-Annual-Report-2019-20-OP-a_R.pdf

4 Population data has shown the link between substance use and crimes, see here: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/impacts/social-impacts>

5 It is not clear how many of these were attributable to alcohol and other drug use, however the link between substance use and these incidents is recognised. These statistics can be found here: *Tasmania Police, Annual Report 2019-20*, accessed online 10/3/2021, found here: https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/DPFEM63777-Annual-Report-2019-20-OP-a_R.pdf

Why invest?

The two priorities for investment in this submission support key strategic objectives outlined in the following documents: *ATDC COVID-19 Impact Report (July – November (2020))*,⁶ *The Reform Agenda for Alcohol and Drug Sector in Tasmania*⁷ and *Our Healthcare Future – Immediate Actions and Consultation Paper*.⁸

ATDC COVID-19 impact reporting

The ATDC COVID-19 Impact Reports provide information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Tasmanian community-managed alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) sector to provide recommendations to inform the Tasmanian Government's COVID-19 recovery planning efforts.

The first of these reports published in early 2021 highlighted the evidence that COVID-19 has had an impact on Tasmanians who drink, smoke or use other substances. The report also confirmed that more Tasmanians were reaching out for support for their health but at least 570 Tasmanians were unable to access that support. Depending on the support they were seeking, they could be waiting from six weeks to multiple months to access it. There were concerns about inadequate monitoring of the impact of illicit drug use, and the report also highlighted the increased stress on the organisations delivering these services, particularly for front-line workers.

This submission's request for an immediate injection of funds into these community-managed organisations will directly address this issue.

“In December there was an increase in Alcohol consumption because, even though I was able to move around again and we weren't as restricted, the strain and anxiety was still there because I'd lost so much time and everything was out of my control, and I didn't know how to regain that control.”

Tasmanian Consumer Representative, on the continuing impact of COVID-19

The Reform Agenda for the Alcohol and Other Drug Sector in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government's Reform Agenda for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Sector is an ambitious 10-year plan that aims to ensure Tasmanians affected by alcohol, tobacco and other drug use have access to appropriate, timely, effective and quality ATOD services, supports and treatments based on contemporary, evidence informed best practice, and delivered by a highly skilled workforce.

This submission's request for an immediate injection of funds to the community-managed organisations delivering services and programs is fundamental to addressing existing waiting lists to ensure that Tasmanians can access treatment and support where and when they need it.

The request to prioritise the establishment of an independent consumer organisation aligns with the first reform direction 'A client/consumer-centred approach cross the service system' and will deliver Action 1.1 of the Agenda being to 'establish a funded AOD consumer organisation in Tasmania'.

Our Healthcare Future

The Tasmanian Government's Our Healthcare Future seeks to build a sustainable health system, by connecting and rebalancing care across the acute, sub-acute, rehabilitation, mental health and primary health sectors through to care in the community. This submission's request directly contributes to this by expanding evidence based ATOD programs in the Tasmanian community-managed sector. By focusing on education, prevention and relapse will minimise the harms associated with substance use and reduce the burden on the Tasmanian hospital system. Specifically:

- Investing in prevention will contribute to the global aim of hospital avoidance.
- Increasing the funding of evidence based, cost effective programs that work will address health issues in the community, before they escalate to a presentation at a Tasmanian hospital.
- Ensuring that we 'listen to hear' through meaningful consumer engagement processes will lead to a better and more responsive Tasmanian ATOD service system, and broader health system more generally.

“One week, you want help. Then they say 'it's gonna take seven weeks'... I have been ready to change, and I'm told there's a waiting time – I can wait for a week, maybe two, but by the time they call you back you're too heavily involved in your addiction. The window is gone.”

Tasmanian Consumer Representative, on the impact of growing waiting lists

⁶ <https://www.atdc.org.au/covid-19-impact-on-atod-services-report-1-july-november-2020/>

⁷ https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/417207/FINAL_Alcohol_and_Other_Drugs_Reform_Agenda_2020_for_website_PDF.pdf

⁸ https://www.health.tas.gov.au/ourhealthcarefuture/immediate_actions_and_consultation_paper

Priority 1: Increased investment into community-managed services

COVID-19 impacted Tasmanians who use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. This includes changes in people's consumption habits, particularly alcohol alongside fluctuations in the availability, use and price of illicit substances.

As a result, more Tasmanians have been reaching out for support, including through online and telephone support services. Due to the historic underfunding of the Tasmanian community-managed alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) sector, this increase in demand is putting pressure on a section of the health system that was already under pressure.

Community-managed organisations delivering ATOD services across Tasmania have been attempting to accommodate increasing demand but their waiting lists are growing. This is particularly relevant for those delivering counselling, residential rehabilitation services and drug education programs and prevention services. The impact on residential rehabilitation services is further exacerbated by reduced capacity in the Tasmanian Government's Inpatient Withdrawal Unit.

As at the end of November 2020 there were at least 570 Tasmanians waiting to access support from a specialist ATOD service but were unable to access that service.

Funding stress is being experienced across the full spectrum of specialist ATOD services, including counselling, residential rehabilitation services and drug education programs and prevention services.

The ATDC welcomed the Tasmanian Government's injection of \$4.9⁹ million into the Department of Health's ATOD services and programs in the 2020-21 State Budget. The ATDC is now seeking a funding boost for the community-managed sector to ease the funding stress on these organisations and enable them to meet the increasing demand.

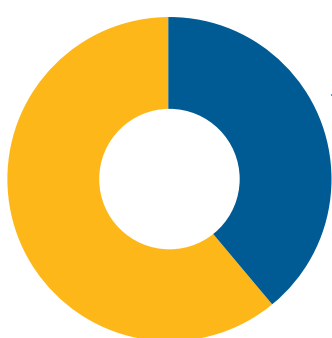
In consultation with our members, the ATDC has identified the need for an immediate injection of funds of a minimum of \$9.149 million¹⁰ from the 2021-22 State Budget.

This funding is required to:

- Secure existing programs and services that are due to cease when funding agreements expire 30 June 2021
- Address operating deficits that are impacting the delivery of existing programs and services
- Introduce additional programs and services to meet increasing demand across the State.

32,292

Tasmanians will experience an alcohol or drug substance use disorder



39%
of these Tasmanians
will require some form
of treatment



51%
of those requiring
it are currently
receiving treatment

49%
of those requiring it
are **not receiving
treatment**

⁹ Noting \$124,000 was allocated to the ATDC to continue delivering the ATOD consumer representative service during 2021-22.

¹⁰ The ATDC takes care to ensure the information presented is accurate at the time of publication. This figure does not represent the Tasmanian Government's total investment in the community-managed ATOD sector, rather it represents the immediate investment identified for the 2021-22 financial year. Information is subject to change and any questions on individual funding requests should be directed to the community-managed organisation.

ATDC members

Alcohol and Drug Foundation: \$713,000 to secure the future of the Good Sports Program in Tasmania, deliver a community alcohol management guide for Tasmanian local government and execute a targeted media campaign focused on increasing awareness of the harms of alcohol consumption.

Anglicare Tasmania: \$195,000 to secure the future of the 24/7 AOD hotline and increase state-wide capacity to manage AOD assessments, referrals and support.

Bethlehem House: \$140,000 to secure the future of their Residential Rehabilitation and Recovery case-worker to continue connecting homeless and at risk of homelessness men with AOD services.

Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation: \$100,000 to increase their staffing capacity to deliver alcohol and other drug services in the Smithton community.

Drug Education Network: \$225,000 to increase their core-funding to assist in the employment and retention of specialist educators and to respond to current demand due to insufficient staffing levels.

Holyoake Tasmania: \$317,360 to secure the future of the Gottawanna Program and employ additional staff to respond to increasing demand and client complexity.

Launceston City Mission: \$2.087 million in 2021-22 to secure the future of the Missiondale and Serenity House AOD residential rehabilitation services. From 2022-23 onwards this would increase to \$2.348m to maintain existed funded services.

Launceston City Mission is also seeking additional funding to extend the services at Missiondale to include a medical centre to provide on-site medically supervised AOD detoxification services. The capital investment required to build the clinical rooms is approximately \$1.75 million, with ongoing operational costs after completion of approximately \$700,000 per annum.

Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania: \$200,000 to increase core-funding to maintain existing programs and services, and expand support and systemic advocacy for families and friends of those affected by comorbid mental illness and AOD use.

Pathways Tasmania: \$485,000 to secure the future of their existing AOD residential rehabilitation program (Transformations), which has just expanded to include 8 extra beds for a new female rehabilitation service and expand services to meet increasing demand due to COVID-19. Transformations is currently at capacity with 20 beds. They are seeking to launch a women and children's service as a follow-on expansion once this funding need is secured.

Quit Tasmania: \$536,600 to embed brief advice into the Tasmanian Health Service, provide free nicotine replacement therapy and targeted support programs for priority population groups and secure the future of the 'Smoke Free Generation' youth campaign.

South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation: \$360,000 to expand the rullanih teggana Aboriginal AOD program to address the evident need in the region and make it an inclusive and rewarding program accessible to all in the southern community.

The Link Youth Health Service:

\$100,000 to increase staffing capacity to provide increased AOD outreach support to young Tasmanians.

The Salvation Army: \$1.3 million. This includes \$100,000 to address the operational deficit of the Ulverstone Bridge Program, \$200,000 to immediately expand existing services to meet demand and \$1 million to secure the future of their existing 15 residential rehabilitation bed service in southern Tasmania.

Youth, Family and Community Connections:

\$340,000 to increase access to specialist parent and adolescent AOD services, and introduce an on-site comorbidity service to respond to increasing demand and the impact of COVID-19.

Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania:

\$150,000 to increase core funding to enable the employment of a workforce development officer. \$150,000 to employ a fixed-term AOD Reform Agenda Project Officer until 30 June 2025. These are additional priorities above the funding requested in Priority 2 of this submission to support the establishment of the independent consumer organisation.

Funding Continuity until 30 June 2025

Providing funding certainty is an important element to supporting organisations through uncertainty.

Alongside the immediate injection of funds in 2021-22 detailed above, the ATDC is calling on the Tasmanian Government to provide funding certainty for community-managed organisations delivering ATOD services.

There remain a number of Tasmanian ATOD community-managed organisations whose funding agreements expire on 30 June 2021. This uncertainty of funding, which also extends to those organisations funded until 30 June 2022 inhibits an organisation from embedding service change, recruiting and retaining staff, and contributes to workforce stress.

To ensure they can focus on delivering their health services, the ATDC is seeking a **guarantee of funding continuity for all community-managed organisations delivering ATOD services until 30 June 2025.**

Priority 2: Fund an independent consumer organisation

Tasmania remains the only state or territory that does not have a funded independent consumer organisation in the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) sector. Consumer organisations are an essential feature of health service systems and deliver services through the lens of lived experience. This valuable expertise contributes to improved service delivery by making services (and the system generally) more responsive and accountable to the people they are funded to provide services to. A key role is to advance the health, human rights and dignity of people who use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Calls to establish a consumer organisation commenced over 15 years ago, and the need for these services have significantly increased over this time.

In 2019, in collaboration with the Tasmanian Department of Health and community sector stakeholders, the ATDC submitted an options paper to the Tasmanian Government recommending the establishment of an independent consumer organisation as the preferred approach to provide this critical service. Reinforcing this recommendation, the *Reform Agenda for Alcohol and Drug Services in Tasmania* outlines the intention that funding of such an organisation will be in place by 2023.

Since this time, the ATDC has continued to engage extensively with stakeholders and have identified people and organisations who are ready to support the very early stages of planning and establishing the purpose and role of this organisation.

A key principle underlining the above process is that it should be an inclusive process, led by the lived experience community. This organisation, to be successful, must be self-determining. Supporting this process, the ATDC has identified key individuals who have experience in community building, governance, organisational start-up administrative processes, finance management and strategic planning and we are now seeking a dedicated resource to lead this work into the future.

A dedicated resource will enable the ATDC to lead the work necessary across the next two years, from the development of the organisation's community of practice through to the establishment of the inaugural Board of Management. This work would align with the AOD Reform Agenda's aspiration to have this organisation incorporated by 2023. This work would happen separately and in addition to the ATDC's continued operation of a small in-house consumer representative service.¹¹ It is the ATDC's intention to transfer this service across to the independent consumer organisation once it is established.

Support for the establishment of a stand-alone consumer organisation has never been stronger. Combined with the clear need for these services, the ATDC is strongly advocating for funding to be prioritised across the next two State Budgets (2021-22 and 2022-23) to enable the establishment of this service by July 2023.

Investment

The cost to initiate start-up processes for a consumer organisation is \$175,000 per annum (with a two-year commitment across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years).

Once the organisation is established in 2023-24, it is estimated that the cost to establish and support the first year of operation is \$463,000, with an ongoing annual investment of \$380,000 per annum there-after.¹²

Key deliverables

The key deliverable will be employment of a Project Manager to commence planning processes, including:

- Significant community building activities to ensure the organisation is truly representative of people with a lived experience of alcohol and other drug issues.
- Through inclusive processes with the above, coordinate the development of a strategic plan, business model and a constitution.
- Coordinate an expression of interest process to recruit the inaugural Board of Management.
- Achieve incorporation of the consumer organisation.

Time frame

Start-up processes: July 2021 to June 2023.

Governance

The ATDC would oversee this project, with governance oversight from a steering committee comprising of key government, community and consumer representatives.

This governance arrangement would remain in place until the ATDC finalises the operational requirements of the consumer organisation and transitions the governance responsibilities to the inaugural Board of Management.

“Thank you so much!
My goodness it's nice to know something useful came out of our conversation . . . it feels good to have made a small contribution.”

Tasmanian Consumer Representative,
reflecting on seeing their contributions included in report to the Tasmanian Government

¹¹ The ATDC received \$124,000 to deliver this service in the 2021-22 FY. Funding to continue this service beyond 30 June 2022 will need to be included in the 2022-23 State Budget and beyond.

¹² This figure is based on the calculations provided in the ATDC's independent ATOD consumer organisation options paper submitted to the Tasmanian Government in 2019.

About the ATDC

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council 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.

It is our vision that Tasmania can be free from alcohol, tobacco or other drug related harm or discrimination.

Through advocacy, policy, research and sector development initiatives, we seek to increase investment into alcohol, tobacco and other drugs services across Tasmania. It is also our aim to foster a collaborative, inclusive and effective alcohol, tobacco and other drugs sector and facilitate positive change in community attitudes and policy settings.

Acknowledgements

The ATDC wishes to thank our member organisations who generously gave their time to contribute to this submission:

- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Advocacy Tasmania
- Alcohol & Drug Services (North & South)
- Anglicare Tasmania
- Bethlehem House Tasmania
- Cancer Council Tasmania
- Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation
- Drug Education Network
- Holyoake Tasmania
- Launceston City Mission (Missiondale)
- Mental Health Families & Friends Tasmania
- Pathways Tasmania
- South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation
- Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
- Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis & Related Diseases
- The Hobart Clinic
- The Link Youth Health Service
- The Salvation Army

The ATDC also wishes to thank the consumers who contributed their experiences to this submission. We are committed to seeing more opportunities for people with lived experience to make their voices heard through an independent consumer organisation.

We also thank the Tasmanian Government, and the members of the Alcohol and Other Drug Expert Advisory Group: Data Set Working Group and the Consumer Organisation Development Project Advisory Group for their contributions.

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The ATDC acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the traditional custodians of Tasmania and recognises the importance of working together.

The ATDC gratefully acknowledges the financial and in-kind support from the Australian Government Department of Health, the Tasmanian Government Department of Health and Primary Health Tasmania.



The ATDC is a Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) accredited organisation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES).

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