

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Incoming government to face multi-million-dollar shortfall for alcohol, tobacco and other drug services

Tuesday 20 April 2021

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The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania has outlined its priorities for the Tasmanian State election calling on all major parties to commit to addressing the funding shortfall impacting the availability of treatment services and education programs across the State.

With community-managed services stretched and demand for supporting increasing, ATDC chief executive Alison Lai said that the next government was headed into funding shortfall of more than \$9 million dollars.

"The community-managed alcohol, tobacco and other drugs sector provides education and treatment to thousands of Tasmanians every year, but services are stretched and not reaching all Tasmanians who need them," Mrs Lai said.

"The majority of residential rehabilitation beds in Tasmania have no certainty of funding beyond the end of June this year, and we have organisations that are cutting back services because of a lack of funding, and services that have waiting lists and are unable to meet demand.

A comprehensive list of funding priorities is outlined in the ATDC's [2021-22 Budget Priority Statement](#).

Despite drug use being commonplace, Ms Lai said she continued to be surprised at the challenges her organisation experiences to bring attention to the issue.

"It's no secret that many Tasmanians drink alcohol, smoke tobacco or use other drugs," she said.

"For some it might only be occasional but for thousands of Tasmanians each year their relationship with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is more complex, causing a health risk to themselves or others.

"It's essential that support is available, and any aspiring government can't be silent on how they plan to address the funding shortfall to ensure existing services are continued and expanded to meet increased demand, get Tasmanians off waiting lists and into the specialised support they need."

The next Tasmanian Government can also show their support, by providing a commitment to fund an independent consumer organisation to represent Tasmanians with a lived experience of alcohol, tobacco or other drug use.

"A fully-funded independent consumer organisation will finally amplify the voice of lived experience of Tasmanians who need, and access services," Mrs Lai said.



*No Harm, No Discrimination*

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"A comprehensive business case has been developed in consultation with government, and all that is missing is a commitment to fund it.

With funding for services a top priority for any incoming government, Mrs Lai said that this needed to be accompanied with a commitment to treat personal drug use, whether it be alcohol, tobacco or other substances, as a health issue – and that this ethos should underpin the development and implementation of any government policy.

"Drug use is a health issue, not a criminal issue and not something to be ashamed of," she said.

"It's well documented that the enormous stigma associated with the personal use of drugs, including alcohol, often stops people from reaching out for the support they need and we would be expecting any government to work with our members to develop evidence-based policies that reduce harm and discrimination, and not add to it."

Find out more about the ATDC's election priorities in our [2021-22 Budget Priority Statement](#).

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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 <i>Language matters</i> resource at: <a href="http://www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/">www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/</a>	



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