

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Regional pharmacists invite locals to learn more about accidental overdose

Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

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Regional communities will hear first-hand about the dangers of accidental overdose from common medicines, with a series of community presentations set to be delivered in regional Tasmania starting tomorrow.

Several Tasmanian organisations have teamed up to talk with regional communities about the risks of accidental overdose, especially accidental mixing of pain killers or sleeping pills with alcohol.

The Tackling Accidental Pharmaceutical Medicines Overdose (TAPMO) Local Drug Action Team is a collaboration between the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC), Pharmacy Guild (Tasmania), Drug Education Network, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, and University of Tasmania.

According to the Pennington Institute, since 2014, unintentional overdose of prescription medications has seen more than 30 Tasmanians lose their lives each year.

Pennington also report that accidental overdose is more prevalent in regional communities, and non-prescribed use of prescription medications in Tasmania is higher than any other state jurisdiction. ATDC chief executive Alison Lai is committed to seeing a reduction in accidental medication overdoses, along with the TAPMO partners.

"It's a common misconception that illegal drugs are the leading cause of accidental overdose deaths in Australia, when the reality is quite different and deaths are more likely to be due to prescription medications than illegal drugs," Mrs Lai said.

The ATDC warns that there is a significant risk of accidental overdose when not using pain medications such as opioids, or sleeping pills such as benzodiazepines as prescribed or consuming these medicines with alcohol.

"There are risks associated with prescription medications, especially if you are taking more than one medication, and even more so if you also consume alcohol recreationally.

"Accidental overdose can be avoided if you know the risks, and one of the best places to get this information is from your local pharmacist," Mrs Lai said.

To help connect regional communities with their local pharmacist and learn more about the risks of accidental overdose, the TAPMO Local Drug Action Team are visiting Dover, Triabunna, Queenstown, Wynyard and Smithton during April and May.



*No Harm, No Discrimination*

Suite 1, Level 1, 175 Collins Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000  
PO Box 4702 Bathurst Street PO, Hobart TAS 7000  
9am – 5pm Monday to Friday | P 03 6231 5002  
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The community presentation schedule is below:

Dover	27th April 2021	6:00 – 7:30pm	19th Bar and Bistro, Dover Golf Club
Triabunna	29th April 2021	5:30 – 7:00pm	Triabunna Community Hall
Queenstown	11th May 2021	6:00 – 7:30pm	West Coast Council Chambers
Wynyard	12th May 2021	5:30 – 7:00pm	Reception Centre, Wynyard Showgrounds
Smithton	13th May 2021	5:30 – 7:00pm	Grey’s Private Room, Tall Timbers

**There is no cost to attend and presentations are open to anyone in the community.**

**More information can be found at:** <https://www.atdc.org.au/mixing/>

**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](http://www.atdc.org.au/service-directory)

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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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