

MEDIA RELEASE

Tasmania leads nation with statewide cognitive enhancement program for alcohol and drug services

Thursday 17 February 2022

Tasmania will become the first state in Australia to introduce a statewide cognitive enhancement program for alcohol, tobacco and other drug services when training gets underway on 23 February 2022.

In an Australian-first, the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC) is leading a coordinated statewide Alcohol and Other Drug Cognitive Enhancement Pilot Program (ACE Pilot Program), announced today by ATDC Sector Development Manager Dan Vautin.

"Many people in alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment have concerns around memory, thinking, executive function, and emotional regulation and the ACE Pilot Program will provide interventions, screening, and 'cognitive hacks' to help people complete treatment and achieve their goals," Mr Vautin said.

Research shows that around 50% of people in alcohol and other drug treatment experience challenges with memory, attention, thinking, executive functioning, problem-solving or emotional regulation. ([source](#))

"These challenges can have a devastating impact on the effectiveness of alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment, which is why the ACE Pilot Program is so important," Mr Vautin said.

Pathways Tasmania Chief Executive Aldo Antolli says the ACE Pilot Program is a great fit for their Velocity Transformations service - an evidence-based, long-term alcohol and other drugs residential treatment service based in Hobart.

"We are so grateful to ATDC for taking charge of delivering this to our sector,

"The ACE program empowers our staff to accurately identify clients from the get-go who have cognition challenges and build support strategies tailored to their needs,

"This ensures longer and better engagement with our treatment programs, which studies show increases likelihood of long term success," Mr Antolli said.

Previous trials outside of Tasmania have resulted in significantly increased treatment completion rates ([source](#)) and it is hoped that the ACE Pilot Program will improve alcohol, tobacco and other drug services right across Tasmania.

"Equipping people with the skills to improve their cognitive functioning through the evidence-based ACE Pilot Program is a game-changer for alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment in Tasmania," Mr Vautin said.

This is the first time in Australia that any group of organisations have tried to implement the ACE Program statewide, with 6 organisations from both the community-managed treatment sector and government alcohol and drug services.

"Whilst this 12-month project is ambitious, the ATDC, our members and partners are committed to innovating and continuously improving our services to meet the needs of Tasmanians who seek support for their alcohol, tobacco or drug use," Mr Vautin said.



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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ACE Pilot Program participating organisations:

- Holyoake
- Tasmanian Health Service Alcohol and Drug Service
- Anglicare
- The Salvation Army
- Launceston City Mission
- Velocity Transformations (Pathways Tasmania)

Further information on Alcohol and Other Drug Cognitive Enhancement:

<https://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/ace-program>

Further information about Velocity Transformations (Pathways Tasmania):

<https://pathwaystas.org.au/programs/vt>

Available for interview:

- Dan Vautin – Sector Development Manager, ATDC
- Aldo Antolli – CEO, Pathways Tasmania

Media contact:

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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: www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/ Mindframe for Alcohol and other Drugs: https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs The Power of Words: https://adf.org.au/resources/power-words/	

Add help-seeking information

Always include help-seeking information alongside any story about alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Help and support for alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in Australia (24 hours 7 days a week):

- Alcohol and Drug Information Service - 1800 811 994
- Counselling Online - counsellingonline.org.au
- Family Drug Support - 1300 368 186

Tasmanian alcohol, tobacco and other drug support services including face-to-face services:

- ATDC Service Directory atdc.org.au/service-directory



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