

ACT AOD Sector Project eBulletin: August 2008

The monthly ACT AOD Sector eBulletin is a concise summary of information, important developments, publications, events and other information relevant to AOD Workers in the ACT. The eBulletin is an activity of the ACT AOD Sector Project, Youth Coalition of the ACT. To subscribe, submit an item or to provide feedback email ebulletin@aodsector.org.au.

News from the ACT AOD Sector Project

ACT AOD Sector Project

The ACT AOD Sector Project is a capacity building Project that began in July 2007, and is funded by ACT Health. The Youth Coalition of the ACT provides support to ACT AOD Workers to conduct the AOD Sector Project. The Project aims to build the capacity and identity of the ACT AOD sector, foster intra and cross-sectoral relationships, and improve outcomes while maintaining respect for the diversity of services and for people who are affected by AOD.

The ACT AOD Sector Project has been successful in securing funding for another 12 months, which will allow us to build on the activities that have been firmly established in the first year. [Click here](#) to download a factsheet on the new sector support activities that have been established by the Project. The ACT AOD Sector Project, Youth Coalition of the ACT would like to thank all of the services and individuals who gave their time and effort to contribute to the development of the ACT AOD Sector Project.

For more information visit www.aodsector.org.au or contact Amanda Bode, ACT AOD Sector Project Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT on info@aodsector.org.au or (02) 6247 3540.

August ACT AOD Sector Forum

The August ACT AOD sector forum will be hosted by Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation. Please note that the date and time for the August forum has changed.

Date: Friday 29 August 2008

Time: 12.45pm for arrivals, forum 1pm - 3pm.

Guest Speaker: To be confirmed

Venue: Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, Grattan Cct, Wanniasa (Behind Erindale shops)

Note: This forum is for AOD Workers only.

For more information or to RSVP contact Amanda Bode, ACT AOD Sector Project Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT on info@aodsector.org.au or (02) 6247 3540.

Submissions for September-October 2008 Training and Professional Development Calendar

The Training and Professional Development Calendar is produced bimonthly by the ACT AOD Sector Project in partnership with the Youth Coalition; and is calling for submissions for the period of September to October 2008. This calendar has an average distribution of over 500 in the ACT and surrounding areas to the youth, alcohol and other drug, mental health, family support, community and government sectors.

To include your training in the calendar for September to October, e-mail erin@youthcoalition.net or call the Youth Coalition on (02) 6247 3540.

Please submit your training details for this calendar by **Monday 11 August, 2008**.

See also the *Training and Professional Development* section for the 'ACT Training and Professional Development Calendar'.

ACT AOD Sector Forum Update

This section reports back on information shared by services, programs and workers who attend the ACT AOD Sector Forum. For further information about the following services visit www.aodsector.org.au

Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP)

Service spokesperson: Mackenzie Clare

Phone: 6205 8385, *Email:* Mackenzie.Clare@act.gov.au

ADP 2008 Group Programs:

[Click here](#) to download a flyer listing all current groups being run by the ADP. Information on commencing dates is

In This Edition...

News from the ACT AOD Sector Project

Update on Project activities.

ACT AOD Sector Forum Update

Information from services that attended the AOD Sector monthly forum.

Sector Activities and Events

Launches, key weeks, international days and program and service activities.

News from the Executive Directors' Group

Information from the EDs' group that is relevant to the AOD sector and workers.

Sector Development

Information on networks, resources, websites, factsheets and tools for workers.

Training and Professional Development

Training for the AOD and allied sectors, including upcoming seminars, conferences, bus tours, courses and other professional development opportunities.

Policy, Reports and Research

New research, reports, inquiry findings, and any key policy activities affecting the AOD sector.

Media

Media releases and news items relevant to the ACT AOD Sector.

Consumer Participation

Information items about consumer participation that are relevant to the AOD sector and workers.

Youth, Mental Health and Allied Sectors

Information from and about allied sectors that is relevant to the AOD sector and workers.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities in the ACT AOD and allied sectors.

Grants and Funding Opportunities

included below. To register or for more information phone (02) 6205 4515 or (02) 6207 9977. Upcoming grants, funding opportunities and tenders.

- **Effective Weed Control:** A free 2-hour x 5-week group program for Cannabis users wanting more information or who want to change their cannabis use. The group is commencing in 4 - 6 weeks; enrol now!
- **Relapse Prevention Program:** A free 2-hour x 6-week program for adults with substance use issues, who wish to develop and maintain healthier lifestyles. This group will be run depending on enrolments.
- **Controlling Your Drinking:** A free 4-hour program over 2 weeks designed to help you decide whether your drinking is harmful, whether alcohol may be controlling you, what you get out of drinking that may block your attempts to cut down and what you can do for yourself that alcohol is now doing. Commencing 7 August 2008, from 4.30 - 6.30pm.
- **Mindfulness Meditation & Stress Management Group:** A free group designed for individuals with, or caring for someone with, an alcohol and/or other drug issue who want to learn meditation and other mindfulness techniques. The group is commencing in 3 - 4 weeks; enrol now!
- **The Stepping Stones Course:** A structured and experiential course for families who are supporting drug dependant loved ones. Topics include: coping with stress and anger, tips about communication and boundary/limit setting with the aim of providing families with resources to assist themselves and the substance user.

Canberra Recovery Services, Salvation Army

Service spokesperson: Bob Garven

Phone: 6295 1256, Email: bob.garven@ae.salvationarmy.org

Provides a long term residential program for men aged 18 and over with dependence on alcohol, drugs or gambling. Participants are involved in group and individual support sessions and work therapy. Participants attend local AA, NA or GA meetings as part of their program.

Comorbidity Project, ACT AOD Sector Project

Service spokesperson: Steve Byrne

Phone: 6247 3540, Email: steve@youthcoalition.net

The aim of the Comorbidity Project is to assist and support non-government ACT AOD services to undertake service improvement processes to better identify and manage clients experiencing comorbid AOD and mental health issues. The Project has now established the Comorbidity Strategic Working Group and the Improved Services Initiative Grant Recipients Network.

Directions ACT

Service spokesperson: Jo Smith

Phone: 6122 8000, Email: reception@directionsact.com

Althea Medical Centre is a primary health centre that delivers health and allied services to people with AOD related health issues. Althea is a free or low cost services that is situated within Directions ACT at Woden. The Althea Wellness Centre is set to achieve positive health outcomes for people with alcohol and other drug issues through a range of clinics. At the present time 6 clinics are offered with the option to expand the services in the near future. Clinics include:

- Liver Clinic – for people wanting testing and treatment options for hepatitis C
- Hep C Wellness Program – for people with hepatitis C
- Naturopath Wellness Clinic – for relapse prevention (Cost \$15 for the remedies)
- Maternal and Child Health Clinic – for parents and their young children
- Mental Health Clinic – for assessment of comorbidity issues
- Mental Health Support – for counselling, support and referrals for comorbidity issues

Note: Bookings on 6122 8000 are necessary for all appointments.

For more information on Directions ACT Programs visit www.directionsact.com

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

Service spokesperson: Selina Walker

Phone: 6231 9555, Email: selina@gugan-gulwan.com.au

Some programs currently provided by Gugan Gulwan include:

- Information, support, advocacy, case management and court support to young people aged 12 - 25 years experiencing alcohol and other drug and/or mental health related issues. They have an Outreach Worker,

Detox Support Worker, Dual Diagnosis Worker and Coordinator.

- Friday night outreach to areas where young people gather to provide education and ensure they get home safely.
- Young Mens Group.
- Young Womens Group.
- Education in schools on AOD issues.

The Connection

Service Spokesperson: Aimee

Phone: 6279 1640, Email: aimeet@aivl.org.au

The Connection provides peer support for young Indigenous and non-Indigenous drug users, their friends and family.

The connection now sits under, and is a Project of the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA).

The Sobering Up Shelter, Centacare

Service Spokesperson: Lisa Goodisson

Phone: 6163 3711 or 0406 377 623, Email: soberingupshelter@centacare-canberra.org

Open 11pm - 11am, Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights. Provides a safe place for intoxicated persons to recover from alcohol or other drug use. The shelter is a free and confidential service.

Sector Activities and Events

Invitation to Toora Women's 25th Birthday

Toora Women Inc.

Toora Women Inc. are sending out a warm invitation for their 25th Birthday. They will celebrate 25 years of service to single women, and all the women who made this possible. There will be a plaque ceremony for current long term workers, and the launch of their new endeavour to raise community awareness of the increasing issue of homelessness for older women. The guest speaker will be ACT Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher MLA.

Date: Tuesday 12 August 2008

Time: 1:45pm-4pm

Where: The Reception Room, ACT Legislative Assembly

Cost: Free and catered

RSVP: To book a place, email adminsupport@toora.org.au by 6 August 2008.

Click here to download a flyer. For more information, phone Sira Nicholas on (02) 6122 7001.

ACT Early Intervention Awards - Promoting Collaboration, Flexibility & Responsiveness

Supportlink, Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) and Parentline

The awards are designed to highlight the significance of early intervention services in the prevention of (including but not exclusive to) child and elder abuse, family violence, substance abuse, suicide and mental illness, crime, social isolation, preventable family breakdown and homelessness. The awards also aim to promote "best practice" and excellence in community service delivery in particular, the willingness to collaborate with other agencies and deliver flexible and responsive services to clients. To support the aim of the Awards the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services and ACT Health have each contributed a \$5000 award which will be presented to the Agency/Program assessed to be the most outstanding in each category.

Visit www.earlyinterventionawards.com.au for more information on the awards and to download an application form.

News from the Executive Directors' Group

- Denise Lamb and Michael Reid from Care and Protection (C&P) met with the ED's at their July meeting. They advised that C&P are currently working on an Alcohol and Other Drug Policy which will be forwarded to the ED's for comment when available. They confirmed there is not a hard and fast rule that care plans need to go to court for changing. However, at some points in the process, they are not able to be changed during court proceedings.
- AOD services noted there had been an increase in the referrals from C&P, and that the earlier referrals were appreciated.
- AOD services expressed some concern about a lack of support for women who had their children already

removed from the home. Language barriers for clients with some C&P workers from overseas was also noted as a concern.

- It was agreed that there may be merit in pursuing some joint training between C&P workers and AOD workers.

Sector Development

Research on Families Affected by AOD Misuse: Interviews with Young People

Australian Catholic University (ACU) in partnership with Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn

The ACU is conducting a research project to better understand how we might better support young people in families where a relative has an AOD issue, particularly when that young person is helping to care for them. The project hopes to hear from young people themselves about their experiences and how they would like themselves and their families to be supported.

For further information about the project [click here](#) or contact Tim Moore, Australian Catholic University on tim.moore@acu.edu.au or phone (02) 6209 1229.

Study into the Current Practices in the Treatment of Cannabis

National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC)

NCPIC are inviting clinicians who work with clients with cannabis issues to participate in a study of the current practices in the treatment of cannabis.

The Survey is available from www.surveys.unsw.edu.au/survey/154197/e782/ until 15 August 2008.

For more information contact Amie Frewen on a.frewen@unsw.edu.au

National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC) Resources

National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC)

New issues of the NCPIC E-zine and Bulletin are now available. Additionally, their consortium partner, the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), produces an additional Bulletin series that deals with a range of cannabis-related issues from a criminal justice perspective .

Visit <http://ncpic.org.au/> to download all of the resources.

Alcohol News

DrugInfo Clearinghouse, Australian Drug Foundation (ADF)

Alcohol has been in the spotlight over the last couple of months. Some of the recent announcements are outlined in an email bulletin from DrugInfo Clearinghouse just in case you have missed any of them.

Visit www.druginfo.adf.org.au/newsletter.asp?ContainerID=alcohol_update to view the factsheet.

Calling for Contributions to the DrugInfo Clearinghouse Newsletter

DrugInfo Clearinghouse, Australian Drug Foundation (ADF)

The September 2008 issue of the Australian Drug Foundation's DrugInfo Clearinghouse newsletter will focus on prevention and early intervention of amphetamine - related harm. You are invited to contribute an article, event notice or other relevant items for publication in this issue. They are particularly interested in examples of research being put into practice. The deadline for submissions is **Monday 11 August**.

For more information or to discuss a proposed piece contact Betty Vassiliadis on (03) 9278 8138 or betty@adf.org.au

Training and Professional Development

ACT Training and Professional Development Calendar (July - August 2008)

ACT AOD Sector Project, Youth Coalition of the ACT

The bi-monthly Training and Professional Development Calendar is produced as a partnership between the ACT AOD Sector Project and the Youth Coalition of the ACT. The calendar compiles training and professional development opportunities available for workers from the AOD and allied sectors.

[Click here](#) to download the current Training and Professional Development Calendar or visit www.aodsector.org.au

For more information contact Amanda Bode, AOD Sector Project Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT on (02) 6247 3540 or info@aodsector.org.au

Comorbidity Professional Development Scholarships: for Alcohol And Other Drug and Mental Health Workers

The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

NCETA is pleased to announce the third round of Comorbidity Professional Development Scholarships. The Australian Government has allocated approximately \$3.6 million per annum to 2011-12 for the National Comorbidity Initiative (NCI). The Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) and Mental Health (MH) Comorbidity Professional Development Scholarships program has been developed as part of this initiative. The program has been allocated \$2.1 million and is coordinated by NCETA on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

The Comorbidity Professional Development Scholarships are open to Alcohol and Other Drug and Mental Health workers employed in non-government organisations. The initiative aims to enhance workers professional skills and knowledge across the comorbidities of AOD and Mental Health by providing funding to support eligible workers to undertake relevant professional development and/or training.

Round Opens: Monday 28 July 2008

Application Closing Date: Monday 25 August 2008

Announcement of Awards: Monday 27 October 2008

Application details, guidelines and related information can be found at

www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/projects/comorbidity.html

Prisoners Aid Orientation Workshop

Prisoners Aid

Prisoners Aid has been assisting prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families since 1963. This workshop anticipates the opening of the new ACT prison, the Alexander Maconochie Centre, which is due to begin operations in September this year. The program is designed for prospective volunteer members of Prisoners Aid who will work at the Alexander Maconochie Centre or make home visits to prisoners' families, members of other organisations who may be involved in working with prisoners or prisoners families and who wish to familiarise themselves with some of the issues that may arise. The program includes:

- Introduction to the activities of Prisoners Aid
- Awareness of factors contributing to crime in the community
- Supporting clients who are facing difficulties
- Operations at AMC (presented by ACT Corrective Services)
- Some practical matters in dealing with clients

When: Tuesday 12 August 2008

Time: 9am-5:30pm

Where: Volunteering ACT (Chandler Street, Belconnen)

Cost: Free

RSVP: To book a place, phone (02) 6257 4866

For more information, email prisonersaid@bigpond.com.

Introduction to the Community Sector Workshop

ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)

The aim of this half day workshop is to explore the history and values of the sector while giving new workers tips on how to navigate and network within the sector. Come along to meet and make connections with other new community sector workers and learn more about exactly "What is the Community Sector" and how you and your organisations are a part of it.

Date: Wednesday 13 August 2008

Time: 9:30am-1pm

Where: Smith Family Training Room, Corner Launceston & Easty Streets, Woden.

Cost: Members: \$33; Non-members: \$50; Government/corporate: \$66.

RSVP: To book a place, email lisa@actcoss.org.au.

For more information contact ACTCOSS on (02) 6202 7200.

Aboriginal Culture, History & Heritage Training

ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)

This one-day workshop for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers gives participants a general introduction into the recent history of Aboriginal people in Australia. It aims to improve knowledge of Aboriginal culture and dispossession, and explores ways that organisations might improve their practice to respond to the needs of Aboriginal people.

Date: Friday 8 August 2008

Time: 9:30am-4:30pm

Where: Yarramundi Reach, Lady Denman Drive

Cost: Between \$44 and \$231 depending on service type

RSVP: To book a place email les@actcoss.org.au or julie@actcoss.org.au

For more information contact ACTCOSS on (02) 6202 7200.

Better Evaluation: Better Outcomes

ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)

Evaluation is an important tool for organisations if they wish to continually improve their service to clients. This half day workshop will give you a brief overview of evaluation techniques for diverse client groups as well as information and tools to gain effective feedback and ways to use this feedback. Susan Abbot will be presenting the workshop. Susan has been working in the community sector for over twenty years and has developed a diverse range of evaluation tools to suit the sector.

Date: 21 August 2008

Time: 9:30am - 1pm

Where: ACTCOSS Meeting Room, Level 1, 67 Townshend St, Cnr Dundas Court, Phillip

Cost: HACC Service \$33; Members \$50; Non-members \$66

RSVP: To book a place email caterina.giorgi@actcoss.org.au.

For more information contact ACTCOSS on (02) 6202 7200.

Building Better Boards: the ACTCOSS Governance Workshop Program

ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)

These workshops are designed for community sector Board or Management Committee members. They give participants a broad understanding of Governance responsibilities and how to make your Board or Management Committee function more effectively. The workshops have been scheduled to fit in with a typical organisation's timetable of audits, AGM's and new Members joining their Boards. The workshops include:

- Legal Obligations - Wednesday 27 August
- Running an AGM - Wednesday 10 September
- Core Documents - Wednesday 24 September
- Planning Strategically - Wednesday 15 October
- Effective Meetings: Making them Work - Wednesday 29 October
- Board Basics - Wednesday 12 November

Date: Please see above for Workshop dates

Time: 5.30 - 7.30pm

Where: Room 10, Griffin Centre, 20 Genge St, Canberra

Cost: \$22 for members; \$27.50 for non members per workshop

RSVP: To register for any or all of these seminars please email lisa@actcoss.org.au

For more information contact ACTCOSS on (02) 6202 7200.

ACTCOSS 2008 Biennial Conference: Community Sector Futures

ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)

ACTCOSS will hold their 2008 Biennial Conference in September at the Kippax Uniting Community Centre. Guest speakers will include Chief Minister Jon Stanhope MLA, Jackie Huggins from the University of Queensland, Debbie Kilroy from Sisters Inside, Lin Hatfield Dodds from UnitingCare Australia and Jon Falzon from St Vincent de Paul Society's National Council.

Date: Thursday 4 and Friday 5 September 2008

Time: 8am-5pm Thursday and Friday

Where: Kippax Uniting Community Centre, Holt, Canberra

Cost: Members: \$165; Non-members: \$210; Corporate/Government: \$250.

RSVP: To book a place, phone (02) 6202 7200.

Policy, Reports and Research

Note: Most of the reports and research items referenced below are available from the Alcohol and Other Drug Council of Australias National Resource Centre at www.adca.org.au/content/view/19/57/

Are interventions targeted at particular population sub-groups better

than those targeting whole populations?

This topic is addressed in a well-referenced editorial in the current issue of the *International Journal of Drug Policy*. It discusses contemporary understandings of the outcomes of drug education and related interventions that target school students who are using drugs or otherwise deemed to be 'at-risk' and compares them with interventions targeting whole populations, in this case school populations. It presents a number of reasons why the targeted approaches are frequently ineffective and potentially harmful, and highlights what the authors see as the strengths of focussing on the whole school community. On the other hand, the editorial argues in support of targeted interventions for what it calls detached youth, such as those who are disengaged from the school community.

Bonell, C & Fletcher, A 2008, 'Addressing the wider determinants of problematic drug use: advantages of whole-population over targeted interventions', *International Journal of Drug Policy*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 267-9.

Understanding statistical language

Reports of various kinds—research, policy, media, etc.—frequently contain statistical language. Many readers, however, are not comfortable with key statistical terms, an understanding of which is critical to assessing the information provided. To help fill this knowledge gap the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed an online resource called Statistical Language! It explains the meaning of key terms and illustrates their use. The statistical words covered are Data; Index; Mean; Measures of Error and Spread; Median; Mode; Percentage; Population, Sample and Estimate; Probability; Quantitative and Qualitative; Range; Rate; Ratio; and Time Series.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *Statistical Language!*, 2008, Australian Bureau of Statistics, www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1332.0.55.002.

'No one should be stigmatized or discriminated against because of their dependence on drugs'

For many years sections of the United Nations (UN) System, particularly the UN International Narcotics Control Board and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have taken a conservative approach to drug policy, focusing on supply control at the expense of prevention and treatment, and opposing harm reduction measures. In recent times, UNODC has reversed this position. Furthermore, a contemporary, evidence based policy position has recently been announced at the highest level in the UN System. The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has stated that 'No one should be stigmatized or discriminated against because of their dependence on drugs'. He went on to say:

As we mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I remind all Member States of their responsibility to fully respect the rights of prisoners who are drug dependent or are in custody for drug-related crimes, especially their rights to life and a fair trial. I also call on Member States to ensure that people who are struggling with drug addiction be given equal access to health and social services. No one should be stigmatized or discriminated against because of their dependence on drugs.

Ban Ki-moon 2008, 'No one should be stigmatized or discriminated against because of their dependence on drugs'. Message on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, 26 June 2008. United Nations Information Service Vienna (UNIS) UNIS/SGSM/053, 24 June 2008.

'Beyond 2008'

'Beyond 2008' is the report of the recently-conducted International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Forum conducted in Vienna by the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Narcotic Drugs (VNGOC).

Australian NGOs were prominent in this Forum, led by personnel associated with the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD). Its purpose was to contribute to UN initiatives to review the global response to drugs—especially but not exclusively illegal drugs—that is taking place this year. The Chair of the VNGOC, Dr Eva Tongue, stated:

The outcome of 'Beyond 2008' has been a Declaration and three Resolutions adopted by consensus on 9 July, 2008 by all the participants of the Vienna Forum. These will be presented to the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Drug Demand Reduction when it meets in September 2008 to prepare for the High Level Segment of the 52nd session of CND. Please bring the declaration and resolutions to the attention of your own government and seek their support for the recommendations. We have created a series of proposals which command consensus across the rich diversity of philosophies and approaches within the NGO community. We now have the responsibility to build on that consensus and ensure that governments and international agencies draw on the recommendations to create inclusive and effective drug policy, strategy and practice.

Participants in the 'Beyond 2008' International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Forum 2008, *Beyond 2008*

Declaration, Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Narcotic Drugs (VNGOC), Vienna, www.vngoc.org

What are the effects of police confiscation of illicit drugs and syringes from people who illicit drugs?

Australian researchers, particularly Sydney-based ethnographers, have developed an impressive body of evidence of the adverse public health impacts of certain patterns of policing illicit drug use and drug users. Knowledge in this area has recently been enhanced through research conducted in Vancouver, Canada. They investigated the impacts of police confiscating drugs and injecting equipment in the absence of a formal arrest. The study found that

'... the Injectings Drug Users most affected by street-level policing tend to possess various characteristics, such as homelessness, that place them at heightened risk for various adverse health outcomes. Our findings also suggest that the confiscation of drugs and/or needles and syringes through discretionary policing practices have the potential to exacerbate drug market activity or prompt increased syringe borrowing. These findings indicate the need for ongoing evaluation of the public health impacts of discretionary policing approaches.'

Werb, D, Wood, E, Small, W, Strathdee, S, Li, K, Montaner, J & Kerr, T 2008, 'Effects of police confiscation of illicit drugs and syringes among injection drug users in Vancouver', *International Journal of Drug Policy*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 332-8.

Can distributing foil be an effective harm reduction measure?

A core strategy for reducing drug-related harms is to help users move to less harmful, non-injecting routes of administration of drugs (NIROA). With an apparently increasing availability in Australia of low-grade heroin from Afghanistan, we may see an increase in the 'chasing' of heroin. In Britain, where this route of administration is well established, researchers have investigated the outcomes of providing to people who inject illegal drugs specially produced packs of foil to promote transition from heroin injecting to inhaling. They were recruited from Needle and Syringe Programs (NSPs).

They found that, out of 320 NSP attenders, 54% took the foil packs when they became available and some new clients (non-injecting heroin users) started attending the service to obtain the foil packs. It was pointed out that this group would not otherwise have been in contact with the treatment service. Among 48 recent injectors who were provided with foil at the NSPs, '85% reported using the foil to chase heroin on occasions when they would otherwise have injected. Among the people who took it, client satisfaction with the quality and size of the foil packs was good and respondents viewed its availability as a valuable extension to the NSP's services.'

The researchers concluded that

'These findings suggest that distributing foil packs can be a useful means of engaging NSP attenders in discussions about ways of reducing injecting risks and can reduce injecting in settings where there is a pre-existing culture of heroin chasing'.

Pizzey, R & Hunt, N 2008, 'Distributing foil from needle and syringe programmes (NSPs) to promote transitions from heroin injecting to chasing: an evaluation', *Harm Reduction Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 24.

Does Circle Sentencing reduce Aboriginal offending?

As is the case in some other jurisdictions, in Canberra we have a diversion program for Indigenous offenders, the Ngambra Circle Sentencing Court, in which the local Indigenous community is involved in the sentencing process with the aim of reducing the risk of re-offending. The New South Wales equivalent has recently been evaluated. The research assessed the extent to which offenders who participate in circle sentencing show a reduction in the frequency of their offending, take longer to reoffend and/or reduce the seriousness of their offending. The findings were that Circle Sentencing has no effect on any of these outcomes:

Circle sentencing participants offended less in the 15 months following their circle. However, the same was also true of Aboriginal people sentenced in a traditional court setting (the control group). After a range of offender and offence characteristics were controlled for, we found no difference between the circle sentencing group and the control group in time to reoffend. Finally, there was no difference between the circle sentencing group and the control group in the percentage of offenders whose next offence was less serious than the reference offence.

Commenting on the findings, Dr Don Weatherburn, Director of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (the body that undertook the evaluation), said that Circle Sentencing should be strengthened rather than abandoned:

Giving Aboriginal Elders direct involvement in the sentencing of Aboriginal offenders encourages offenders to critically reflect upon their behaviour. Personal reflection on its own, however, is not

enough to reduce the risk of re-offending. Offenders also need to be given opportunities to address the factors that get them involved in crime, particularly drug and alcohol abuse.'

Fitzgerald, J 2008, Does circle sentencing reduce Aboriginal offending?, *Crime and Justice Bulletin no. 115*, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney,

www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/pages/bocsar_mr_cjb115

Mental health reference resource for drug and alcohol workers

This is the title of a publication of New South Wales Health released last year. It provides a sound overview of the topic in 92 pages. The chapters address, in turn, overview of mental illness, mental health plans and protocols, classification of mental illness, mental health services: how they work, comorbidity, and working with clients with mental health issues in an AOD setting. The document is available from the publisher and online.

NSW Health 2007, *Mental health reference resource for drug and alcohol workers*, NSW Department of Health, North Sydney, www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2007/pdf/mh_resource_1-6.pdf

Media

Launch of the National Indigenous Health Equality Council

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon

10 July 2008

The Rudd Government's efforts to reduce the 17 year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians took another step forward today with the establishment of the National Indigenous Health Equality Council. The Council will advise the Government on the development and monitoring of health-related goals and targets to support the Government's commitments to closing the appalling life expectancy gap and unacceptably high rates of child mortality in the Indigenous population. The Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, today announced that Professor Ian Anderson will be Chair of the National Indigenous Health Equality Council. As a first priority, the Government will ask the Council to consider how to boost the participation of Indigenous people in the health workforce. Releasing a new report, *Pathways into the Health and Workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: A Blueprint for Action*, Minister Roxon said that boosting the Indigenous health workforce is critical to closing the life expectancy gap.

"The National Indigenous Health Equality Council will have an ongoing role in progressing recommendations contained within the Blueprint for Action," Ms Roxon said.

Visit

www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr104.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2008&mt=7

to view the full media release.

Consumer Participation

Consumer Participation in NSW Drug and Alcohol Services - Guide

New South Wales Government, Department of Health

This Consumer participation guide provides some guidance, a framework and some practical examples on what can be done to improve the participation of consumers within AOD services. It provides a set of principles to assist health staff in facilitating consumer access to Drug and Alcohol Services.

Visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/gl/2005/GL2005_075.html to download the document.

Youth, Mental Health and Allied Sectors

Mental Health Week October 2008

ACT Health, the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) and the Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC)

Mental Health Week will be held from 5 - 11 October 2008 and aims to activate, educate and engage people around mental health and related issues through the organisation of a variety of events by individuals and organisations.

ACT Health, the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) and the Mental Health Community Coalition, are pleased to invite you to participate in the preparations and activities associated with Mental Health Week 2008.

A Coordinating Committee has been formed to commence preparations for Mental Health Week 2008. The functions of this committee include coordinating and producing a calendar of events, Assessing and approving funding reimbursement applications and providing support and assistance to Planning Group committee members.

The theme for this year is 'Participate'. This theme provides a fantastic opportunity to get creative and celebrate involvement. It also provides an opportunity to highlight mental health issues generally across the Territory.

Time is quickly running out and we need to get started. If you feel you are able to contribute in any way to these preparations, then please contact Mark Bartlett, Mental Health Policy Unit on 6207 1783. [Click here](#) to download an invitation to participate .

Employment Opportunities

Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) Manager

CAHMA is the ACT peer-based drug user's organisation. One of the main aims of CAHMA is to promote and protect the health and human rights of people who use/have used illicit drugs in the ACT. CAHMA is currently auspiced by the Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL) an organisation representing issues of national significance for people who use/have used illicit drugs.

AIVL is seeking to employ a CAHMA Manager to:

- Manage all CAHMA projects & services
- Manage CAHMA staff and volunteers
- Represent CAHMA on high level committees and at public events
- Develop and implement AIVL/CAHMA policies & procedures
- Support the ongoing development of CAHMA as an organisation.

The position is based at the CAHMA premises in Canberra. This is a full time position for 37.5 hours per week. The position currently has management responsibilities for 3 part time staff and will also need to undertake some direct project and/or service delivery work. A commencement salary of \$65,000 p.a. plus 9 percent superannuation is available. Salary packaging is also available. People with personal experience of the issues that CAHMA represents are encouraged to apply for this position.

Applicants MUST obtain the position description and selection criteria before submitting an application by contacting Annie Madden, AIVL Executive Officer on ph: (02) 6279 1600 fax: (02) 6279 1610 or email anniem@aivl.org.au

Directions ACT: Various Positions

Directions ACT are currently seeking applications for the following vacant positions:

- Clinical Manager - Full Time
- Comorbidity Project Manager - Full Time
- Training Coordinator - Part Time
- Personal Assistant to the Executive Director - Part Time
- Receptionist - Part Time
- Human Resources Coordinator - Part Time

All applications must be received by **5pm on 4 August 2008**.

Visit www.directionsact.com for each position description and selection criteria. For further information contact the Human Resources Department on 6122 8000 or email reception@directionsact.com

Grants and Funding Opportunities

National Binge Drinking Strategy Community Level Initiative: First Funding Round

Department of Health and Ageing

Under the National Binge Drinking Strategy, the Department of Health and Ageing is seeking applications from incorporated community groups or local government organisations who can demonstrate the ability to develop a prevention or early intervention project with the support of other groups in your community. Funding is available for organisations to undertake time-limited prevention and early intervention projects in city, urban, regional, rural and remote Australia. The focus of the projects will be on the prevention and reduction of binge drinking by young people, specifically in the age group 12-24 years. Selection will be merit based. Innovative projects and those representing partnerships between Community Organisations are encouraged.

An upper limit of \$150,000 plus GST (per grant) for up to two years has been set for individual project proposals. For

organisations wishing to collaborate and submit a combined proposal, an upper limit of \$250,000 plus GST (per grant) for up to two years has been set for each combined project proposal.

Organisations interested in applying must address the selection criteria in the format outlined in the application form.

Applications close: **5pm on 11 August 2008**. Application kits are available from www.health.gov.au/tenders

For more information contact Kate Murray on communitylevelinitiative@health.gov.au or 1800 209 312

First Round of FebFast Funding Grants Launched

FebFast

FebFast has commenced its first grants program to deliver funds to organisations that assist young people who have problems with substance use.

In February 2008 FebFast launched its original education, awareness and fundraising campaign, inviting Australians to take time out from their alcohol consumption, and at the same time raise funds to help Australia's Alcohol and Other Drugs Service Sector to assist young people. FebFast CEO, Fiona Healy, said the organisation's grants program would deliver a variety of \$3,000 and \$50,000 grants to services around Australia.

The funds will be distributed to organisations that work in alcohol and other drug research, prevention or service delivery, specifically associated with young people. Services interested in applying for a FebFast grant are invited to visit the organisation's website for further information at www.febfast.com.au Applicants must have Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Applications are to be submitted via email to info@febfast.com.au by **5pm Friday 22 August 2008**.