



Alcohol, Tobacco & other  
Drugs Council Tas Inc.

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Tasmania takes part in Global Day of Action

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26 June 2014

On Thursday 26 June 2014, activists in more than 50 cities around the world will make their voices heard as part of the *Support. Don't Punish.* global day of action which calls on governments to focus on helping people who use drugs so they can achieve a positive and fulfilling life.

"The *Support. Don't Punish.* campaign shines a light on the ineffectiveness of the war on drugs that has been waged for half a century. Instead of punishing people who use drugs we should be offering them services that address any health and social problems that they may have, and at the same time, respect their human rights." says Ann Fordham, Executive Director of the International Drug Policy Consortium, based in London, UK.

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania (ATDC), the peak body for community drug and alcohol treatment organisations in the State, is supporting the Global Day of Action.

ATDC CEO, Jann Smith says that the *Support. Don't Punish.* campaign has a clear message, "It is time to leave behind harmful ideology and prejudice and instead focus on the health and welfare of people who use drugs, and their families and communities."

"We need more investment in proven cost-effective harm reduction responses for people who use drugs, and for the provision of support and treatment."

"We need to start looking at this from a health and social welfare perspective, and consider the ways that we can provide support to these individuals. In most cases, therapeutic interventions result in far better outcomes for the individual, their families and the community."

In Tasmania the Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative (IDDI) and the Court Mandated Diversion (CMD) programs are examples of alternative approaches used to address issues associated with drug use and crime. The IDDI provides a police diversion program for people caught using or possessing small quantities of illicit drugs to a number of community sector organisations for appropriate education, counselling or referral. The CMD program enables Magistrates to sentence eligible offenders into treatment for their drug use as an alternative to a custodial sentence. Evidence suggests that prison recidivism rates have dropped for those participants involved in the Program.

Jann Smith observed that, "When they're on the programs people are not offending and if they're not offending, the community is being protected."

Residential rehabilitation also plays a vital role in rebuilding the capacity of people with drug dependence, to live to their full potential and make positive contributions to our community.

"More government investment in rehabilitation services will generate significant return on investment. There are many stories from residential rehabilitation where individuals have been successfully supported to recover.

However, long waiting lists show that many more in our community need access to effective addictions treatment, and we need increased funding to support them” said Jann Smith, ATDC CEO.

For more information about *Support. Don't Punish.* visit the website <http://supportdontpunish.org/action/>

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