

## ATDC

# CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies has been put in charge of the brief to evaluate the consumer engagement platforms of the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC).

Major findings in our research demonstrate overwhelming and consistent support across the sector for the design and delivery of an organisation dedicated to promoting and amplifying voice and lived experiences of AOD usage. The organisation is seen as a way to fill a crucial gap in advocacy, service delivery and representation across our state.

The authors would like to thank all the Tasmanian AOD organisations that have participated to our research since September 2021, as well as all lived experience advocates whom we interviewed. We are grateful for their input, and the rich data that we were able to obtain thanks to these interactions.

As part of this independent research, TILES has produced a series of separate outputs which are available on the TILES website (see [https://www.utas.edu.au/tiles/research/current\\_projects](https://www.utas.edu.au/tiles/research/current_projects)). These outputs include:

- A preliminary report, following a consumer engagement consultative workshop held at the ATDC conference in 2021;
- A scoping literature review (update available from November 2022);
- A progress report (April 2022), and
- A full report that will be available on the TILES and ATDC websites from November 2022.

**Suggested reference:** Bartkowiak-Théron, I; Barnes, A, Asquith, NL & Rodgers, J. (2022) Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Council of Tasmania: Briefing Paper on the proposed independent organisation. Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania.

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## Introduction

Early 2021, the ATDC sought to evaluate its consumer projects, and to explore what consumer and service providers wanted to see in an independent organisation dedicated to consumer engagement and AOD lived experiences.

In answer to this, the Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) team at the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies (TILES) offered an independent project brief for consideration. This short brief is the penultimate deliverable of this research, and is aimed to solely focus on aim 5 of the research, which provides context to the ATDC's business proposal for the development of a lived experience independent organisation for the AOD sector in Tasmania. The final full report will be available from November 2022 on the ATDC and TILES websites.

## Method and participants

Empirical methods used in this project were largely qualitative and consultative, and adopted the framework of appreciative inquiry. Researchers engaged in a series of in-depth, semi-structured discussions with 1) ATDC stakeholders and AOD agencies, and 2) lived experienced advocates (also known as LEAs). A total of about 35 hours of interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed, with about 75% of the ATDC membership and AOD sector organisations agreeing to participate in the research.

## Two main findings

### Consensus on the value of consumer engagement and lived experience for the sector

- All participants agreed on the diverse wealth of knowledge that lived experiences can bring to the AOD sector as an immeasurable asset.

### Support for the creation of an independent organisation for lived experiences of AOD

- Overwhelming support for a self-determined, 'grassroots' style body or organisation (hereafter 'organisation')

- Every single one of our interviewees, from either group, identified a pressing need for an organisation dedicated to consumer engagement and AOD lived experiences
- What was made clear throughout the interviews, was that an organisation dedicated to AOD advocacy through lived experience was an urgent necessity for the state. All participants identified a glaring 'gap' in how government and non-government organisations engage and listen to the 'voice' of AOD consumers.
- All research participants indicated a pressing need to fill a well-perceived and well acknowledged 'voice' gap in AOD service delivery in Tasmania. This gap is accompanied by significant stigma and organisational structural obstacles that, while already being addressed slowly by the ATDC and its members (with, for example, a change from 'consumer' to 'lived experienced advocacy' terminology, now well adopted across the board), remain a concern for stakeholders in particular.
- Except for one participant, all other interviewees from either participant groups expressed a crucial need for the organisation to remain solely focused on AOD.

## About the ATDC

The ATDC 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. Its vision is a Tasmania without alcohol, tobacco or other drug related harm or discrimination.

As an independent not-for-profit organisation, the ATDC represents a broad range of alcohol, tobacco and other drug organisations. These organisations provide information and awareness, prevention and early intervention, harm-reduction and specialised treatment and recovery services and programs.

The ATDC plays a vital role in leading, collaborating and advocating for increased investment into treatment services, and population based initiatives that reduce the harms associated with problematic substance use across Tasmania.

The ATDC supports the sector by delivering training, networking and information sharing opportunities, as well as undertaking policy and advocacy projects with, and on behalf of our members. At all times our work is underpinned by a commitment to evidence-based practices and policies, consumer participation, harm reduction, and partnerships and collaboration.

## About TILES

Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies (TILES) is committed to excellence in law enforcement research. Collaborative research that links academics with practitioners is a hallmark of that research. The Institute focuses on four strategic priorities namely research, teaching, communication, and professionalism.

**TILES Vision** | To achieve an international reputation for excellence in law enforcement research.

**TILES Mission** | To conduct and promote evidence-based research to improve the quality of law enforcement and enhance community safety.