



# CEO Communique #17 August 2024

These communiques provide a snapshot of the work the [ATDC team](#) are undertaking on behalf of the sector. Questions? Contact [Jackie](#)



## Advocating for increased investment

This remains the number one advocacy piece in the immediate future for us as a peak body. We have heard that services are shrinking and will continue to do so if we do not have appropriate indexation applied to all future contracts. There are also the continuation of the peer worker grants that do not have any continued funding post December this year. Advocacy work is front of mind and occurring at state and national levels. Please read on to understand the activity we have taken on your behalf.

### Advocacy to State and Federal Governments

The ATDC has been regularly advocating to state and commonwealth governments around these issues; recent activity includes:

- The ATDC Board met with Minister Guy Barnett at the July Board meeting to raise funding issues and impacts on ATDC members. Moving forward, indexation applied on eligible contracts renewed in the 24/25 is set to be 3.5% (base rate). Last year total indexation was 4% (included a base rate plus an uplift component). We are aware that recent cost pressures means that services will continue to be impacted. We will continue to advocate regarding the shift to five-year funding contracts (promised for July 2025) and the push for timely renewals of contracts.
- The ATDC CEO met with Federal Department of Health and Ageing representatives to discuss issues related to the flow of funding to organisations and the low levels of indexation applied to PHT sector contracts (~1.6%). There is also the DATSUM (supplementary measure) component of this funding that is not being offered in 2025/26 financial year. The ATDC, through national networks, will continue to advocate for the continuation of DATSUM, adequate indexation, and timely renewals of contracts.



### **New position paper - Funding sustainability!**

- The development of a new position paper [Funding Sustainability for the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Sector](#) has been endorsed by the ATDC Board. Kudos to Dan Vautin, Director of Policy & Impact for managing this work. This paper will support our advocacy on the above issues.

### **The timing of the State Budget 2024**

The 2024 State Budget will be handed down on September 12 2024. It is usually handed down in May but was delayed due to the timing of the state election. The ATDC developed the [2024-25 ATDC Budget Priority Statement](#). We have continued to advocate for this as well as raise the priorities articulated in the submissions from our member organisations.

Looking forward to next year (State Budget 25/26), we expect that the timing of budgets (and due submissions) will revert back to the regular schedule. So, we expect to work with our members to develop a submission to Treasury by December this year. We will let you know when we know when this is confirmed.

### **Peer Worker Grants**

Peer Workers have been transformative in their impact on client outcomes and experience in the ATOD sector. The second year of this 'pilot' program is underway with funding due to run out at the end of 2024/start of 2025. The ATDC has been strongly advocating to the MHADD and the Health Minister promoting the success, and querying the sustainability, of this work beyond the two-year grants round. The MHADD had committed to an evaluation of the peer grants and we have been enquiring on the timeline for this to support future funding rounds. Rest assured the advocacy for this is strong and this pressing issue is recorded in minutes and risk registers across a range of government processes.



### **Amplifying the voice of lived experience**

[Review of Lived Experience](#) – the ATDC was notified in December 2023 that the State Department of Health had contracted the Centre of Mental Health Service Innovation to conduct a review of lived experience activities across AOD, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention areas. The stakeholder engagement component of this work has still not yet commenced with the timeline for completion pushed back to December 2024. We have no further information on the details of this work at this stage except that we have been told that it will commence soon.



**The Independent Lived Experience Organisation:** Frustratingly, the ATDC's progression of this work is stalled due to the review above. An independent organisation is a long standing strategic priority of the ATDC, member organisations as well as our valued and committed Lived Experience Advocates. It has also been a standing commitment of the current government. There has been extensive consultation on this, this priority is articulated in successive government documents (eg Reform Agenda) and our sector has contributed to [The Time is Now](#) business case that shows the services an independent lived experience organisation would bring to our sector.

**Lived Experience Advocate Service:** The [LEAS](#) continues to strengthen the voice of lived experience with several noteworthy activities in the past few months. Across the last financial year, the Advocates completed 968 hours of volunteering in various roles including interview panels, working groups, media, consultations, and presentations.

**Youth LEAS** –The LEAS successfully recruited and provided training to ten 'youth LEAs' to support work by the Department to develop a Youth Framework for the AOD sector. The new Advocates have gotten off to a flying start through focus groups and other advocacy work. It is fantastic to see the growth and diversity in lived experience perspectives now offered to the sector.

Don't forget an ATDC member can request the service of an Advocate for free, [if you would like to do so, please go here](#). Not sure what Advocates do? [Click here](#).



### **Tackling stigma and discrimination**

**Tasmanian ATOD Communications Charter:** In a recent meeting with the ATDC Board, Minister Guy Barnett expressed an interest in the ATDC Communications Charter. A long discussion ensued about the importance of language when discussing health issues and how this impacts help-seeking and treatment efficacy. The ATDC will seek to promote the Communications Charter whenever it can: it is a standard recommendation to all media outlets we interact with to become aware of the Charter and the importance of language.

**Stigma Awareness:** The ATDC continues to raise the issue of AOD stigma and here's some examples: we are currently updating our ATDC position paper on the topic with Advocates consulted, we recently supported LEA Lily Foster to author an op-ed on the Support. Don't Punish day of action that was published by The Mercury on the day. Dan Vautin, Director of Policy and Impact continues to provide advocacy sessions to raise awareness of AOD stigma to the cross sector and other groups when requested. Discussions about stigma and the impact thereof are a regular feature of our media engagements.

If you identify any opportunities in the cross sector for a AOD stigma awareness session, please contact [Dan Vautin](#) to discuss. The Drug Education Network (DEN) can also offer training in reducing stigma.



## Representing the sector

The team continue to represent the sector on many working groups and committees. Meetings over the past three months included:

**Interagency Drug Policy Committee (IDPC):** Since the release of the Tasmanian Drug Strategy in May this group has met once in July with the initial focus on reviewing an Implementation Plan as developed by the TDS Advisory Group. Coordinated by the Tasmanian Department of Health, this Committee includes representatives from across a range of government agencies (DPAC, Tas Police, Justice, Education, Liquor and Gaming etc.).

**Tasmanian Drug Strategy Advisory Group:** This group is responsible for progressing work related to the TDS for endorsement at the IDPC and last met in early August with the intent of developing the Implementation Plan. The action from this group was to provide feedback on the implementation plan prior to the next meeting in September. The aim is to have the plan completed by September 2024.

**Statewide Mental Health Services Reform Program Group:** This is a meeting chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Community Mental Health and Wellbeing and includes updates from the four mental health reform streams as well as the AOD reform stream. This is attended mostly by departmental staff as well as Mental Health Council, Mental Health Lived Experience Tasmania and Mental Health Families and Friends. This group recently met in May and July and updates on the AOD Reform Agenda were provided by SWMHS and ATDC CEO.

**AOD Reform Project Control Group:** As mentioned in previous communiques, this group oversees progress against the AOD Reform Agenda. These meetings continue to be held regularly and the ATDC is a member alongside Primary Health Tasmania, and two community-managed AOD service providers (currently The Salvation Army and The Link Youth Health Service). The two current working groups that supported the large scale funded reform projects to this date - [detox@home](#) and Drug and Alcohol ED Brief Intervention Team (DABIT). Both projects have concluded within the Reform Agenda process and are now operating within Alcohol and Drug Service.

**Mental Health Integration Hub (Safe Haven) Partnerships Group** – this group meets monthly to support the Peacock Centre Integration ‘Safe Haven’ Hub in Mount Stuart in the south of the state. The ATDC Reform Project Officer/Manager Lived Experience represents ATDC members on this group. This group recently identified opportunities to facilitate partnerships between the Safe Haven Hub and AOD Service providers in Hobart.

**AOD Continuing Care Steering Committee** – This is a group that oversees a project run through the Department of Health that focuses on care for people entering and exiting secure facilities (e.g. prisons). Within the last week there has been a meeting of this group, the first meeting back since October 2023. Currently the Tasmanian Government is awaiting signoff on its Action Plan from the relevant Departments.



**Priority Populations and Community Representative Advisory Group (Mental Health and Suicide Prevention)** – The Manager Lived Experience is a member of this group that met in June. The Manager represents the collective voice of lived experience and this is a good example of systemic advocacy ensuring the collective priorities of people with lived experience are represented.

**LEX Training HUB Steering Committee:** The [LEX Training Hub](#) is a project with Mental Health Council of Tasmania that seeks to support the Lived Experience workforce in Tasmania – both in providing training pathways for individuals wishing to become peer workers and also capacity raising for organisations wanting to improve their systems and workplaces to incorporate people working in lived experience roles. The ATDC alongside the Drug Education Network and the Salvation Army represent the AOD workforce on this group. This group are progressing course content currently.

**Tasmanian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Action Plan Advisory Group Meeting** – this group has met twice in 2024 in March and June. These two meetings occurred following a significant hiatus in this work. Drug Education Network are also on this group. The initial work involves a review of the Action Plan (drafted two years ago) and the Terms of Reference.

**AOD CEO Peaks Network:** this group consists of CEOs from AOD peak organisations across the country and is coordinated by the [AADC](#). This group meets monthly to discuss issues at the national level. Please see page one for information on the latest meetings where this group meets directly with Commonwealth Alcohol and Drug Branch representatives to discuss issues such as funding through Primary Health Tasmania, Opioid Dependence Treatment Program, NIAA funding and also to advocate for robust governance arrangements at the Federal level more generally. There has been several questions and discussions around the funding process through Primary Health Network – particularly regarding indexation and the general challenge with last minute renewals for funding ( the most recent renewal came one week before the funding concluded). This advocacy continues with all eyes on the DATSUM component in 2025-26.

**AADC Policy Officers:** this group is convened by our national peak body the AADC. This is a meeting of policy officers from each state and territory jurisdiction as well as some representing specialist organisation within the ATOD sector nationally. The submissions developed by this group on national ATOD issues [can be found here](#).

**Peaks Capacity Building Network (PCBN):** this group is attended by staff from all of the AOD peaks in each state and jurisdiction in Australia that have carriage of the sector capacity building program.

**EAG Suicide Prevention** – this is a meeting run by [Everymind](#). The project will provide a landing page for Tasmanians caring for someone (18 or over) who experiences suicidality. This includes an [online support and information service](#).

However...



**Supporting the workforce**



ATDC Workforce Survey 2023: Assoc Prof. Raimondo Bruno delivered a comprehensive presentation to launch the Workforce Survey 2023 on 30 May. Over 30 people attended from across the community sector. The report and presentation is now live on the [website](#) and a series of social posts are scheduled to be shared over the coming fortnight promoting the sector and the survey publicly.

### International Overdose Awareness Day

Our annual event is coming up soon, on September 2 2024 with events in the three regions of Tasmania. Please see the registration links below.

#### FOR THE DIARY!

1. Registration link for Hobart event, hosted by ATDC and Drug Education Network : [International Overdose Awareness Day - nipaluna/Hobart Tickets, Mon 02/09/2024 at 10:00 am | Eventbrite](#)
2. Registration link for Launceston event, hosted by Anglicare Tas in collaboration with LCM and The Salvation Army: [International Overdose Prevention Day 2024 - Launceston Tickets, Mon, Sep 2, 2024 at 11:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)
3. Registration link for Burnie event, hosted by Youth, Family & Community Connections (YFCC) : [International Overdose Awareness Day - Burnie, Tasmania Tickets, Mon, Sep 2, 2024 at 11:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)

Want more information on any of these events? Email Sector Development Project Officer [Ruzina Dahal](#).

The 'Breakfast Club' series of meetings were deployed in Devonport and Hobart in June with the ATDC in partnership with the AOD Reform Team Department of Health. Participants reported an increase in confidence in networking, improved networks, and most attendees reported that they could see opportunities for referral and collaboration. Nearly all stated that they would like to be invited to more breakfast networking sessions. Budget allowing, the SCB team would like to see how to continue such networking in the future.

ATOD Sector & the TasCOSS Industry Plan Workforce Coalition: [this group](#) continues to meet regularly to discuss issues of concern regarding the community sector workforce. This is an important role for the ATDC to ensure that the ATOD sector is represented in broader community sector workforce discussions and TasCOSS' work to roll out the community sector Industry Plan.

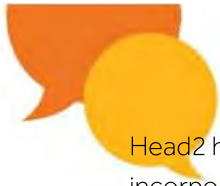
AOD Reform Agenda work: [development of a workforce strategy](#): Initial scoping for this work has commenced that included a project plan and the commencement of a literature review. The ATDC Reform Project Officer was leading this work, however this role is currently vacant. This work is currently in hiatus until this position is recruited to.



### Championing the data & evidence

[ATOD Shared Data Project](#): This is being progressed through the Central Intake Referral System (CIRS). As reported previously, Phase 2 of the ATDC project was not funded through the State Budget and AOD data collection is now seen to be included as a component of a MH central intake / assessment model that is in development (aka CIRS). The Department reports it is progressing this work but that stage one will be a transition of





Head2 health data. The Department shared that this work is progressing but that it is "two years off" engaging the AOD sector to have AOD data incorporated into this work. The intention is still there to use the work from the ATDC data project when the AOD sector is engaged to provide input into this process. This area is slow moving.



## Leading and Navigating Change (Policy & Reform)

**Questions in Parliament:** In June Leg Co Member, The Hon Mike Gaffney asked two questions in the Upper House that are relevant to our members – one on indexation currently applied to state government contracts and the other on funding certainty for AOD peer workers. We await a response in Parliament.

**AOD Reform Agenda** – Our Reform Project Officer position has been vacant since July 1. We will seek to recruit once we know if we are successful in receiving an additional three years of project funding in the Tasmanian State Budget in September. Since the last communique in March however the ATDC has been working collaboratively with the DoH Reform team and the AOD sector to shape up some projects for the 2024-25 year that include the development of an AOD Youth Sector Framework, Service System Framework and a Workforce Strategy. One round of sector wide consultations has occurred and the second round is scheduled for Wednesday August 7 in Campbell Town. Please contact the AOD Reform team on [aodreform@health.tas.gov.au](mailto:aodreform@health.tas.gov.au) if you would like more information.

**Tasmanian Drug Strategy (TDS):** The [Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2024-2029](#) was released in May and, as stated above, there has been a meeting by the Advisory Group and the IDPC to identify some actions to progress. At this stage it is unclear the quantum of funding attached to this Strategy.

**Updates to ATDC position papers** – the DPI is currently updating two position papers on the topics of drug checking and stigma. With regard to drug checking – joining the ACT, we now have Queensland implementing drug checking services and Victoria making a recent announcement of an intention to do similar. Regarding AOD stigma, we still hear reports of people who use drugs reporting experiencing stigma. While the Communications Charter supports interactions with the media, our recent Workforce Survey showed that there was still considerable work to do when it comes to challenging and dismantling stigma within the health system. There has been consultation with Lived Experience Advocates on the stigma paper and we look forward to sharing a new version with you.

**National Peak Body (AADC) policy submissions:** The national peak continues to be incredibly active in submitting a range of policy submissions where ATOD may be relevant. The ATDC continues to feed into this work alongside our state and territory counterparts. Since the last CEO Communique in March, there has been an impressive number of submissions (they are on fire!) including but not limited to:

- [Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Inquiry into Excess Mortality \(May 2024\)](#)
- [Submission to the National Autism Strategy \(June 2024\)](#)



- [Submission to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee Inquiry into the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment \(Vaping Reforms\) Bill 2024 \(April 2024\)](#)
- [Submission to the Select Committee on Cost of Living \(April 2024\)](#)

**Promotion, Prevention, Early Intervention Framework:** Consultants, Allen & Clarke met with ATDC staff and other stakeholders across May as part of a process to inform a PPEI framework for AOD, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention sectors in Tasmania. The PPEI Framework EAG met in July to provide feedback on a draft literature review. ATDC Director, Policy & Impact provided written feedback to the MHADD on the document prior to the meeting. There were numerous concerns around the draft content, chief of which was the apparent lack of visibility in the document of ATDC member work.

### **ATDC 2025 Conference!**

Hooray! It is conference planning time. We have a great committee, drawn from the AOD sector whose chief role is to inform the program. We have ensured that there is representation from all parts of our sector – resi rehabs, government Alcohol and Drug Service, regional, youth, lived experience representation. We have it covered. Our first task is to identify 2-3 big name keynotes so Naomi, our event organiser, can go to work with marketing and advertising and attracting sponsors. In the mean time the key details are:

ATDC Conference

Grand Chancellor Hotel, nipaluna/Hobart

June 25-26, 2025.





Claire Ripper finished up as Reform Project Officer in June and commenced as Manager Lived Experience in July. Currently the Reform Project Officer role is vacant, as future funding is contingent on the September budget announcement. Following a hopefully September announcement we will advertise for this role, so if you are looking for project work and would like to work with us, please stay tuned.

We have [Skills-based Director positions open right now open on the ATDC Board](#). Please click on the link for all the information you need to apply.

### **And, did you know....**

We said goodbye to Greg Taylor, our Director – Lived Experience in June.

And we warmly congratulate Matthew Devendish who was appointed to the CEO role at Pathways (Matthew was more recently acting in the role after Aldo Antolli resigned in June).

Until next time, thank you for all the work you do for Tasmanians.

Jackie  
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