Acknowledgment of the Lived and Living Experience of Alcohol and Other Drugs in Tasmania

We, The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council (ATDC) Tasmania, acknowledge and deeply value the diverse voices and experiences of people with Lived and Living Experience of alcohol and other drugs. We acknowledge that experiences with alcohol and other drug use are unique to everyone. We value the various support networks who stand alongside people within this community, offering care, support, and strength through challenging times.

Harm, stigma and discrimination

Alcohol and other drug use can be accompanied by harm, stigma, and discrimination for many, with significant impacts on health and wellbeing. Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs continue to be a major cause of harm in Tasmania, and is a significant driver of preventable death, disease and illness, and psychological distress. Their impacts extend across health, social, and economic domains, which ultimately intersects with the housing, education and employment sectors and often the justice system.

Stigma and discrimination can affect not only individuals but also the broader community which impact equity, access, and opportunity for all.

The voice of Lived and Living Experience illuminates the realities of substance use and its intrinsic link to human rights, health, and dignity. This highlights that problematic use of alcohol and other drugs is a health issue—not a character or moral failing—and that it does not define a person. The voice and advocacy of those with Lived and Living experience, promotes empathy, inclusivity, and supportive environments and challenges entrenched stereotypes.

We stand together to call for an end to these inequities and for the creation of a Tasmania where all people seeking support are met with respect and without fear of recrimination or reprisals. We support and advocate for the Tasmanians with Substance Declaration of human rights.

Appreciation for Advocacy

To those who use their Lived and Living Experience of alcohol and other drugs to advocate to improve our health sector and community: we thank you. Your voices and insights are a catalyst for change; challenging stigma, deepening understanding, and fostering meaningful progress across Tasmania's AOD and broader health sectors.

Through your advocacy, the Lived and Living Experience community fosters connection, solidarity, and hope. Your stories inspire others to challenge misconceptions, embrace resilience, and work towards a future where people feel valued and supported, treatment and support services are strengthened, and stigma and discrimination is reduced. By amplifying the collective voice, you help to build a trauma-informed and inclusive community that prioritises autonomy, choice, and diversity.

We celebrate the significant contributions of Lived and Living Experience Advocates, and Peer Workers. Your expertise, passion, and dedication improve the lives of people, families, and the wider Tasmanian community. Together, we honour your essential voice and shared commitment to creating a future where dignity, respect, and understanding are the foundation of every decision that impacts Tasmanians.

This acknowledgment was co-designed with Tasmanians who have Lived and Living Experience of AOD use. It is a living document, reflecting the evolving needs and priorities of the community. We acknowledge that this document will require periodic review to remain relevant and responsive to these changes. We encourage the use of this document in its intended purpose, within the Tasmanian AOD specialist and health sectors. For any enquiries, please contact Claire Ripper – Manager Lived Experience claire@atdc.org.au