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Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania

MEDIA RELEASE

Treatment gap for alcohol and other drugs in Australia

27 February 2025

A new report by the University of New South Wales drawing on data from the Drug and Alcohol Services Planning Model has found that there is significant unmet demand for the treatment of people with substance use disorders.

The report says the number of people who received alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment in Australia in 2023 was estimated to be 198,731 people, while between 207,966 and 469,767 Australians could not access alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment in 2023.

This pointed to a significant gap in demand for service for alcohol and other drug related issues across Australia.

The report authors noted that "In Australia, we only treat between 30% and 48% of the population who would seek and benefit from AOD treatment. "

The CEO of the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council in Tasmania, Jackie Hallam, said frontline workers in Tasmania were reporting a similar trend here.

"Tasmanian data in this space is being collated and will be available in the middle of this calendar year," she said.

"We are expecting a similar story to the national numbers, the research results reveal that AOD treatment in Australia is significantly underfunded and under-resourced.

"In a Tasmanian context, we need to start talking about this underinvestment and what we need to do to address it.

"We also need to recognise the pivotal role that community organisations have in addressing problems early, keeping people healthy and away from hospitals and prisons"

"If we continue to ignore that many more Tasmanians are wanting help than our service system can provide then problems will continue to worsen and seen elsewhere across the system"

One good example of this is access to withdrawal services on the north west coast. Lack of access to withdrawal (also known as detox) causes a blockage in people wanting to go to resi rehabs. You often need a

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short stay in a detox facility in order to progress to a rehab stay. When detox services are located in the south and in limited supply, this means that people in the regions struggle to get there.

"The number and proportion of people missing out on AOD treatment should be used to better plan for service needs."

"We are halfway through a reform process and many of our long standing problems still remain. In order to unlock the potential and turn around Tasmanians' lives, we need to dedicate resourcing in our regions and communities".

Released by:

- Nicolas Turner
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Available for interview:

- Jackie Hallam - CEO, ATDC

Who are the ATDC?

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania 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.

Our vision is a Tasmania without alcohol, tobacco or other drug related harm or discrimination.

No Harm, No Discrimination
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Language matters

Language is powerful, especially when discussing alcohol and other drugs and the people who use them. Stigmatising language reinforces negative stereotypes. "Person-centred" language focuses on the person, not their substance use.

When reporting on people who use alcohol and other drugs....	
Try this 👍	**Not this** 👎
Substance use, non-prescribed use	Abuse, misuse, problem use, non-compliant use
Person who uses drugs	Drug user, drug abuser
Person with a dependence on....	Addict, junkie, druggie, alcoholic
Person experiencing drug dependence	Suffering from addiction, has a drug habit
Person who has stopped using drugs	Clean, sober, drug-free
Person with lived experience of drug dependence	Ex-addict, former addict, used to be a...
Please see the *Language matters* resource at: www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/ Mindframe for Alcohol and other Drugs: https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs The Power of Words: https://adf.org.au/resources/power-words/	

Add help-seeking information

Always include help-seeking information alongside any story about alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Help and support for alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in Australia (24 hours 7 days a week):

- Alcohol and Drug Information Service - 1800 811 994
- Counselling Online - counsellingonline.org.au
- Family Drug Support - 1300 368 186

Tasmanian alcohol, tobacco and other drug support services including face-to-face services:

- ATDC Service Directory atdc.org.au/service-directory

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