

*Do you have alcohol and other drug issues in your community?*

*Would you like to know more about the resources and services available to support people experiencing challenges with alcohol and other drugs?*

*Want some assistance in how to respond if someone comes to the house looking for assistance, or is intoxicated?*

## **Connecting people impacted by alcohol and other drugs with support through Neighbourhood Houses**

### **Background**

Over recent years some Neighbourhood Houses have reported an increase in people presenting with alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) related issues. Some staff and volunteers in Neighbourhood Houses have suggested that having a greater understanding of how they can support people with these issues, and how they can connect people with specific professional support would be very beneficial.

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania has been aware of these issues and in 2014 agreed to work with the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Council (ATDC) to help houses and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services to work together to improve support for Tasmanians affected by AOD issues. A grant application was submitted to the Australian Government Department of Social Services, and the ATDC has received funding for this project.

The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Council (ATDC) is the peak body representing the interests of community sector organisations that provide services to people with substance misuse issues in Tasmania.

### **What are the aims of the project?**

We want to build connections between staff and volunteers in Neighbourhood Houses, and the workers in ATDC member services to:

- provide NH staff and volunteers with a basic understanding of drug and alcohol misuse issues
- demonstrate the potential of houses as a neutral, safe and respectful environment in which to meet, for AOD sector workers,
- provide NH staff and volunteers with information about appropriate referral pathways to AOD services
- provide expert support to houses when the need for local forums on a specific issue is identified
- provide ATOD related resources and information to houses

The project is not about adding additional work to the busy programs of Houses, but rather aims to provide skills and resources that enable staff and volunteers to further strengthen the services and supports already provided.

### How will we do this?

The project coordinators, Tamara Speed (ATDC) and Jonathan Bedloe (NHT) will be working with NH staff and volunteers to develop the best ways to do this. Later this year, the ATDC will find out what assistance neighbourhood house workers need to increase their knowledge, confidence and ability to discuss AOD issues with community members, and connect them with appropriate services.

Some activities that are being considered include the following:

- annual **bus tours** across each of the 3 regions for members. Neighbourhood house workers will be taken on a tour of local AOD services and gain an overview of the AOD programs and join with AOD workers for morning tea and lunch
- in 2016, the ATDC will host joint **training** for NHT and ATDC members on topics identified by Neighbourhood House workers and volunteers
- the ATDC may host lunch and facilitate some regionally based discussions to lead on after one of the NH regional meetings

### What's next?

We have established a Project Advisory Group, with two members from Neighbourhood Houses and two members from alcohol and drug services. Along with the project coordinators from NHT and ATDC, this group will provide advice as to the best approaches and activities to be conducted during the project.

Tamara and Jonathan have started, and will continue to visit houses and talk about the program and find out how we can help houses respond appropriately to the needs of your communities.

You can order resources relating to alcohol and drug services through the ATDC.

If you want more information about the project, or if you have ideas to contribute to the project, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us through the details below.

### About the ATDC

*The ATDC is a membership-based, independent, not-for-profit and incorporated organisation which is the key body advocating for adequate systemic support and funding for the delivery of evidence-based alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) initiatives.*

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