



Drug Education Network 2022-2023 Annual Report



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Drug Education Network acknowledges the strength, resilience and capacity of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their deep and lasting cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship as ongoing custodians of the skies, land and waters of lutruwita / Tasmania. We recognise that our organisation operates on the land of the traditional custodians and we pay our respect to Elders past and present. DEN is proud to work with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to prevent the harms caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Executive Summary

The 2023 financial year was a big year for change for the Drug Education Network. A change in CEO after many years had the potential to create a level of instability within the organisation but instead, what has transpired is a considered and intentional focus in direction that has increased the stability and continuity of the organisation.

As DEN has transitioned from one strong leader to another, we have gratefully secured a three-year funding contract with our primary funders, the State Government, through the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate. This funding commitment further demonstrates the priority given to the important work we are undertaking within the Tasmanian community. Tasmanians need access to trustworthy information to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing, and we will continue to provide access to that information for the foreseeable future.

We continue to work towards a future free from harms caused by alcohol and other drugs with growth across all of our services and investment in expansion of our future education and training offerings.

We have proven our commitment to the health and wellbeing of young Tasmanians by delivering drug education to more students, across more schools than ever before.

We have continued to take significant steps toward a Tasmania free from instances of drug-related stigma and discrimination by integrating lived experience into our training sessions, and by providing an innovative new online hub to increase access to information and resources when and where people feel safe to access them.

We were recognised by our sector peers at the Tasmanian Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Sector Awards, with the Organisation/Program Award for Excellence for our Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Project, in its final year of completion.

As we move forward with Emily at the helm, we wish to extend our thanks as a team to our Board of Governance for helping us to transition through our leadership change so seamlessly. We appreciate your guidance and support immensely.

This report outlines our achievements throughout the 2023 financial year. We are proud of the significant work we have undertaken, and all that we have achieved.



About DEN

The Drug Education Network (DEN) is a not-for-profit health promotion organisation. We provide school education, workforce training, resources and information to help keep Tasmanians safe from harms caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Our Position

The Drug Education Network (DEN) neither condones nor condemns the use of drugs. Rather, we acknowledge that drug use exists irrespective of legal status or societal norms.

Our Purpose:

To prevent and reduce harm from drugs through education and leadership.

Our Vision:

Communities free from the harms of drugs.

Our Strategy:

We operate under a board of governance, in line with a strategic plan and key performance indicators set by our main funding body: the Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Directorate (the Department of Health, Tasmania).

If you would like to learn more about our Strategic Plan, you can do so here:

<https://den.click/strategy>

Our Health Promotion Approach

The Drug Education Network (DEN) strategically undertakes specific activities to prevent and reduce harm from drugs through leadership and education.

We support the Tasmanian community by providing state-wide access to evidence-based, age-appropriate information, education, resources, and training.

We help individuals to better understand and prevent alcohol and other drug-related harm within their own lives, and across their broader communities from as young as grade 5.

We equip Tasmanian workers with the tools and training they need to keep themselves and their clients safe.

We inform policy makers through best-practice information, encouraging stigma reduction through appropriate health-focused, evidence-based submissions and advice.

We offer information and resources that are suited to the health literacy needs of their intended audiences.

All activities and service offerings provided by our team are evidence-based and aligned with best practice health promotion methodologies. These methodologies are applied to five distinct health promotion activity streams:

1. **Leadership, sector representation, and advocacy**
2. **Implementation and monitoring of new education, training, and resources**
3. **Community education, resource development and distribution**
4. **Dissemination of information to priority populations**
5. **Research, analysis and evaluation, and**
6. **Workforce development and training**

By undertaking activities within each activity stream, we are working towards our vision of communities free from harm, while ensuring optimal, evidence-based outcomes for the people we support.

We hope that this year's Annual report will clearly demonstrate our achievements, and evidence our commitment to early intervention, primary prevention and harm reduction in the alcohol and other drug health promotion space throughout Tasmania.



Chair Report

Dear Members and Stakeholders,

As the exiting and incoming Chairs of the Board, we are pleased to present The Drug Education Network's Annual Report for the financial year 2022-2023. We are grateful for the opportunity to highlight DEN's achievements and endeavours as it continues to support our community to be free from harms caused by drugs.

Throughout this financial year, DEN has remained committed to providing best-practice leadership and education and has continued to strive, adapting, innovating, and improving DEN's programs and operations to better serve the needs of Tasmanians.

We are delighted to be able to share several key highlights from the financial year 2022-2023:

DEN Has Secured a Three-Year Funding Contract with the State Government

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce that DEN has secured a three-year funding contract through the Mental Health, Alcohol, and Other Drug Directorate. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and effectiveness of DEN's work. This long-term funding commitment will not only ensure the stability of our programs, but also underscores the government's recognition of the critical role DEN plays within our community.

DEN Has Undertaken a Constitutional Review and Extended Board Director Terms

DEN is committed to good governance and transparency. As part of our commitment to best-practice, we have conducted a review of our Board constitution. The outcome of this review has led to an update which includes an extension of the Director's term from one year to two years. This change enables our Directors to provide more sustained leadership and strategic planning, enhancing the overall stability of the organisation.

DEN Has Undergone a Change in Leadership

The financial year 2022-2023 marked a significant transition for DEN as we farewelled our long-term CEO, Shirleyann Varney, and welcomed our new CEO, Emily Chase.

Emily brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective to our organisation. We look forward to her leadership and the realisation of her vision as we continue to support the Tasmanian community.

Both Chairs, on behalf of the Board, wish to thank Shirleyann for her significant contribution and dedication to DEN and the broader Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Sector, and wish her well in her future endeavours.

As we look ahead to the future, DEN remains committed to its core mission and values. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are determined to continue to make a positive impact on the lives of those we support.

We extend our gratitude to our fellow Board members, staff and all our stakeholders for their unwavering support and dedication to DEN.

Iris and Angela
Exiting and Incoming Chairs



Iris Goetzki
Chair



Angela Waite
Vice Chair

CEO Report

2022-23 saw a changing of the guard for DEN, with Shirleyann Varney leaving the role of CEO in November 2022 after 9 years of significant contributions, not only to DEN, but to the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector as a whole. It is clear to me that Shirleyann cared a lot about DEN and all the work undertaken by the dedicated team, and because of the resulting positive work environment and workplace culture at DEN, I have had one of the easiest transitions of my career.

Sometimes a change in leadership can result in a change of direction or a change in priorities. Luckily for me, DEN had its' priorities right long before I arrived; to prevent and reduce harm from drugs through leadership and education. So how do you undertake leadership in an organisation that already sees its role as a leader? You listen, you observe, you consult, and you collaborate. Since commencing as CEO in February, my focus has been on understanding what has come before me, and how I can support DEN to further benefit the Tasmanian community. To be a meaningful leader you must take the time to understand the needs of those you are leading, this applies equally to me as the new CEO, as it does to DEN as leaders in health promotion, prevention and early intervention around alcohol and other drugs in Tasmania.

Our annual report will tell you what we have achieved, our measurable output, and these figures show increasing demand year on year. What you may not see in the figures is the time spent listening to and understanding the needs of the community through consultation and research. In 2022-23 DEN completed two major projects, both involving extensive consultation within the community to ensure the outcomes are meaningful for those they impact the most.

The Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Project was completed this year, and after three years, this project has seen a significant change in the landscape for alcohol and other drug Peer Workers in Tasmania. While the AOD sector works hard to try to eliminate stigma and discrimination towards those who use substances, it's the stories of the brave people with lived experience that resonate the most. I very deliberately use the term 'brave', as these individuals are owning their experiences of using substances in a community where, frustratingly, stigma and discrimination still very much exist. Being able to acknowledge and support the growth of AOD Peer Worker roles in Tasmania has been extremely important and rewarding for DEN.

In 2022-23 DEN also completed the Community Conversations Project. This project focused on educating parents and caregivers on the importance of ongoing dialogue with young people around alcohol and other drugs. Again, due to the impact of stigma around alcohol and other drug use, parents and caregivers often avoid talking to young people about substance use, further driving these behaviours in to the shadows, where support is limited, and the risk of harm is much higher. In completing this project, we listened to parents and caregivers and responded to what they saw as some of the difficulties they have experienced in helping the young people in their lives navigate exposure to substance use, with the end goal of keeping young people safe from harm.

This year has been a big one for the team at DEN, a change in CEO brings a level of uncertainty, particularly when the outgoing CEO was in the role for such a significant period. I want to thank my team, Anita, Deni, Maria, Rob, Dave, Zoe, Cathy, Michelle, Samantha, and Jonathan for your dedication to your work, and providing me with such a soft landing. I would also like to thank the DEN Board for trusting me to carry DEN forward, and for ensuring I was equipped with everything I needed to do justice to my new role.

Emily Chase



Emily Chase
CEO

Impact Report

School Communities

Between July 2022 and June 2023, we provided:

109
Education Sessions
to

2284
Students

across

30
Schools

and we educated:

243
Staff Members
at

16
Professional Development
Sessions

Workforce Training

We built people's
knowledge

90%

of participants 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' with the statement 'I have built on my knowledge of this topic'

We increased people's
skills

93%

of participants 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' that they intended to change their practices or behaviours around the topic

We changed people's
awareness

86%

of participants 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' that they have changed their awareness and knowledge about the topic'.

Information and Resources for Community Members

In late June 2022 we launched Community Online Drug Education (CODE).

In the year since:

We uploaded

We received

215
new resources

3076
views

In addition to the information available on CODE, we distributed:

2240
hardcopy resources

and

905
digital downloads

The top 3 most popular online resources:

1. The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Brief Intervention Framework
2. The 'Cannabis... is it just a weed?' brochure
3. The 'Safe Partying' Brochure

The top 3 most popular hardcopy resources:

1. Youth Wristbands
2. The 'Methamphetamines and Your Teeth' wallet cards
3. The 'More Options for Managing Pain' information packs

Communities with an identified need

We provide health promotion education and training to the Tasmanian community through targeted project work, strategic partnerships, on-request conference presentations, considered and responsive resource development, and by increasing access to trusted information about topics of interest through CODE.

Project Work

Within the 2022-2023 financial year, the Drug Education Network has conducted two key projects:

- The Community Conversations Project (see page 19 for more information).
- The AOD Peer Workforce Project (see page 21 for more information).

Feedback from our projects

About the AOD Peer Workforce Project:

"I cannot commend this peer worker training program enough! It marks a significant turning point for me both personally and professionally. The program educated me on principles that have set me up to be an extremely effective lived experience advocate in a plethora of various AOD issues with a wide variety of community organisations and AOD services. It also impacted me personally in many ways, but most markedly by challenging the stigma that I placed on myself. A Keystone to not only my recovery from addiction but recovering myself and my life."

- AOD Peer Workforce Training Participant

"If not for DEN and the Peer Workforce Training project, I believe there would be very few, if any, AOD peer workers in Tasmania - nor peer work roles, paid or unpaid."

- AOD Peer Workforce Training Participant

About the Community Conversations Project:

"Thank you for the opportunity to have my say. The topic of alcohol and drugs wasn't an easy one to navigate with my kids, so I'm very grateful that I have some hints about how to deal with it now."

- Penguin Focus Group Participant

"Oh wow - This is a fantastic resource. Thank you. Well done to all concerned."

- General Manager, Northern Suburbs Community Centre Inc.





Campaigns and Media Appearances

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Campaign

Every September we show our support for NOFASD Australia's Red Shoes Rock campaign, drawing awareness to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and the existing prevention and support initiatives in place.

This year was no different, we worked together with the Bridgewater Library and volunteers from the community to provide an information stall between the 5th and 9th of September.

Community members were invited to pop in and chat with one of our volunteers or educators to learn more about healthy pregnancies and access a free resource pack.

Other Health Promotion Campaigns

We have also engaged in promotional work to encourage uptake and acknowledgement of Dry July, International Family Drug Support Day, Wear it Purple, Support Don't Punish Day, International Overdose Awareness Day, Wear it Teal for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and the Push-Up Challenge: Pushing for Better Mental Health.

A health-based approach to Personal Illicit Drug Use

Throughout the year we have shown our support for a growing Australian acceptance of a health-based approach to personal illicit drug use, encouraging the Tasmanian government through a submission to the Green's 'Decriminalising Personal Use' Bill (2023). Emily also took part in a radio interview with Leon Compton on ABC, and attended a number of meetings with policy makers alongside our friends at the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Council of Tasmania and Anglicare.

Leadership and Consultation Work

We have provided significant feedback to the Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2023-2028, the State Government's AOD Reform Agenda, and the National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Strategy through consultative workshops, written submissions, and advisory meetings.

We also regularly participate in a number of sector working groups, including the State Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Coordination Group, the Tasmanian Health Service Health Promotion South and North-West, Young People Smoke Free Working Group, and the Tobacco Control Coalition.

Partnering Organisations

We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to the following partnering organisations who have worked with us throughout this reporting period:

- Friendly Pharmacies
- Holyoake Tasmania
- The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Council of Tasmania
- Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania
- Primary Health Tasmania
- Sexual Assault Support Service
- Tasmanian Community Fund,
- The Salvation Army Tasmania
- Youth, Family and Community Connections
- 360 Edge
- The Australian Drug Foundation
- The Mental Health Council of Tasmania
- The University of Tasmania
- The Department of Health
- NOFASD Australia
- The Australian Lions Drug Awareness Foundation

Without your help and support we would not have been able to provide the same quality or quantity of services throughout this financial year.



Resources and Information Dissemination

Resource Provision

In 2022-23, we distributed 2240 hard-copy resources to the Tasmanian community, and a further 905 digital downloads were provided through our websites.

We launched an online Resource!

We were delighted to launch a new service offering to Tasmanians at the start of this year.

An ever-green online solution that increases access to evidence-based information and resources, at any time, from any place:

Community Online Drug Education (CODE)

We understand that not everybody feels comfortable walking into a service and asking for the information that they need to keep themselves or their loved ones safe.

While we work towards a future free from stigma and discrimination, we also seek to provide solutions that meet people where they are right now.

That's why we launched CODE.

With 287 resources at the time of launch, and an additional 215 resources added in the year since, CODE has provided 444 individuals with increased access to resources and information.

CODE is safer than a Google search and provides a wide range of trustworthy factsheets, videos, podcasts, articles, and services to empower Tasmanians to make informed decisions about their own health and safety when it comes to alcohol and other drugs.





School Communities

Between July 2022 and June 2023, we provided 109 education sessions to 3382 students across **30** different Tasmanian schools.

We also provided professional development sessions to 243 attendees at 16 professional development sessions across those schools.

The breakdown of these schools is as follows:

- 5 public primary schools (two in the North, three in the South).
 - 6 public colleges (Five in the South, one in the North).
 - 8 public high schools (One in the North, seven in the South).
 - 6 district schools (Four in the South, two in the North).
 - 4 Private schools (Four in the South).
 - Other: 1 (One in the North).
-
- Total number of schools that received educational sessions in the North: 7
 - Total number of schools that received educational sessions in the South: 23

Primary Schools: Evandale Primary School, Fairview Primary School, Margate Primary School, New Norfolk Primary School, West Launceston Primary School.

Public High schools: Big Picture School, Clarence High School, New Norfolk High School, Hobart City High School, Huonville High School, Kings Meadows High School, Montrose Bay High School, Taroona High School.

Public Colleges: Bayview Secondary College, Claremont College, Elizabeth College, Hobart College, Newstead College, Rosny College.

District Schools: Campbelltown District School, Dover District School, Glenora District School, Jordan River Learning Federation, Tasman District School, Triabunna District School.

Private Schools: St Mary's College, St Michael's Collegiate, The Friends School, The Hutchin's School.

Other: Ashley Youth Detention Centre

How did students find our sessions?

71% of students reported that they **liked something** in their session

83% of students reported that they had **learned something** from their session

67% of students reported that they had **learned where to find help** because of their session



How we do it – Our Best Practice Approach to School Community Education

We support school communities through classroom education sessions, professional development opportunities for school staff, and parent symposiums.

We work alongside school communities to provide age-appropriate education that supports the existing Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum. We aim to equip young people with the information they need to stay safe and make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs, starting from grade 5, all the way through to tertiary and vocational level.

Classroom Sessions

Our small-group classroom sessions provide young people with opportunities to engage, interact, ask questions and learn about the risks and potential harms caused by alcohol and other drugs.

All sessions are curriculum-mapped against the Tasmanian Department of Education's Health and Physical Education curriculum, aligned with the best-practice principles of drug education, and use age-appropriate, evidence-based information and resources to enhance students' learning.

Professional Development for School Staff

The Drug Education Network's Staff Sessions are designed to provide principals, teachers, and school health nurses with the information and resources they need to support continued learning about alcohol and other drugs within their school.

Parent Symposiums

A best-practice approach to alcohol and other drug education in schools requires input from the whole school community, including educational information sessions for parents, carers, and guardians- so that learning can continue beyond the confines of the classroom.

We are happy to participate in parent symposiums upon invitation from an organising school. School symposiums provide a great forum for questions and help to alleviate carer's concerns. They are also a great way to increase access to and knowledge of further support and information for those who need it.

School Feedback

Feedback received from students across all grades within this reporting period:

From Grade 5 and 6 Students:

"I liked the session because I learned what's good and bad. And its good because I get anxiety sometimes about stuff like that but I liked the lesson."

"I think the art activity was really fun and all the information was really important and everyone should learn about being safe with drugs."

"I found this lesson useful because it showed me more places to get help and that there is a lot more than a couple of drugs."

"I didn't know alcohol was a drug."

"Energy drinks have caffeine and now I know my mum drinks caffeine. I can share my new learnings with mum."

"I enjoyed this session because we got to do activities and it was fun."

School Feedback

Feedback received from students across all grades within this reporting period:

From Grade 7 Students:

"I liked it, it was very engaging and you helped to get everyone involved."

"Learnt a lot of new things today. :)"

"One of the best drug presentations I have seen."

From Grade 8 Students:

"Good presentation. Thanks for actually teaching us and not being boring. :)"

"Spoke really well, gave us all an understanding on taking any substances."

"This really helped me learn more about drugs and alcohol and how to be safe/careful."

From Grade 9 Students:

"It was interesting compared to other drug talks we've had before."

"I liked learning about the most-least dangerous drugs."

"Very good and clear! I liked that instead of just telling us drugs are bad you told us why, effect on yourself and others and how to get help. Very good!"

From Grade 10 Students:

"A good heads up if by some reason you do ever take drugs, I learnt that you can turn down peer pressure."

"It was a really engaging session that I found really interesting. It was very informative and I learnt lots."

"Great information it was a great help!"

From Grade 11 and 12 Students:

"I was surprised alcohol was the most harmful."

"I liked how chill you were about it, it didn't feel like it was a 'don't do this', so much more informative."

"It was a very interesting session with lots of information and very engaging."

"Delivery of this information was well developed and aimed at student level, well done teach."

"Rob helped me to understand about medications and epilepsy."

"I love this program its amazing."

From School Staff professional development sessions:

"Really engaging, flexible training. Easy to follow and understand."

"Great as a psych teacher to further talk about this topic."

"I feel this was definitely of benefit for our high school teachers."

From students attending University education sessions:

"I think a large professional learning session for teachers would be good if not already offered."

- Masters of Education Student.

"Really good example of how to calmly cover sensitive topic."

- Masters of Education student.

"Excellent session - The educator has a great deal of experience and the workshop information was enhanced through his real life examples."

- Associate Degree in Alcohol and other Drugs student.



Workforce Training

We provide alcohol and other drug workshops and workplace training that supports the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians and their clients.

Our workshops and training sessions are evidence-based and provide the information needed to make informed decisions.

Within the past year we have provided **33** workshops and/or training sessions to **378** participants.

6 sessions were delivered in the North, **2** sessions in the North-West, and **25** sessions in the South.

14 of these sessions were Brief Intervention training sessions, and **19** were alcohol and other drug health promotion workshops.

We were also invited to present **5** times across four different conferences.

We built people's knowledge

90.2% of participants 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' with the statement 'I have built on my knowledge of this topic'

We increased people's skills

93.5% of participants 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' that they intended to change their practices or behaviours around the topic

We changed people's awareness

86.5% of participants 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' that they have changed their awareness and knowledge about the topic'.

In this reporting period, we worked with the following organisations:

Greenpoint Medical Services	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Foundation Tasmania
Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania	Foster and Kinship Carer's Association of Tasmania
COTA Tasmania	Australian Lions Drug Awareness Foundation
Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania	TASCoss
Holyoake Tasmania	CatholicCare Tasmania
Youth, Family and Community Connections	Annie Kenney Young Women's Emergency Accommodation
Pulse Youth Health	TasCAHRD
Mission Australia	Alcohol and Drug Service
Primary Health Tasmania	Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Council of Tasmania
Karadi Aboriginal Corporation	Community Corrections
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	Salvation Army Tasmania
NOFASD Australia	Tasmanian Aboriginal Service
Uniting: Grand Parents Raising Grandchildren	Mental Health Council of Tasmania
Department of Health and Human Services	
Alcohol and Drug Foundation	
Hobart City Mission	
Centacare Evolve Housing	
Huon Valley Council	
Tasmania Prison Service	

How we do it – Increasing access to tools and information

The Drug Education Network’s workforce training sessions are designed to provide Tasmanian workplaces and their clients with the information, resources and skills needed to help reduce and prevent harm caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Whether a workplace is made up of client-facing roles in the community services, allied health or public service sectors, or they are seeking to provide their team with information about alcohol and other drugs that will help them to make informed decisions and keep themselves and others safe, we have training options to suit.

Our sessions cover a wide variety of topics, including: how drugs work, how to respond to a suspected overdose, how to discuss concerns, why people use drugs, the stages of change, where to find help and the impacts of stigma and discrimination (to name a few).

Between July 2022 - June 2023 we delivered 12 Brief Intervention Foundation sessions, 2 Brief Intervention Masterclass sessions, and 19 alcohol and other drug health promotion sessions to 378 participants across Tasmanian workplaces.

Working Towards a Future Free from Stigma and Discrimination by Integrating Lived Experience

If you attended one of our workshops or training sessions within the past year, there’s a good chance that you may have heard from either Samantha or Jonathan, our Lived Experience Speakers.

Both graduates of the Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Training Project, we have been lucky enough to have Samantha and Jonathan join sessions delivered by our educator team on a regular basis through the last year.

By skilfully working to enhance our health promotion messages with their lived experiences, our Lived Experience Speakers help us to challenge stereotypes and increase understanding of how alcohol and other drug-related issues can occur, and who they can affect.

Whether speaking to a group of allied health professionals about their personal experiences with the healthcare system or sharing their perspectives as someone who has engaged with different support services, Samantha and Jonathan have enriched participants’ learning with increased awareness and understanding of the effects of stigma and discrimination.



Samantha
Lived Experience
Speaker



Jonathan
Lived Experience
Speaker

Workforce Training Feedback

Feedback from Brief Intervention Foundation sessions:

"Stages of change was great. Helped me realise how little I knew and now actually know as much as I thought I did at the start of the day."

"One of the most informative and useful training sessions I have been to that was delivered in a succinct and engaging manner. Thank you!"

"Very enjoyable and informative session. Presenters were both very knowledgeable and very competent presenters. Good use of humour!"

"Great to cover these topics and feel we could comment without judgement."

"I have personal and professional experience in this area already but excellent to build on that!"

Feedback from Brief Intervention Masterclass sessions:

"I do not work in a position to provide intervention but it has improved my knowledge & ability to provide care in a non-judgemental way." - from an Oncology Nurse

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the program. It has given me excellent knowledge to move forward in my work."

"Was a really positive experience. Especially learning about the impact that drugs have on people. Would love to keep learning from the DEN."

Feedback from other workforce training sessions

"Thank you - great presentation. Would like intervention training."

"Lived experience perspective was critical for overall impact."

"Would like more workshops. Enjoyed the Lived Experience Speaker's discussion."

The lived experience speaker was fantastic - thank you for sharing your story and info. Thank you for delivering the session. You kept our attention!!"

"I wish you'd been able to stay longer!"

"Education delivered in such an awesome easy-to-understand way. THANK YOU SO MUCH!"

"Really engaging, flexible training. Easy to follow and understand."

"Lived Experience gave more depth and knowledge firsthand - very helpful!"

"The Lived Experience Speaker's story was very inspiring and brought the presentation together. Facilitator was very knowledgeable. Would like to receive more training on strategies to assist people."





The Community Conversations Project

The Community Conversations Project was coordinated by Project Officer Clare Thompson, providing five guided ‘conversational’ resources for parents, carers and guardians, hosted on the Community Online Drug Education (CODE) website.

Community members identified the need for these resources, and they were created in consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders.

The resources aim to help parents, carers and guardians to access the information they need to keep the young people in their lives safe from harms caused by drugs.

The five resources produced by the project are as follows:

Connecting Through Conversation: ‘How to Talk About Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs with the Young People in Your Life’.

This resource contains:

- advice about how to talk with young people when speaking about drugs
- information and techniques that can make talking with young people easier
- tips for talking about drugs with young people

Keeping Them Safer: ‘Increasing the Safety of Young People Around Alcohol and Other Drugs.’

This resource contains:

- a discussion about ‘primary prevention’ and ‘harm minimisation’
- an exploration of the ‘risk’ and ‘protective’ factors that affect drug use
- tips on how parents can help to keep young people safe around drugs

Looking After Them: ‘Supporting Young People Around Alcohol and Other Drugs’.

This resource contains:

- information about drug use and its effects on mental health
- explanations about habit and behaviour change
- tips for supporting a young person who is using drugs
- stigma; what it means and how to deal with it

Looking After You: ‘The Importance of Self-Care When Supporting Others Around Alcohol and other Drugs’.

This resource contains:

- a look at some of the challenges of caring and explore the impact of caring
- a discussion about stigma, and how to deal with it
- information about how empathy can help to reduce conflict
- suggestions some tips around self-care
- offer support options available for families experiencing drug-related issues in Tasmania

Just say ‘Know’: ‘Information About Drugs and Young People’.

This resource contains:

- information about the different types of drugs and how they are grouped or classified
- some history around how and why drugs are used
- an explanation of how drugs affect our brains and bodies
- the facts about how many young people are using drugs
- more information about the effects of drugs
- considerations about the things that affect how likely a young person is to use drugs or have problems with drug use

Next steps for the project:

While the Community Conversations Project phase has officially concluded, we will continue to utilise the finished resources to inform future training offerings.

Now listed on the Community Online Drug Education (CODE) website, they will remain accessible to all Tasmanian community members for the foreseeable future.

We hope that you will use them to learn, share and refer to whenever you may need them.





The Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Project

This reporting period saw us through the final year of the three-year Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Project.

In this year we have:

- Continued chairing Peer worker Community of Practice meetings to support ongoing networking and co-reflection opportunities for all three cohorts of peer trainees.
- Collaborated with Holly Emery, a researcher at the University of Tasmania, to undertake a research project that assessed the effectiveness of peer work in Alcohol and Other Drug treatment settings across Tasmania.
- Conducted qualitative interviews with Peer Workers, clients of Alcohol and Other Drug Services, and non-peer workers.
- Provided our research findings and manuscript in preparation for submission in a peer-reviewed journal.

Preliminary analysis of the project has identified two main areas of efficacy:

- Tasmanian alcohol and other drug peer workers are effectively enhancing and supporting client experiences within alcohol and other drug services, and
- Tasmanian alcohol and other drug peer workers are providing additional organisational value through their work.

Our findings have indicated that the Peer Workers have been effective in giving hope to clients, demonstrating the value of lived experience, creating a safe space, acting as knowledge and communication go-betweens, reducing stigma, and adding support for clients within a treatment setting.

The Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Symposium

In November 2022, the Drug Education Network collaborated with project partners: Holyoake, Salvation Army, and Youth, Family and Community Connections to host the Inaugural Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Symposium.

This event was opened by Premier Rockliff and attracted a wide range of attendees from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug, Justice, and Community sectors, including Peer Workers, Lived Experience Advocates, People with Lived and Living Experience, and Alcohol and Other Drug Workers.

The Symposium provided an excellent opportunity for conversation, collaboration and brainstorming between Peer Workers and Sector Workers, who discussed their needs for Peer Worker roles, their successes and challenges, and the importance of organisational readiness.

This event was hugely successful in increasing understanding of Peer Worker roles within the Alcohol and Other Drug Sector across Tasmania.

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Council of Tasmania Award

We are proud to share that the Alcohol and other Drug Peer Workforce Project was the recipient of the Organisation/Program Award for Excellence at the 2023 Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Council of Tasmania Conference.

This award recognised the Alcohol and Other Drug Peer Workforce Project as a program that has demonstrated excellence in Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug work in Tasmania.

The nomination described the project as a game-changer for the Tasmanian Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug sector, highlighting the Drug Education Network's leading role in the development of the Peer Workforce and Organisational Readiness programs, which have seen 32 alcohol and other drug peer workers trained across Tasmania.

Feedback about the project:

"The Peer work program was a great experience, One I value greatly, receiving AOD education to help myself and others."

"Groundbreaking and worthwhile program."

"We have had lots of positive feedback from clients about the difference peer workers are bringing to their recovery. peer workers have been able to engage clients and keep people in recovery who might have otherwise not engaged in services. with their lived experience, peer workers can reach clients that the clinician might not be able to."

"This project has highlighted the necessity of including a peer workforce in our service delivery."

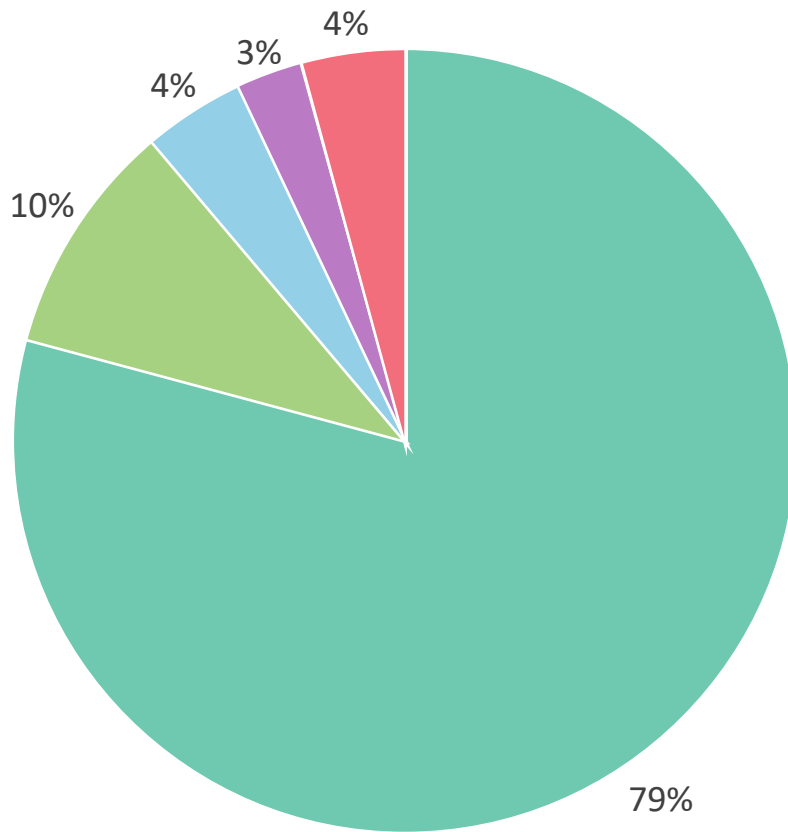
"For the first time Tasmania now has a trained and highly effective ATOD peer workforce. I can only hope this momentum continues and is supported with appropriate funding."

Next steps for the project:

With the completion of the final year of this project marking the end of our funding and ongoing peer worker training rounds, we now look forward to future collaboration with the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, who have received funding to set up a mental health and alcohol and other drug peer workforce training hub, set to open in early 2024.



Finance



Salaries and on-costs
This is the portion of our budget that paid the salaries of our talented team.

Administration and communication
This expenditure covers our phones, subscriptions, accreditation, governance, websites, printing and all the other little things that compound to allow us to run our organisation to a professional standard.

Our Premises
We love the convenience of our Brisbane Street Office, which acts as a central hub for our busy team. While we all enjoy working from home on occasion, we would be lost without a place to put all our resources and tools!

Vehicles and travel
It's no secret that we love to road trip! Our vehicles allow our educators to travel right across our beautiful state providing education, training, resources and information to all Tasmanians, irrespective of their location.

Educational projects and resources
While we are lucky enough to receive the occasional grant or donation to boost our funding, our programs still cost us money to run. Whether we are printing, researching, developing, adapting or sharing - providing resources and information to the community requires time and money!



Stay in Touch

There are plenty of ways to keep up to date!

Follow our social media for an overview of our service offerings or sign up to our newsletter for a comprehensive account of our projects, activities and deliveries.

Social Media

The Connection

Stay across all of our latest news and events by signing up to our monthly newsletter.

Support Our Work

If you value evidence-based drug education, information and training and would like to support our work, please consider making a donation to increase our impact in the Tasmanian community.

The Drug Education Network is a not-for-profit Tasmanian charity, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) ([click here to view our registration details](#)). Any amount is greatly appreciated, and donations of \$2 or above are tax deductible.

If you are able to provide a donation, please click the button below. We thank you for your generosity.

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Shirleyann Varney
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