



## AOD eNews <November 2024>

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### 1. Central and Eastern Sydney PHN

**Author: Paul Hardy, Drug Health Manager**  
*Update from CESPHN*

Welcome to this edition of CESPHN's AOD e News.

NSW and ACT PHNs recently collaborated on a submission to a national inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia.

The submission emphasises that to ensure equity, accessibility, and the best outcomes, the entire AOD and primary health system must be included in joint planning, coordination, integration and implementation processes, as a lack of services in one area (for example, the current lack of general practitioners) will have a deleterious flow-on effect on other aspects of AOD services.

Submissions are still being accepted to this inquiry and can be lodged [here](#), where submissions that have already been made can also be viewed.

The NSW Drug Summit is also rapidly approaching. The aims are to improve the health and wellbeing of communities and people impacted by drugs across some key focus areas of health promotion and wellbeing, equity, respect and inclusion, safety and justice, keeping young people safe and supporting families, and integrated support and social services. While attendance at the

summit itself is by invite only, there is an opportunity for organisations and individuals to have input through the [Have your Say](#) platform.

Many people are working hard around both the National and NSW forums to advance the sector and respond more effectively to harms related to substance use, so we're very excited to see what developments follow.

## 2. The Rehabilitation Project

*Author: <Mohamad Fenj, Counsellor and CALD AOD Program Manager>  
<The Rehabilitation Project>*

The Rehabilitation Project is a community-based drug and alcohol support, and recovery service targeted at Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community members particularly the Muslim community. It was established in 2019 and since then has been committed to providing a platform for people experiencing addiction, wanting or in recovery, to come together to connect, share their experience and find support.

What we do:

- Group counselling
- Relapse prevention group
- Online support
- Workshops
- Psychosocial programs
- Community awareness and development
- Referral pathways
- Continuing care

With a strong focus on lived experience peer work, The Rehabilitation Project has been run by volunteers, however, thanks to recent funding from Central Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network we now have a fulltime position.

We support men to overcome addiction and minimise harm through the Connect-Discover-Recover program. A 2-hour weekly program, Wednesday nights, in Riverwood. The program provides psychosocial and psycho-spiritual support, drug addiction support, psychoeducation and awareness workshops, group counselling, recovery meetings, relapse prevention activities, social/recreational events as well as online support platform.

Every 6 weeks we provide social and recreational activities and events include hiking, bushwalks, fishing, BBQs and more.

Our mission is to provide a culturally competent support program that is inclusive of religious and philosophical beliefs from best practice and evidence-based modalities as well as to foster a Therapeutic Community to support individuals through their journey of recovery to instil hope, increase will, capacity and determination. Over 92% of our participants are of CALD background.

We believe that each individual regardless of faith or ethnic background has the right to be treated with care, genuine concern and respect. We strive to align with the rich principles of Islam of which loving for others what you love for yourself.

We value empowering individuals to believe that change is possible because the way we look at people changes the people we see.

[Find our website here](#)

[Visit our Facebook page here](#)



### 3. The Station Ltd. Drop-in Centre

**Author: <Graciela Luna & Yumna Sikander>**  
**<The Station Ltd>**

We aim to deliver a person-centred approach to treatment that focuses on the individual's personal needs and goals. The role of our staff is to promote mental health and well-being, with the prevention of substance use. These are integral parts of the support that we bring to our community.

Our staff transforms this objective into action through the following core approach of harm minimisation, early intervention, and referrals. The aim is to increase the information and care systems which will result in better service delivery to individuals and the community.

Once a week a team of medical practitioners attend the Centre. The medical team includes a GP, a registered nurse, Mental Health Clinician, and a Psychiatrist providing assessment, diagnosis, treatment-care, observation, health evaluation and professional advice.

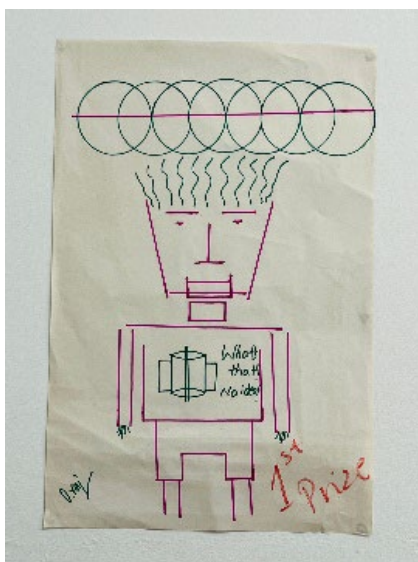
Once a week we also have a legal service clinic. The team is led by Homeless Persons' Legal Services.

The Station's networking information may also be used to communicate with external healthcare providers and statutory and regulatory bodies, to facilitate client safety improvements. All client's file records are confidential and subject to prevailing privacy laws and policies.

Counselling and Alcohol & Other Drugs support is available Monday to Friday: from 8:00am to 3:30pm. Services are free of charge.

Other services available at The Station Ltd Drop-In-Centre are Meals, Showers, Laundry facilities, Housing Support, Dental Care referrals, tea & coffee, computers, Wi-Fi, Foxtel, and a relaxing atmosphere. These just-mentioned services operate seven days a week from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday to Friday. Saturday & Sunday from 7:30 am to 2:00 pm.

The Station celebrated Mental Health Awareness Month with an arts and crafts activity based on mental health issues. This activity gave the clients a chance to interact and talk about sensitive issues. It was also fun. There were some delicious snacks. There were prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for the most well-drawn picture.



## 4. Community Restorative Centre

**Author: <David Chivers, AOD Transition Programs Manager>**  
**<Launch of CRC's Harm Reduction Guidelines>**

All of CRC's programs operate from a model of harm reduction. A harm reduction approach aligns with CRC's principles of being client-centred and 'meeting people where they are at,' promoting openness and honesty with clients, and offering non-coercive, non-punitive, and non-judgemental support. This approach aims to holistically address clients' needs as they rebuild their lives in the community.

In the June newsletter, I mentioned that CRC had developed a document—Harm Reduction Guidelines—in response to a lack of consolidated harm reduction advice for people exiting prison.

We know there is incredible work happening across the AOD sector, and much of the information in the document will be familiar to AOD staff. However, we are also aware that many myths persist among the general public, such as the assumption that educating people about safer drug use encourages further or increased drug use. We appreciate that it is an emotive topic and do not wish to diminish or disregard anyone's real-life experiences. However, as professionals, we adopt an evidence-based approach and seek to reduce stigma and shame. Substance dependence should be viewed as a health issue, not a criminal or moral one.

As part of the official launch, we ran a series of internal workshops for all CRC staff, presented by AOD staff. These workshops allowed us to highlight and reiterate our commitment to harm reduction and provided an opportunity for staff to share information and refresh their knowledge.

The nine harm reduction principles outlined in the document are as follows:

1. Non-abstinence
2. Information on safer drug use
3. Overdose prevention & reversal
4. Pharmacotherapies
5. Needle & syringe programs
6. Equitable and non-coercive access to treatment
7. Testing and treatment for blood-borne infections such as HIV and hepatitis C
8. Pregnancy and breastfeeding [support for women]
9. Decriminalisation / diversion from the criminal justice system

The document contains numerous links to additional services and useful resources. You can download a copy of the Harm Reduction Guidelines [here](#).

## 5. Odyssey House

*Author: <Taylor Hammes, Team Leader Community Programs, Odyssey House NSW>  
<Mandarin-speaking counselling program>*

Odyssey House NSW Community Programs, Redfern Hub is excited to announce the launch of our free and confidential Mandarin-speaking counselling program. This service is designed to support individuals and families/friends in the Chinese-speaking community who may be struggling with substance use or related concerns.

Through a culturally sensitive lens, the service will provide personalised support tailored to clients' unique needs, helping clients build the skills and tools necessary for long-term recovery. Our experienced counsellors work closely with clients to address challenges, whether they are managing stress with drugs or alcohol, facing legal issues, or are concerned about a loved one's substance use.

Our Mandarin-speaking program offers:

- One-on-one counselling in person, via phone, or online.
- Development of personalised recovery plans to help prevent relapse.
- Support for co-occurring mental health issues and referrals to relevant services.



We also provide support for those required to attend AOD counselling for legal reasons. We aim to walk alongside clients on their recovery journey, helping them achieve meaningful, long-lasting change.

Referrers and potential clients can reach us by contacting Bruce Chen at 0422 793 708 if they prefer speaking Mandarin or by emailing CSCES@odysseyhouse.com.au. Alternatively, clients can scan the QR code to begin the referral process and get started on their counselling journey.



## 6. South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

*Author: <Tracy Cowan, Senior Nurse Manager, Drug & Alcohol Service, SESLHD>  
<The Emergency Department Assessment Unit (EDAU) at Prince of Wales Hospital>*

The Safe Assessment Unit (SAU) project is a NSW Health initiative to provide a safe, low-stimulus environment for the multi-disciplinary care, treatment and support of patients who present to Emergency Departments (ED) with psychosocial crisis associated with substance use, psychiatric conditions, and toxic ingestion, alone or in combination. Prince of Wales Hospital has chosen the term EDAU (Emergency Department Assessment Unit) rather than SAU.

The EDAU will open on 4 November 2024. It is a 6-bed unit that will provide care for patients aged 16 to 70 years with an acute psychosocial, toxicological or substance use related presentation, who can be safely observed and managed in the EDAU environment, and whose goals of care are reasonably likely to be addressed with a plan developed within 24 - 48 hours. Multidisciplinary Team reviews and discussions will take place twice daily, including; a Peer Navigator, clinicians from the Emergency Department, Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol, and Toxicology.

This allows collaborative and co-ordinated discharge planning to commence at the point of admission, involve the patient and family/carer (where appropriate), and include the formulation of a community treatment plan following discharge.

The SESLHD Drug & Alcohol Service will:

- Assist the treating team by assessing patients whose presentation is due to a substance use disorder, or where their substance use has contributed to their presentation.
- The Drug & Alcohol clinicians will provide advice on monitoring and management, including; planning aftercare and handover to community treatment services.
- Provide information relating to care and follow-up.

- Drug & Alcohol service hours will be 8.30am – 5pm, with provision for extended cover to 6.30pm on weekdays. After hours, the EDAU team will have access to 24/7 on-call medical advice through the SESLHD D&A Service Medical On-call System.
- The Drug & Alcohol and Mental Health teams, in collaboration with the Mental Health peer navigator will establish a transition plan to community services relevant to the presenting and ongoing needs of the patient.

## 7. Youth Drug Health Service (YDHS)

We provide free and confidential drug and alcohol counselling and support for young people who live in or are connected to the Sydney Local Health District area.

YDHS is a voluntary service for young people between the ages of 12-25 who have concerns with their use of alcohol and/or drugs. This means that the drug and alcohol use must be impacting on the young person's school attendance, relationships, physical and mental health or overall wellbeing.

We are a mobile team, expanding into different sites across the Sydney Local Health District (spanning from Redfern to Concord, and over to Punchbowl). However, currently, we primarily work out of Youthblock, at 288 Abercrombie Street, Darlington (Redfern) and HealthOne Building at Green Square.

For any enquires please email [slhd-dhs-youth@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:slhd-dhs-youth@health.nsw.gov.au)

## 8. St Vincent's Hospital

*Author: <Franky Lander-McLeod, S Check Program Officer at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney>  
<S-Check a Free Stimulant Check-In Clinic>*

### About S-Check

S-Check is a confidential check-in clinic providing adults with free medical check-ups and an opportunity to chat to a counsellor about their use of cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA, GHB and other stimulants.

Across several sessions, we help people:

- Find out more about stimulants
- Understand their use and talk about any concerns they have with a counsellor
- Get a medical check-up with a doctor and have the results explained
- Put together a plan to work towards changes they wish to make

No referral is required to visit S-Check, and there is no obligation to commit to ongoing treatment or counselling.

### Our approach

S-Check takes a harm minimisation approach, providing a safe non-judgemental space for people to receive early intervention support and make informed decisions about their stimulant use. We're guided by our client's wants and needs - whether that's understanding more about their use, managing use, reducing or stopping altogether.

**Who is the service for?**

S-Check is for anyone 18 years+ who wants to know more about the impacts of their use on their health and wellbeing, or who is concerned about the frequency or amount they're using.

**Drop In Clinic**

You can access the program through our drop in clinics, these occur on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 9am – 11.30am.

**Where are we located?**

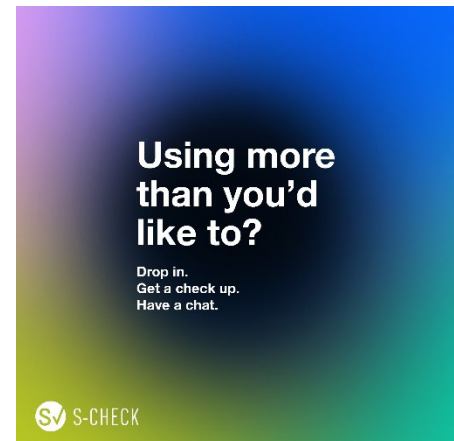
We are located in St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney.

Our address is Level 2, The O'Brien Centre, 390 Victoria Street Darlinghurst NSW 2010.

Entry is through Burton Street.

We recognise that people may not wish to seek support in the community they reside, so people do not need to live in Sydney to visit S-Check.

Visit our website for more information for referring professionals and people wishing to visit: [www.svhs.org.au/scheck](http://www.svhs.org.au/scheck)



## 9. NSW Drug Summit 2024

The NSW Government made an election commitment to hold a drug summit in its first term to build consensus on the way NSW deals with drug related harms.

The summit will bring together health experts, police, people with lived and living experiences, drug user organisations, families and other stakeholders to provide a range of perspectives. It will build on the Government's commitment to better health outcomes for people impacted by drugs.

The summit will include two days of regional forums – Griffith on 1 November, and Lismore on 4 November – and two days in Sydney on 4 and 5 December.

The regional forums will provide a dedicated space to ensure the unique and valuable experiences and perspectives of people in regional NSW are heard.

The summit will focus on:

- health promotion and wellbeing
- equity, respect and inclusion
- safety and justice
- keeping young people safe and supporting families
- integrated support and social services.

**Have Your Say – Help Inform the NSW Drug Summit 2024**

[Take the survey here](#) to share your views, concerns, and solutions or improving community health and wellbeing.



Your survey responses will directly inform the summit discussions and help the government develop practical solutions.

## 10. Sector news, additional resources, other upcoming events, training and webinars

- **NSW Health Safety Notice:** High dose MDMA (ecstasy) tablets have recently been found in NSW – purple shield-shaped tablets  
[Click here to read the full notice](#)
- **Australian Drug Trends 2024:** Key Findings from the National Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System (EDRS) Interviews
- **Changes to vaping in Australia in 2024**  
This [stakeholder information kit](#) provides information on the changes to vaping in Australia under the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Act 2024 that came into effect on 1 July 2024, as well as subsequent changes on 1 October 2024.
- Sydney Addiction Seminars – Management approaches to stimulant use disorder and the role Stimulant Treatment Services & pharmacotherapies – 6 November 2024 7:00PM  
[Join Zoom here](#)
- **ACDAN Symposium 2024** – 12-14 November, Canberra  
The theme is breaking the cycle recovery and resilience.  
[Buy tickets here](#)
- **NCCRED Symposium 2024**  
Innovations: Improving health outcomes for people who use methamphetamine and emerging drugs  
[Get tickets here](#)

If you would like CESP HN to meet with you to discuss these or any of our other AOD referral options with you, please contact the AOD team at [aodnewsletters@cesphn.com.au](mailto:aodnewsletters@cesphn.com.au)

For more information about our programs visit

[www.cesphn.org.au/allied-health/help-my-patients-with/drug-and-alcohol-support](http://www.cesphn.org.au/allied-health/help-my-patients-with/drug-and-alcohol-support)