



AOD eNews **SEPTEMBER 2026**

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1. Central and Eastern Sydney PHN

Update from CESPHN

Paul Hardy, CESPHN AOD Manager

31 August marks International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD), the world's largest annual campaign to end overdose, remember loved ones lost without stigma, and acknowledge the grief of families and friends. The 2026 theme, *25 Years On. Still Needed*, recognises 25 years of collective action and reinforces that overdose remains preventable. For the AOD sector, IOAD is an opportunity to promote evidence-based prevention, challenge stigma, and connect people with compassionate, timely support.

Naloxone is a life-saving medicine that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose and restore breathing. Read the [Take Home Naloxone NGO and Private Service Procedures](#), and access the NSW Take Home Naloxone workforce training. If your organisation would like to join the NSW Take Home Naloxone program, please complete an [Expression of Interest form](#) and email it to moh-naloxone@health.nsw.gov.au

2. National AOD Evaluation and Consultation

Update on the National AOD Evaluation

Paul Hardy, CESP HN AOD Manager

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) have now completed three stages of consultation on the DHDA Drug and Alcohol Program (DAP) reform. Outcomes of stage 3 of the consultation can be found [here](#) as well as [key information](#) and [program logic and KPIs](#). Grant opportunities for services commissioned directly by DHDA will be available through [Grant Connect](#). At the time of writing these grant opportunities have not been released and the best way to stay informed is by registering with Grant Connect for updates.

3. NADA

Abstracts are open for the NADA Conference 2027

Sharon Lee, Communications Officer (NADA)



Just Futures: Courage. Care. Collective action.

Save the date! The NADA Conference 2027 will be held on **28–29 April 2027** at the ICC Sydney Convention Centre. This conference will attract delegates from across NSW, the Australian alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector as well as government, justice, health and other cross sector organisations.

Abstracts are now open

NADA invites [abstract submissions](#) for lightning rounds, oral presentations, workshops, symposium and poster presentations. This is an opportunity for you to showcase your innovative practice or research.



Abstracts must be submitted to NADA online by **5pm Friday 30 October 2026**

We encourage workers and services across AOD and other sectors in Australia and internationally to submit an abstract. NADA will prioritise abstracts that are innovative and aligned to the conference theme and stream.

Interactive and practice-related sessions are encouraged to maximise engagement with conference participants.

Guidelines for abstracts

[Please read the guidelines before you apply](#) [PDF]

[> If your abstract focuses on research, submit using this form](#)

[> If your abstract focuses on practice, service delivery or policy, use this form](#)

4. Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC)

Happy Birthday MSIC!

Nicole Kennedy, Service Operations Manager

For 25 incredible years, the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) has provided **life-affirming care** in the heart of Kings Cross. On Wednesday May 27th we gathered in joy and celebration at NSW Parliament in honour of this monumental achievement. Premier Chris Minns, as well as other key dignitaries, consumers, friends, family and staff attended the event.



Hosted by Dr Marianne Jauncy (Medical Director MSIC) we gathered with a question that underpinned every moment of the event: **why is there still only one?** Despite overwhelming evidence of thousands of lives saved and changed, it remains, **by law**, the only supervised injecting space permitted to operate in NSW. There have been zero deaths from overdoses since MSIC opened 25 years ago.

We acknowledged key decision makers with recognition as an official **Friend of MSIC**. Mr Alex Greenwich MP, The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, The Hon. Kristina Keneally, The Hon. Bob Carr, The Rt Hon. Clover Moore AO, and The Hon. Brad Hazzard, have each shown great political courage, championing MSIC over the past 25 years – even when it was hard.

On the day we were grateful to hear from our trailblazing advocates. Stories of hurt and healing, of hardship and humility. Stories are the shortest distance between two people; they hold immense power to **shift hearts and minds**, creating space for change to occur.



Mr Alex Greenwich MP, put it best: “In the Sydney electorate, we have the Opera House, the Harbour Bridge, the Royal Botanic Gardens, but the institution I’m most proud of is the MSIC.”

If you would like to do a public tour of MSIC please book here: [Tours of Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre](#)

5. CatholicCare Sydney Family Recovery Program



**Therapeutic Support for Families and Children
Impacted by AOD – Low Waitlist!**
Family Recovery Program / CatholicCare Sydney

Recovery is strengthened when a loved one's support system is also helped.

Family Recovery at CatholicCare Sydney provides **therapeutic, strengths-based** and **accessible support** to adults, children and young people whose home life is affected by problem alcohol, drugs or gambling. We offer support via online and in-person in the Inner West.

We aim for both adults and children to improve their emotional wellbeing, learn practical tools to strengthen resilience, and understand the impacts of drugs, alcohol and gambling on their loved one and family.

Our team are specialised in working with people impacted by AOD. Family Recovery offers counselling, group programs and education.

Help connect families and children with the specialised support they need. Enquire by visiting catholiccare.org/familyrecovery

6. The Station

The Station Ltd. Drop in Centre
Mathew Morow, Acting Operations Manager



The Station Ltd is a small 'drop-in' service that is walking distance from Wynard station. We operate 6 days a week from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday to Friday and Sat from 7:30 am to 2:00 pm. Currently from 01.07.26 we are now closed on Sundays.

We provide breakfast and lunch every day, as well as showers, laundry facilities, tea & coffee, post box, clothes & toiletries, computers, Wi-Fi, Foxtel, and a relaxing atmosphere. We have a team of housing support workers who provide housing support, this includes but is not limited to; advocacy, housing applications, co-ordination with 'Homes' and guidance around the private rental market. As well as AOD support for clients seeking support in this space

Since our last newsletter we have had two new casuals join The Station, Jon Postlethwaite and Robert Adams. Both new staff have had decades of experience in homeless services and the community sector. We welcome them to the team, and both settled well into their new roles at The Station Ltd.

As stated above, we are closed on Sundays moving forward. This has been a significant change for everyone here at The Station, and we hope in the future we can turn this around and re-open the service 7 days a week.

We started a partnership with the Matthew Talbot Clothing Store from March 2026. We now receive regular clothing donations from their team, which we provide directly to clients on a need's basis. We also have a 'To Order' form to specifically order clothing for particular purposes such as work or court.

Our partnership with Homeless Health continues. They attend the service every Friday at 08.30 am-10.30 am. The service is free of charge and is done on a walk-in basis. A Medicare card is not required. We also are continuing with our regular assertive outreach HART patrols, where our team engage rough sleepers with other SHS organisation in the inner-city area. For the new financial year, we are hoping there will be a few changes in the future for The Station. This will allow the service to continue grow and the organisation move forward, and lead to a better service delivery for the clients who access the service.

7. Hello Sunday Morning



Recovery Doesn't Pause: New Digital Recovery Rooms Strengthen Support Before, During and After Treatment

A/Prof Katinka Van de Ven, Head of Research and Evaluation, Hello Sunday Morning

Recovery doesn't begin when someone enters treatment, and it doesn't end when they leave. Yet people are often at greatest risk of disengagement during periods of waiting for treatment and as they transition back into the community.

To help address these gaps, Hello Sunday Morning, with funding from the Queensland Mental Health Commission, has partnered with Lives Lived Well and The Salvation Army to pilot Recovery Rooms - private, professionally moderated digital peer communities integrated within the Daybreak platform.

Recovery Rooms provide a safe, anonymous space where members can connect with others who understand their experiences, access evidence informed resources and receive ongoing support before, during and after treatment. The model is designed to complement existing alcohol and other drug services by strengthening continuity of care and extending support beyond traditional service settings.

A key feature of the project has been its collaborative approach. Recovery Rooms have been co-designed with participating services and people with lived and living experience to ensure they reflect real world service delivery, local workflows and the needs of people accessing treatment. The pilot also includes comprehensive moderation, referral pathways and governance processes to ensure the communities remain safe and well integrated with partner services.



Alongside implementation, the project includes a mixed methods evaluation examining engagement, member experiences, changes in alcohol and other drug use, psychological distress and the feasibility of embedding digital peer support into routine care. The findings will help inform future approaches to strengthening through care across the alcohol and other drug sector.

As services continue to explore innovative ways to improve continuity of care, Recovery Rooms offer one example of how digital peer support can complement face-to-face treatment and help people stay connected throughout their recovery journey.

If your organisation would like to learn more about the Recovery Rooms model or discuss how digital peer support could complement your existing services, we'd welcome a conversation.

Contact:

A/Prof Katinka van de Ven
Head of Research and Evaluation, Hello Sunday Morning
katinka.vandeven@hellosundaymorning.org

8. Clean Slate



Recovery Doesn't Pause: New Digital Recovery Rooms Strengthen Support Before, During and After Treatment
Fiona Faulkner, Managing Director, Clean Slate

Clean Slate Clinic provides a virtual alcohol and other drug treatment program designed to improve access to care and support people well beyond the initial detox period. While many people first hear about Cleanslate as a home detox service, the program is structured as a broader 12-month model of care that includes clinical treatment, ongoing review, group support, education, and recovery-focused follow-up.

Alongside medical and clinical support, Clean Slate offers drop-in sessions, webinars, and peer-informed recovery options that help people stay engaged over time. The team has recently expanded its Clean Slate Conversations, including a new SMART recovery stimulants-specific group to better meet the needs of clients using stimulants. Early interest in that dedicated group was illustrated by strong attendance in the first week of launch.

Clean Slate is also expanding access through digital support and flexible care options. Version one of the Cleanslate app is now being tested by consumers and is expected to support clients with tools and resources whilst enabling the capture of outcomes over time. Drop-in sessions are also being further integrated into the model, creating more opportunities for clients to access timely support whilst helping the team better understand engagement and outcomes across the program.

Clean Slate continues to see strong engagement and positive trends in quality of life, mental health, and physical health outcomes for clients who actively use the support available to them. The service is also growing its outreach and partnership work with GPs, health professionals, and community services to improve awareness of the range of support available.

Clean Slate welcomes opportunities to connect with referrers and sector partners across the region to support accessible, recovery-focused AOD care.

9. SLHD GLAD

GLAD named Winner of 'Keeping People Healthy' at the 2026 SLHD Excellence Awards ***Chloe Hannigan, District Nurse Manager, Drug Health Services, Sydney Local Health District***

The GP Liaison for Alcohol and Other Drugs (GLAD) program has been recognised as the winner of the “Keeping People Healthy” category at the 2026 Sydney Local Health District Excellence Awards.



GLAD is a partnership between Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) Drug Health Services and Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN), designed to strengthen the capacity of general practice to respond to alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues.

Recognising that GPs are often the first point of contact for people experiencing AOD-related concerns, GLAD brings specialist AOD expertise into primary care. Through real-time clinical advice, education, shared care, treatment planning and coordinated referral pathways, the program supports GPs to confidently manage increasingly complex presentations and enables patients to access evidence-based AOD care within their own communities.

The program has continued to demonstrate significant growth and impact. During FY2025–26, SLHDs GLAD program delivered 1,289 occasions of service and achieved 100% GP satisfaction. Participating GPs have reported increased confidence managing complex AOD presentations, improved access to specialist support and greater capacity to provide treatment within their own practices.

Importantly, GLAD is about more than individual consultations. By building capability within the primary care workforce, specialist knowledge gained through GLAD continues to benefit future patients, extending the reach of specialist AOD services beyond traditional service boundaries.

Receiving the Keeping People Healthy Award is wonderful recognition of what can be achieved through genuine collaboration between primary and specialist care. SLHD Drug Health Services sincerely thanks CESPHN and the many GPs who have embraced the program. Through partnership we improve access to compassionate, evidence-based AOD care.

10. ACON & Odyssey House SMART Recovery Group

LGBTQ+ SMART Recovery Australia Group

Author: *Megan Stevens, ACON Operations Manager, Sydney Peer and Client Services*

ACON and Odyssey House NSW are co-facilitating a LGBTQ+ SMART Recovery group in Surry Hills for LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+SB community members seeking support around substance use.

The group offers a welcoming, judgment-free space to connect, learn practical tools, and take positive steps, working at the individual's pace.

The group runs as a **weekly 1.5-hour session** and supports participants to:

- Build and maintain motivation
- Manage urges and cravings
- Managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- Finding a healthier life balance

Facilitated by clinicians and peer workers who are members of, or allied with, the LGBTQ+ community, this group is all about practical strategies, shared experiences, and real conversations.

Location: ACON, 414 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills

When: Every Tuesday

Time: 5.30pm to 7.00pm

This group is open to LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+SB community members who want practical support to make lasting change.

Referral and Registration

Individuals can self-refer and register online: <https://bit.ly/4rP4f1G>

For further information, please contact Odyssey House NSW on **1800 397 739 (option 2)** or email cscs@odysseyhouse.com.au

11. Community Restorative Centre

Walking Alongside People After Prison: Supporting Recovery, Connection and New Beginnings

Jermaine Sakr, AOD Transition Programs Manager, CRC

Leaving custody can be one of the most challenging periods in a person's life. Alongside the practical challenges of finding housing, reconnecting with family, accessing healthcare, and meeting basic needs, many people are also navigating complex issues related to alcohol and other drug use, trauma, social isolation, and the stigma associated with a history of incarceration. CRC's AOD Transition Program exists to support people through this critical time, helping them build stability, confidence, and hope for the future.

Throughout the year, the program continued to provide flexible, outreach-based support for people preparing to leave custody and those recently released into the community. Rather than expecting clients to fit into a rigid service model, workers meet people where they are, both physically and emotionally, offering practical support, counselling, advocacy, and encouragement at a pace that reflects each person's individual goals and circumstances.

A cornerstone of the program is the belief that meaningful change happens through trusting relationships. Many people leaving custody have experienced significant disadvantage, trauma, discrimination, and disconnection from support systems. CRC's approach focuses on building genuine partnerships with clients, recognising their strengths, respecting self-determination, and supporting them to define what recovery, wellbeing, and success look like in their own lives.

The past year has also highlighted the importance of community and collaboration. CRC continued to work alongside correctional centres, health services, community organisations, peer networks, and cultural support services to ensure clients can access the resources and opportunities they need to thrive after release. Participation in community events and sector forums has helped strengthen these connections while raising awareness of the unique challenges faced by people transitioning from custody.

Cultural competency and responsiveness remained central to service delivery throughout the year. CRC continued to engage with multicultural and Aboriginal community networks and access specialist cultural support and supervision to ensure services remain inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the diverse communities we serve.

At its heart, the AOD Transition Program is about walking alongside people as they navigate change. By providing compassionate, non-judgemental support during a critical life transition, CRC helps people strengthen their recovery, reconnect with their communities, and create opportunities for healthier and more hopeful futures.

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

➤ **Alcohol Use Disorder and Insomnia - 30 Minute CPD podcast**

A/Prof Ralph Audehm speaks with Dr Chris Davis and Dr Jenny Lee about the tight link between sleep and alcohol use disorder, and why insomnia so often drives relapse:

Learning Areas:

- *Explore the bi-directional relationship between alcohol use disorder and insomnia*
- *Practical GP-level strategies to screen for and assess sleep in patients with alcohol use disorder*
- *Why benzodiazepines and Z-drugs are contraindicated in current or past patients*
- *Realistic CBT-I strategies for a standard GP consult*
- *How wearables and sleep tracking offer objective feedback on sleep architecture, HRV and alcohol's impact*

Listen on demand here: <https://www.healthed.com.au/podcasts/sleep-relapse-and-alcohol-use-disorder-practical-strategies-for-gps/>

➤ **Pharmacotherapy for Alcohol Use Disorder - 60 Minute CPD Webinar**

Dr Chris Davis (Addiction Medicine Specialist & GP) and Colin Fearn (Prescribing Pharmacist) are hosting a practical, case-based 60-minute webinar to explore pharmacotherapy for Alcohol Use Disorder.

Learning Areas:

- *Identify which patients with alcohol dependence may benefit from medication, and which first need planned withdrawal*
- *Prescribe thiamine and manage withdrawal risk safely, including recognising Wernicke's encephalopathy*
- *Choose between acamprosate, naltrexone and disulfiram, matched to patient goals*
- *Initiate, monitor and stop first-line pharmacotherapy in general practice*
- *Appraise the emerging GLP-1 evidence and answer the patient who asks for "Ozempic for drinking"*

The webinar will take place at 7.00pm AEST on Thursday 3rd September and participants can register to join live or receive the recording afterwards here:

https://cleanslateclinic.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hUrwIAmVTsKhyLpOpOwMxA

- ### ➤ **Talking Point – “Using health economics to inform investment decisions for the alcohol and other drugs sector”**
- hosted by Turning Point and presented by Professor Cathy Mihalopoulos. This presentation explores how health economic evaluation can be used to inform resource allocation and guide investment decisions across the alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector. By demonstrating the cost-effectiveness, value, and return*

on investment of prevention, early intervention, and treatment programs, health economics provides evidence-based frameworks to justify funding and support policy development.

Date: Wednesday 9 September 2026 1:00-2:00pm.

Register [here](#)

➤ **Upcoming NCCRED Webinar: Broadening our Understanding of Syphilis Prevention for People who Use Drugs Thursday 10 September 2026**

This webinar will present an overview of the epidemiology around syphilis cases among people who use drugs, followed by a panel discussion exploring best practices for syphilis prevention, cross-disciplinary care, and future research and policy priorities. Read more and register [here](#).

➤ **Skills-based training workshop: Co-occurring AOD & Mental Health.** Building capacity to respond to co-occurring mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings. Training opportunity offered by The University of Sydney Matilda Centre and funded by the NSW Government.

Date: 20-23 October 2026

Time: 9:00am – 5:00pm

Location: PARKROYAL Hotel, Parramatta

Cost: Free. This training opportunity is for people working in NSW Health funded positions, NGOs or Aboriginal Controlled Health Organisations operating in NSW. Registration:

https://sydney.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_81CC4YzqXNvVlPM?Q_CHL=qr

➤ **Search by postcode to find AOD services**

The [Path2Help](#) portal helps a person sift through hundreds of specialist AOD services to confidentially find what's right for them or their family or friend.

➤ **S-Check app to track methamphetamine use**

The [S-Check app](#) supports people to track their methamphetamine use, helps people understand its impacts and offers research-based advice and information.

➤ **Comorbidity on-demand webinars**

The Matilda Centre has developed [on-demand webinars](#) focused on building capacity for the management and treatment of co-occurring AOD and mental health conditions.

If you would like to discuss anything included in this newsletter, please contact our team at aod@cesphn.com.au

For more information on CESPHN funded AOD services visit our [webpage](#)