

Gourmet bread giving hope and purpose



Residents at Hope Springs in Geraldton are baking gourmet bread as part of their first social enterprise.

Participants in the Hope Springs

Community Farm near Geraldton have started their first social enterprise, creating artisanal sourdough and other breads using local ingredients to sell at the local weekend markets.

"We love going to the markets and speaking to other producers, thinking up ways we can collaborate to highlight the great produce of the area," says Sara Donnaruma, Rosella

House staff member and leader of the breadmaking group. "The market organisers and the other producers have been so amazingly supportive of us."

Thanks to local expertise from Amanda Rowland, publisher of The Spelt Project magazine and local spelt grower, and Emma Foulkes-Taylor from Yuin Station, the breadmaking group is flourishing.

"We've added Chapman Valley olives to some loaves and also have a traditional

Maori bread made with potatoes (Rewena)," says Hope's Midwest Services Manager Lesley Evans. "Another favourite is the fried bread, served with a little berry jam: it's a bit like eating a donut, but healthier."

Not surprisingly, the group has sold out at nearly every market attended.

Says Lesley, "The best part is seeing the sense of pride coming from the baking group when people comment on how good the bread is."

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Government of Western Australia
Mental Health Commission



Welcome to *drugspeak*

Welcome to the July 2016 issue of *drugspeak*.

The 2016/17 State Budget was handed down in May, delivering increased support for Western Australians with mental health, alcohol and other drug problems by \$14.7 million, or 1.73 per cent. Mental Health Commission (MHC) funding in 2016/17 will provide approximately 50,000 treatment and support episodes for people with alcohol and other drug problems, an increase of 6.2 per cent since 2015/16.

To reduce methamphetamine related harm, the MHC received \$14.9 million funding over the next two years to boost prevention and support services, through to frontline treatment and rehabilitation. This includes \$9.8 million to expand withdrawal, residential rehabilitation, and community-based prevention and treatment services. An extra eight low medical withdrawal beds, and 52 beds for residential rehabilitation will be provided across the State by the end of 2017/18, enabling the provision of an extra 190 treatments per year, to the 2000 already provided through existing services.

Overall in 2016/17, funding for non-government alcohol and other drug services increased by 7.3 per cent, and by 5 per cent for alcohol and other drug awareness campaigns.

In addition, the 2016/17 budget provides \$19.2 million Royalties for Regions funding to sustain the current level of enhanced service provision in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne. This funding will continue until 30 June 2020, and will build on an almost 40 per



Timothy Marney and Jill Rundle.

cent increase in service provision achieved in the Kimberley and the Pilbara in 2015, where an additional 345 treatment episodes were provided. More details can be found in the State Budget Bulletin 2016/17 on the MHC website: www.mhc.wa.gov.au

In this issue we highlight two developments in the administration of prescriptions for alcohol and other drug service users. Firstly, a new treatment for Hepatitis C became available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in March 2016, which will make a huge difference in the lives of people affected. The second is the landmark decision to make Naloxone available as an over-the-counter pharmacist-only medicine. These are important milestones in treatment options.

It was inspirational and uplifting to be a part of the 2016 Strong Spirit Strong Mind Awards in April. The Awards recognised the work of Aboriginal alcohol and other drug workers Congratulations to the winning organisations and to Aboriginal Worker of the Year, Barron Bonney. Congratulations also to St John of God Hospital Subiaco, Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network Clinical Nurse Specialist, Ann Annetts for winning the Consumer Participation award at the WA Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards 2016 in May.

The sector works to improve the health and wellbeing of people impacted by alcohol and other drug use. We are therefore pleased to feature the Cancer Council WA's work to reduce smoking rates among people most at-risk, including alcohol and other drug service users, in partnership with community service organisations.

Other news from the sector is that MHC has re-located to new premises at 1 Nash Street in Perth. Also at this location are Local Drug Action Groups, WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) and WANADA, as well as the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist. We are excited at the opportunities this co-location brings for collaboration and inclusion. Please check the back page of *drugspeak* for our new contact details.

Jill Rundle

Chief Executive Officer
WANADA

Timothy Marney

Commissioner
Mental Health Commission



WA youth drinking rates lowest in a decade

Western Australian initiatives to reduce alcohol consumption in young people have resulted in fewer young people aged 12 to 17 drinking alcohol than at any time in the past decade.

The latest Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug (ASSAD) survey data shows:

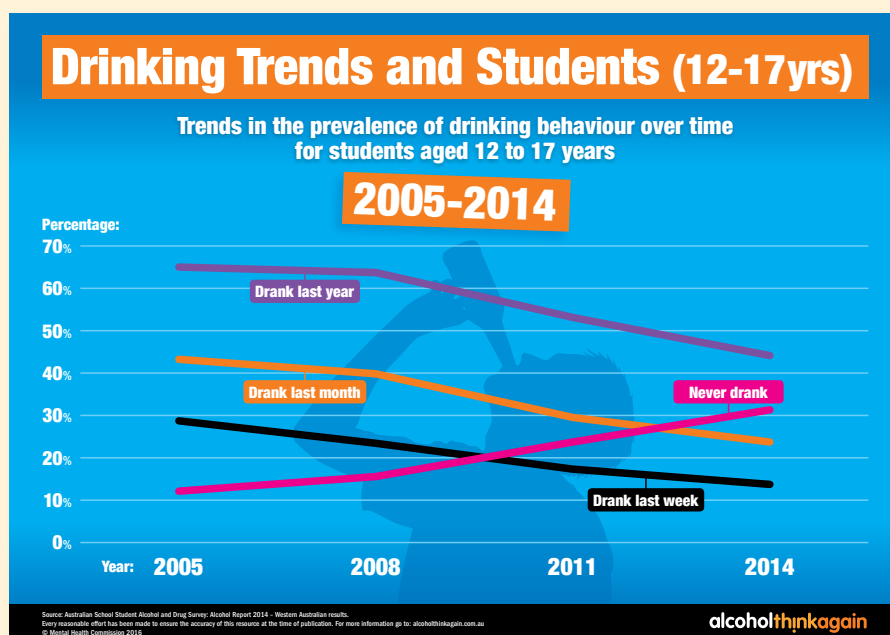
- not only were fewer young people drinking, of those who drank, fewer drank at risky levels
- the proportion choosing not to drink alcohol more than doubled from 12.3 per cent in 2005 to 31.5 per cent in 2014.

Mental Health Commission Director of Drug Alcohol and Prevention Services Gary Kirby commented at the launch of the latest phase of the Parents, Young People and Alcohol campaign.

“This indicates the collective alcohol-related actions are helping to change the decisions and behaviour of young people,” he said.

Mr Kirby said family and friends were the main source of alcohol for minors.

“The State Government’s new secondary supply laws, which ban providing alcohol to children in private settings without parental consent, helped empower parents to deny access to alcohol,” he added. “We’ve seen some really encouraging evaluation data that shows parents have an increased understanding of why children should not



drink, believing they can take action and are doing so.”

Research also showed that almost all parents (96 per cent) were now aware that no alcohol was the safest choice for under 18s, up from 68 per cent in 2012.

The data also found that the young people who did drink were doing so less often and the proportion of students who said they had drunk alcohol in the week and month prior to the survey had almost halved between 2005 and 2014.

“Messages are getting through to older teenagers, particularly boys, with four times more 16 and 17-year-old boys choosing not to drink in 2014 compared with 2005 and those who did drink, doing so less often,” Mr Kirby said.

“We also have positive indications that more young people are finding it easier to say ‘no’ to alcohol offered by friends.”

Check out the latest campaign at www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au

WASUA health clinic re-opens

The WA Substance Users Association (WASUA) has re-opened its health clinic at its new inner city location, offering a free, confidential and non-judgemental service to people who use drugs.

Newly-appointed nurse Leanne Myers has worked in the field of viral hepatitis for 18 years.

“It’s fantastic for patients that the new oral medications have arrived,” says Leanne. “It will now be easier for patients to access a treatment that is shorter in duration with minimal side effects.”

People who have been diagnosed with hepatitis C are invited to visit the clinic and to ask WASUA staff about the new treatment.

The clinic is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays 10.30am - 1pm and 2pm - 4.30pm. No appointment is necessary. Services include:

- Blood borne virus and sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment.
- Hepatitis C peer support and counselling.
- Viral hepatitis management and referral.
- Hepatitis A and B vaccinations.
- Treatment for chlamydia.
- Ulcer and abscess dressings.
- General health and vein care.

For more information, please call WASUA on (08) 9325 8387.



WASUA Youth Worker Sarah Grant is raising awareness about hepatitis C.

Recognition for Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network nurses

Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

Ann Annetts from St John of God Subiaco Hospital Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network (DAWN) has won the Consumer Participation award at the WA Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards 2016. Co-worker and fellow CNS Justin Dorigo was also an award finalist, with winners announced at a gala ball held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on Saturday 7 May 2016.

Ann's award recognises nurses and midwives who make a difference to the lives of consumers and their families as part of their normal working day.

St John of God Subiaco Hospital Director of Nursing and Midwifery Laura Colvin said it was fantastic to see the efforts of Ann Annetts being recognised.

"Ann works extremely hard to ensure our clients receive the highest quality care and she is a great reflection of the distinctive and exceptional care provided at the hospital," she said.

Justin was a finalist in the Excellence in Primary, Public and Community Care category. This category is for enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives currently working in the areas of primary health, public health or community care.

"We were very excited that two DAWN people progressed to the finals because it is a high achievement in itself," says DAWN Manager Elizabeth Wilson-Taylor. "Everyone



St John of God Hospital Subiaco's Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network celebrates as two team members reach the finals of the WA Nursing and Midwifery Awards 2016.

at DAWN is very proud of Ann and Justin's achievements. It is great recognition of the hard work they do each and every day to assist their clients."

This is the second year in a row that a DAWN staff member has been a finalist, with CNS Jeffrey Butterfield honoured in the Consumer Appreciation category last year.

NDRI expands methamphetamine research expertise



Associate Professor Rebecca McKetin.

Australia's foremost methamphetamine researcher, Associate Professor Rebecca McKetin, has joined the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) at Curtin University in Perth, where she will lead a program of research on methamphetamine ('ice'). Rebecca comes to NDRI from the Australian National University to take up a four-year Curtin University Research Fellowship.

Rebecca's methamphetamine research has been used in three parliamentary inquiries, the National Ice Taskforce, and has attracted high-profile media coverage in Australia and internationally. This impact has been recognised by a Young Tall Poppy Science Award.

Her major achievements include:

- conducting the world's first methamphetamine treatment outcome study;
- leading Australia's first investigation into crystalline methamphetamine use;
- developing 'Breaking the Ice', the world's first online treatment for ice use; and
- quantifying the risk of psychosis and violence attributable to methamphetamine use.

Rebecca's current research includes: novel methamphetamine treatment approaches for Aboriginal communities; a pharmacotherapy trial of lisdexamfetamine for methamphetamine dependence; a longitudinal study of mental health; a translation of web-based treatment into NSW Health services; and a methamphetamine cohort study.

Strong Spirit Strong Mind Awards celebrate excellence in Aboriginal Alcohol and other Drug work



(L-R) Mental Health Commissioner Timothy Marney with Dena Rundle (Bega Gambirringu), Dianne Logan (Bega Gambirringu), Joni Jones (Goldfields Rehabilitation Services), Caroline Rundle (Goldfields Rehabilitation Services), Nikita Muir (Hope Community Services – Goldfields Community Alcohol and Drug Service), Joshua Rogers (Hope Community Services), and Barron Bonney (Goldfields Rehabilitation Services)

Aboriginal alcohol and other drug workers from across Western Australia celebrated the 2016 Strong Spirit Strong Mind Awards at The Rise in Maylands on Thursday 28 April 2016. Winners included Wyndham's Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation, a Local Drug Action Group from Halls Creek, and an Aboriginal alcohol and other drug worker from the Goldfields.

"Aboriginal workers in the alcohol and other drug sector are highly valued for their cultural knowledge and their commitment to the community," said WANADA CEO Jill Rundle. "Congratulations to the winners for taking up this challenging work and for achieving positive outcomes for people and communities."

Mental Health Commissioner Timothy Marney presented the awards at a dinner held during the 2016 Aboriginal Alcohol and other Drug Worker Forum. He said the awards acknowledged the outstanding work and contribution made by Aboriginal people in the alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector.

"Strong Spirit Strong Mind promotes the value of Aboriginal culture, identity and spiritual connections as strengths in addressing alcohol and drug use.



Mental Health Commissioner Timothy Marney with Aboriginal Alcohol and other Drug Worker of the Year Barron Bonney.

"The winners embody these values and have helped improve the health and wellbeing of their people through breaking down barriers, mentoring, consultation, empowering youth and building relationships among community members.

"The winners are inspirational and I encourage all AOD workers to find out more about what they do and how they do it."



Strong Spirit Strong Mind Awards 2016 Award Winners

**Aboriginal Alcohol and
other Drug Worker of the Year**
Barron Bonney,
Aboriginal Alcohol and other
Drug Support Worker,
Goldfields Rehabilitation Services

**Innovative and Culturally Secure
Aboriginal Alcohol and
other Drug Program**
The Theatre of Transformation Project:
'Given Half a Chance' – Halls Creek
Local Drug Action Group

Partnership Award
Bega Gambirringu Health Service,
Hope Community Services and Goldfields
Rehabilitation Services

Organisation Recognition Award
Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation
(Wyndham)

Lifesaving medicine now available over the counter

Naloxone hydrochloride (Narcan™) has been used in medical settings to reverse the life-threatening respiratory depression of opioid overdose for more than 40 years.

Since 2013 the Western Australian Substance Users' Association (WASUA) has been delivering a Peer Naloxone Education Program. This program provides education to opioid users, their significant others and front line workers on the prevention and management of opioid overdose, including basic life support and the administration of naloxone. While the Peer Naloxone Education Project has provided training to more than 200 people since its inception, the availability of naloxone has been as a prescription only medicine (Schedule 4).

Recently, the Therapeutic Goods Administration of Australia has made a landmark decision to make naloxone available as an over the counter pharmacist-only medicine (Schedule 3). While naloxone will remain available as a subsidised medication on prescription, people will also be able to purchase it from a pharmacy (unsubsidised).

Professor Simon Lenton from the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University said that the rescheduling of naloxone to make it available over the counter was an important milestone in the prevention of morbidity and mortality associated with



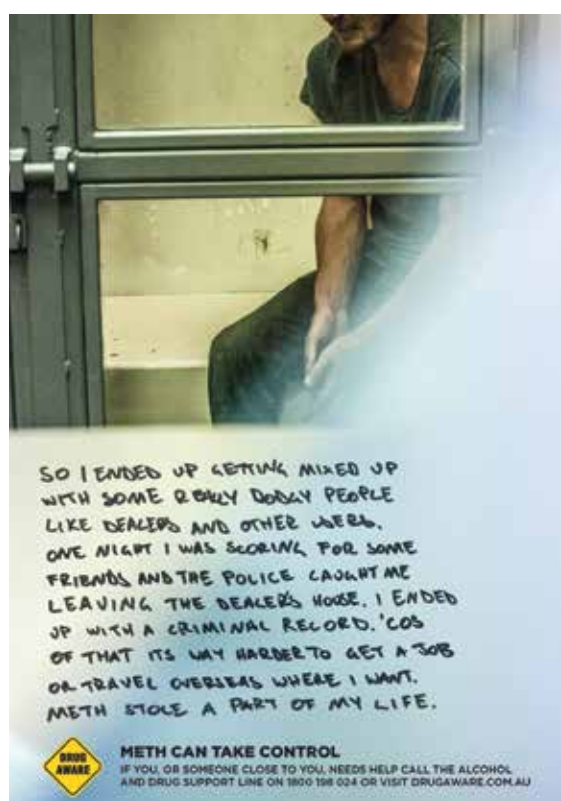
opioid related overdose in this country and worldwide. "Australia is the second country after Italy in the mid-1990s to have officially rescheduled the medicine. Wider availability of naloxone will save lives and pharmacists have really stepped up to the plate in proposing rescheduling and in following through with its implementation."

The Workforce Development Branch at the Mental Health Commission has been working with pharmacists' organisations to develop and deliver training and support

resources to assist with this change in scheduling.

WASUA, in collaboration with the Mental Health Commission, recently delivered its first Peer Naloxone Education session to prisoners awaiting release from Acacia prison.

WASUA also delivers Peer Naloxone Education sessions in Perth, Mandurah and Bunbury.



Drug Aware 'Meth can take control' methamphetamine campaign

The first phase of the Mental Health Commission's Drug Aware branded 'Meth Can Take Control' campaign was launched on 13 December 2015.

The three-year campaign aims to prevent and delay the uptake of methamphetamine use.

The campaign uses a persuasive approach to target 17 to 25 year olds at risk of using methamphetamine, with messages about the potential health, social and legal consequences.

Through targeted video, radio, outdoor and digital media channels, the campaign presents a series of real life stories that demonstrate how someone using methamphetamines can lose control of their lives.

The campaign materials were developed with the guidance of an Expert Advisory Group and tested amongst the target audience to ensure credibility and believability, and to ensure the advertisements do not normalise the use of methamphetamine.

The current phase of the 'Meth Can Take Control' campaign began in April 2016. You can find out more information about the campaign on the Drug Aware website at www.drugaware.com.au

Breaking the cycle

People affected by alcohol and other drug (AOD) use are seven times more likely to smoke tobacco than the general population (93 per cent vs 13 per cent). As a result, people who experience AOD-related issues and who therefore may already experience multiple personal and social challenges are more likely to be affected by tobacco-related death, disease, grief and financial stress.

Cancer Council WA is committed to reducing the health inequalities experienced by groups with high smoking rates and is partnering with the community and social services sector, including the alcohol and other drug sector, to achieve this goal.

"The AOD sector is well placed to support efforts to become smoke free and to provide clients with a tobacco-free treatment service," says WANADA CEO Jill Rundle. "WANADA is committed to promoting awareness of tobacco-related inequalities as well as opportunities to promote smoke-free initiatives."

When asked, many smokers who are also affected by AOD use express interest in stopping their tobacco use. Research shows that not only does this provide immediate health and financial benefits, it also enhances long-term AOD treatment outcomes. Some studies find up to a 25 per cent increased likelihood of long-term treatment success.

Cyrenian House is a smoke free organisation that offers smoke-free alcohol and other drug treatment services.

Says Cyrenian House Therapeutic Community resident Daniel, "It's a bonus, an extra bonus on top to be able to give up the cigarettes because you can't get them."



Cancer Council WA's Emily Box with WANADA CEO Jill Rundle.

"This was actually the main thing I was looking forward to, was to give up smoking."

Community services can help reduce health inequalities by talking to people about their tobacco use and providing smoke-free environments that help people to avoid the temptation for relapse.

To get started, visit www.makesmokinghistory.org.au/communityservices/

WA AOD sector building relationships with WA Primary Health Alliance

More than 75 senior managers and CEOs from WA's not-for-profit alcohol and other drug services attended a forum to learn more about how the Federal Government will fund alcohol and other drug services through the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA). Organised by the WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) in partnership with WAPHA, the forum took place on 4 February 2016 at the Boulevard Centre in Floreat.

From 1 July 2016 the Commonwealth is providing \$241.5 million in new funding over four years for alcohol and other drug treatment services. This funding will be allocated to Primary Health Networks nationally to commission new alcohol and other drug services on the basis of local need.

"WANADA and the WA alcohol and other drug sector is keen to build strong relationships with WAPHA that will allow for the co-design and co-production of alcohol and other drug services that meet the needs of local communities," said WANADA CEO Jill Rundle.

WAPHA acknowledges the considerable work that the Mental Health Commission has undertaken in the development of the *WA Mental Health, Alcohol & Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025: Better Choices. Better Lives*.

Together with WANADA, WAPHA supports the key values of the Plan – such as neutrality of service model, funder and provider.

"The Plan places WA in a strong position to meet demand for alcohol and other drug services and to inform the use of the new Commonwealth funding," said WAPHA CEO Learne Durrington.



WANADA CEO Jill Rundle with WAPHA CEO Learne Durrington at the WAPHA AOD Commissioning Information Forum in February.

"By working together, WAPHA, the WA Mental Health Commission, WANADA and the alcohol and other drug sector have a unique opportunity to achieve greater success for the many individuals, families and communities across WA affected by alcohol and other drug use."

Family support at the Brekky Table

Community service workers gathered to learn more about support services for people affected by a family members' alcohol and other drug use at an event organised by the WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) on Thursday 25 February 2016 in Northbridge.

The event followed the inaugural National Family Support Day on Wednesday 24 February 2016, an awareness day initiated by Family Drug Support founder Tony Trimmingham. The day encourages people affected by a family members' alcohol or other drug use to reach out for support.

"Family Drug Support Day creates greater awareness within the sector of the available family support programs and encourages appropriate referrals," said WANADA's Acting Sector Development Manager Maree Stallard.

Special guests at the Brekky Table James Snell from Cyrenian House and both Sandra Harris and Shelley Munee from Palmerston spoke about the services they offer and their experience of working with family members.



James Snell (Cyrenian House) with Sandra Harris and Shelley Munee at The Brekky Table.

Says Maree, "Services can offer support to family members when needed and the event provided a good opportunity to talk about the issues surrounding families and AOD use."

WANADA plans to host more Brekky Table networking events in 2016.

For more information please visit www.wanada.org.au

Jayhee aims to improve access to primary health for alcohol and other drug users

University of Western Australia (UWA) medical student Jayhee Hahn is committed to improving access to primary health for alcohol and other drug (AOD) users after joining the WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) on a three-year service learning project.

Jayhee will consult with GPs in the Perth metropolitan area to identify GPs' needs in relation to creating better health outcomes for AOD users.

"We want to understand what works well with AOD users in the primary care setting," says Jayhee. "We want to find solutions that work for both health professionals and patients who use alcohol and other drugs."

WANADA Acting Sector Development Manager Maree Stallard says Jayhee is the first UWA medical student to take up a Scholarly Activity Placement at WANADA.

"We're pleased to welcome Jayhee to the team and look forward to her findings," says Maree.

Jayhee joins WANADA at the same time as Advocacy and Research Coordinator Ethan James. Ethan is keen to find ways to reduce alcohol and other drug users' experience of stigma and discrimination.

"Alcohol and other drug use is primarily a health issue and yet experience of stigma and discrimination can prevent AOD users from



UWA medical student Jayhee Hahn with Advocacy and Research Coordinator Ethan James.

accessing primary health care," says Ethan. "Jayhee's work will help us to break down some of the barriers."

For more information about WANADA's Student Placement Program or our work to reduce stigma and discrimination, please visit: www.wanada.org.au

Unique partnerships drive Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Worker Forum



WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) partnered with the Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service (AADS) and Broome's Milliya Rumurra Aboriginal Corporation to host the 2016 Aboriginal Alcohol and other Drug Worker Forum – Connecting Engaging Growing – in Perth on 28 and 29 April 2016.

Aboriginal alcohol and other drug workers from across Western Australia, as well as human service workers with an interest in Aboriginal health and wellbeing, gathered at The Rise in Maylands to share their experience and knowledge.

“Working in remote communities can be very challenging,” says Milliya Rumurra Aboriginal Corporation CEO Andrew Amor. “We continually strive to implement culturally secure practices within the current evidence base to provide the best service we can to our communities.”



Andrew Amor (Milliya Rumurra Aboriginal Corporation), Bevan Norman (Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation), Dianne Logan (Bega Gambirringu Health Service), Nikita Muir (Hope Community Services – Goldfields Alcohol and Drug Service), and Dena Rundle (Bega Gamirringu Health Service) at the 2016 Aboriginal AOD Workers Forum.

“The forum offered workers the opportunity to learn from each other and to share what they knew so that others could benefit.”

AOD service workers from across WA gave presentations on their work, providing insight into their unique approaches to meeting community needs.

Invited speakers included Associate Professor Ted Wilkes from the National Drug Research Institute, Michael Mitchell from the Specialist Aboriginal Mental Health Service (SAMHS) and Dr Kim Isaacs from the Broome Aboriginal Medical Service. Paul Dessauer from the Western

Australian Substance Users' Network (WASUA) conducted a workshop on methamphetamines, while Angela Rizk from the Mental Health Commission conducted a workshop on volatile substance use.

The forum also celebrated the Strong Spirit Strong Mind Awards, recognising the outstanding work in the area of Aboriginal alcohol and other drug work.

The organisers gratefully acknowledge the support of the Mental Health Commission and Lotterywest.

For more information, please visit www.wanada.org.au

Spotlight on new hepatitis C medicines

New medicines for hepatitis C are now available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

“This marks the beginning of a new era for hepatitis C treatment and over time will provide the potential to eliminate the virus,” says Hepatitis WA Executive Director Frank Farmer. “This is welcome news for people living with and affected by hepatitis C and the general community.”

The benefits of the new medicines include:

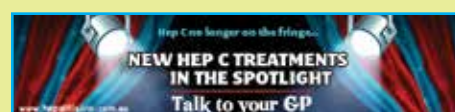
- a cure for 90 per cent of people who undertake treatment;
- taken as tablets they have very few side effects;
- treatment regimes of between 8-12 weeks for most people and;

- peg-interferon will not be required as part of the regimen.

“Specialists are able to prescribe the new medicines and GPs can prescribe the medicines in consultation with a specialist,” says Frank. “We encourage people to discuss the new treatment with their GP.”

The new medicines are available through the PBS to all adults who hold a Medicare card and who have chronic hepatitis C regardless of their stage of disease. There are no limitations on who is eligible for the treatments. People who inject drugs are a priority population for hepatitis C treatment.

Although it is usually a state and territory responsibility to fund the health care of people in custodial settings, the Australian



Government has agreed to fund the treatment for prisoners, who are also a priority population for hepatitis C.

The particular combination of medicines prescribed will depend on a number of individual clinical factors. Interferon-free treatment options are available for all major genotypes in Australia.

People are charged the usual co-payment price paid for a prescription. From 1 January 2016 this is \$38.30 for general patients and \$6.20 for concessional patients.

Other hepatitis C medicines are currently being considered for PBS listing.

New perspectives on FASD

This year has seen the introduction of a special project at Women's Health & Family Services (WHFS) that focuses on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevention.

FASD is the leading preventable cause of brain damage in utero and can cause a range of developmental, cognitive and behavioral problems which can appear at any time during childhood and last a lifetime.

The project at WHFS involves offering support and counselling to pregnant women and creating awareness and education around the risks associated with alcohol use in pregnancy and FASD.

As part of the project, WHFS hosted a one day conference called 'Perspectives on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: The Invisible Disability' on Tuesday 10 May 2016 at the Bendat Parent and Community Centre in Wembley.

"The conference provided a great opportunity for health professionals to collaborate and gain a much deeper insight and understanding of



Above: Anne Russell from the Russell Family FASD Association speaking at Womens Health and Family Services FASD Conference.



the disorder," says WHFS CEO Ann Deanus. "In organising events such as this, we can showcase current thoughts and research and tackle these issues in a proactive rather than reactionary fashion."

Presentations at the conference included FASD prevention, assessment, practical skills for alcohol and other drug workers, information on current programs and a lived experience perspective.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Meehan on (08) 6330 5400, via jmeehan@whfs.org.au or visit www.whfs.org.au/events/fasd

Plan to tackle mental illness, alcohol and drugs

The State Government has delivered on its commitment to provide a blueprint for the continuing transformation of Western Australia's mental health, alcohol and other drug services with the launch of the *Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025: Better Choices. Better Lives.*

Launching the plan, the former Mental Health Minister Helen Morton said it was an important blueprint.

"It tells us the types of mental health and drug and alcohol services we need, the optimal mix of those services, where those services need to be located and what levels of service need to be provided," Mrs Morton said.

Released for consultation in December 2014, the draft plan had been further informed by 19 community consultation forums involving more than 2,000 individuals and organisations,

64 written submissions and 245 online survey responses.

"Analysis of the consultation feedback confirmed a need for community-based early intervention services to support people to stay well within their own community," Mrs Morton said.

The plan outlines the need for a six-fold increase in the level of personalised community support services, double the number of community-based clinical treatment hours and a three-fold increase in the number of community-based beds over the next 10 years.

Priority areas include improving 24-hour emergency response services, services for Aboriginal communities and for children, expanding alcohol and other drug service hubs in regional areas and the development of subacute mental health services and residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation services.

View the plan at www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au

South East Metro Community Alcohol and Drug Service celebrates its first birthday

The South East Metropolitan Community Alcohol and Drug Service (SEMCADS) – a partnership between Palmerston Association and Next Step - celebrated its first year of service to communities in Perth's south east in January. The celebrations opened with a moving welcome to country by Noongar Elder Noel Nannup, and an address by Ken Wyatt, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care.

"Since our partnership began a year ago, the SEMCADS has been very busy providing clinical care to clients and their families, as well as developing and consolidating relationships with key stakeholders to provide integrated care for clients with co-occurring issues," said Palmerston CEO Sheila McHale.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Cannington and Armadale district offices of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support has created a formal link between the services. "The importance of strong and effective collaboration between our sectors is critical to ensuring the best outcomes for clients and the safety of children and their families," said SEMCADS Manager Kim MacNaughton.

"Another milestone was an MOU with the South Metro Mental Health Services and Fiona Stanley Hospital that will facilitate communication, consultation, and shared practices for the management of clients with alcohol and other drugs (AOD) and mental health co-morbidities across the south



SEMCADS celebrated its first birthday in January.

east," said Kim. "Referral pathways between Armadale and Bentley Mental Health services are being developed to support clients with complex issues through the myriad of services."

A large range of initiatives are offered by the team at SEMCADS including psycho-educational groups, Smart Recovery groups, and the provision of education and

training on AOD issues to key stakeholders. "Building the capacity of the mainstream and mental health sectors to better respond to AOD issues is a significant objective in ensuring that clients get comprehensive care wherever they attend," said Next Step Manager of Integrated Services Sue Helfgott.

Over 80 people representing key stakeholders attended the celebrations.

New research shows most cannabis supplied by friends and acquaintances

A new study of Australian cannabis users has found that most obtain their cannabis through a 'social supply' market in which the supplier brokers, facilitates or sells drugs to friends and acquaintances for little or no financial gain.

The study into the Social Supply of Cannabis in Australia was funded by the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund and conducted by a team headed by Professor Simon Lenton at the National Drug Research Institute. It recruited 200 cannabis users aged between 18 and 30 years from Perth, Melbourne and Armadale in northern New South Wales and explored the impact of supply routes on young users and their perceived notions of drug dealing.

The study revealed that the supply of cannabis typically occurs in a closed market, characterised by high levels of trust among

consumers and suppliers who are already known to each other at the level of adjacent pairs or small group networks, with supply usually occurring in private settings.

Although most people who engaged in supply understood that their activities would be regarded as such in law, most did not consider themselves to be a 'true dealer' because they often saw their cannabis supply as 'helping out friends', often in reciprocal relationships, and mostly involving no or minimal profit. Further, many did not seem to engage with the fact that they were potentially exposing themselves to a serious criminal charge.

The bulletin summarising the study is available at: www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/501-520/tandi503.html

Whitelion benefits from Strong Spirit Strong Mind Metro Project Grant

Whitelion is a support service for highly at-risk young people in Balga, Koondoola, Girrawheen and surrounding areas. Its staff form strong relationships and provide intensive one to one case management services to Aboriginal youth who have complex welfare and social problems, recidivism and limited education.

Whitelion exists to rectify disadvantage and prevent further marginalisation of vulnerable youth. These young people often drift between services and often 'fall through the gaps' in mainstream services with their complex and ever-changing needs unmet.

In 2015 Whitelion was introduced to the Strong Spirit Strong Mind Metro Project -

Community Grants. A small grant was used to promote healthy lifestyles through the Supporting Women with Avoiding Alcohol in Pregnancy Project. The project's message is to negate alcohol consumption to avoid alcohol-related harm during pregnancy.

Women aged between 14-22 years came together with support staff and an Aboriginal artist to create a beautiful art mural within Whitelion. This process involved raising awareness to prevent the use of alcohol during pregnancy, artistic creation, team work, expression and enhancing cultural identity.

Whitelion has also taken the opportunity to use the Strong Spirit Strong Mind Metro



Project Grant to promote initiatives targeting the prevention and/or delay of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use among Aboriginal youth in the metropolitan area.

Strong Spirit Strong Mind Metro Project Grants are available for community agencies within the Perth metropolitan area.

For more information about the Strong Spirit Strong Mind Metro Project, which raises awareness and knowledge about the harms related to AOD use with a focus on Aboriginal youth aged 15 to 24 years, contact the Mental Health Commission on (08) 6553 0600.

International Women's Day celebrates diversity in Katanning

Over 150 people gathered in the Great Southern town of Katanning to celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March 2016. Led by Palmerston Association's Katanning team and strongly supported by local health and community services, the Shire of Katanning and Katanning Senior High School, the celebrations gave a voice to the diverse women of Katanning and celebrated their contribution to the community.

Local Noongar Elder Gabrielle Hansen gave an inspiring and uplifting Welcome to Country. Ms Hansen, a member of the stolen generation, grew up in the area with a strong Noongar culture and was later taken to Perth by authorities. She returned to Katanning and has worked for her community in a variety of welfare and education roles.

"We celebrate Women's International Day in Katanning and with women across the world," said Palmerston Association's Katanning Coordinator Trish Hitchins. "We celebrate the things we have in common as well as the cultural differences."

The local Burundi Peace Choir performed at the event, providing an example of just one of the many cultures that make up the Katanning community and contribute to its diversity.

"A 'bring and share' picnic lunch was a big success and the different stalls provided a broad range of information relevant to local women's lives," said Trish.

Karen Lipio and Anna Boschman, both WA Country Health Service employees, shared their experiences of migrating to Australia from



The Burundi Peace Choir celebrates International Women's Day in Katanning with Palmerston's Trish Hitchins (third from the left).

the Philippines and Kuwait respectively. A former Palmerston client gave an uplifting personal account of overcoming alcohol and other drug-related problems and entertained the audience with her beautiful singing. Katanning Senior High School's Head Girl spoke eloquently about the inequality of income and media coverage within professional sports.

"As women, we are united by our strength," says Trish. "We can role model what we'd wish this community to be like."

Drugspeak is a partnership newsletter of the Western Australian alcohol and other drugs sector. It is produced triannually by the Mental Health Commission (MHC) and the Western Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (WANADA).

Contributions, including photographs, are welcome. Please send articles to

the editor, Holly Wood, at holly.wood@mhc.wa.gov.au. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of MHC or WANADA.

Drugspeak is available in electronic format on the MHC and WANADA websites.



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