



## National Family Drug Support Day

Congratulations to all who participated in supported and contributed to the inaugural National Family Drug Support Day held on 24<sup>th</sup> February in venues across Australia. Major events were held in Parliament Houses in Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide. Side events were also held in Perth, Narrabri, Wagga Wagga and others.

Tony Trimingham, National convener of the event said 'This is the start of a campaign to remove the shame and stigma that most families face when they are supporting a drug or alcohol user. Community, media and often political attitudes to drug use so often lead to families experience isolation and helplessness as they try to cope with the already stressful impacts of drug and alcohol use'. Mr Trimingham added, 'All those who contributed to this event contributed to the start of changing attitudes. Drug use can happen in any family. Death is a 'rock bottom' for which there is no return. Criminalising drug use adds to the stresses and there are no positives. It is time to change the way we deal with drug use. We need to follow the example set by the gay, mental health and disability communities and educate the community away from fearful stereotypes. We need to pay particular attention to the marginalised Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse groups. We need to recognise the importance and value of family support and properly support those who provide it'.

The family members who spoke at each event were particularly well received. They were powerful and moving voices. Service providers spoke of the importance of families and the politicians who attended certainly took note of the need to recognise the needs of families and the importance of their voice.

Mr Trimingham listed five requirements from the day:

1. Policy must focus on measures that reduce drug fatalities - families want policies and programs that keep their children alive. This includes harm reduction strategies such as safe injecting facilities, pill testing and heroin prescription programs.
2. Families want informed and innovative policies and programs that reduce the likelihood of harm for their children. This means substantially increasing the proportion of Australia's \$1.7 billion drug budget for harm reduction (2.2%) and treatment services (22%) from the current allocations.
3. A reliance on criminal sanctions to address drug use only serves to create more problems – drug use is a health issue not a crime issue and families want services that assist their children not punish and criminalise them in a way that creates lifelong penalties. Drug users and their families should always be treated with respect care and compassion.
4. Greater inclusion of family members in the decision making process for families experiencing problematic drug use – For too long families have been left in the cold as they are often seen as part of the problem. Families must be included as equal partners and consulted on all aspects in the development and implementation of drug policies and programs.

5. Family support must be recognized and resourced as a key element in achieving positive outcomes with people experiencing problematic drug and alcohol use, with a much greater emphasis needed to support Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse families – families want services that are there to help them as well as the affected individual.

***The event is set to be held annually and planning for 2017 is our next project.***



Details of the attendance and speakers at each event are listed below:



### **Canberra**

**Attendees:** 71

**Speakers:** Senator Richard di Natale (Greens), Rev. Bill Crews (Exodus Foundation), David Quilty (Pharmacy Guild), Stephen Jones MP (ALP), Garth Popple (WHOS), Family Members – Debbie, Anne & Marion.

### **Sydney**

**Attendees:** 136

**Speakers:** The Hon. Pru Goward (Lib), Trish Doyle MP (ALP), Larry Pierce (NADA), Dr Mehreen Faruqi (Greens), Rev. Bill Crews (Exodus Foundation), John Della Bosca (FDS Chair), Family Members – Anne, Beth.





### Brisbane

**Attendees:** 67

**Speakers:** Dr Lesley van Schoubroeck (Qld Mental Health Commissioner), Rebecca MacBean (QNADA), Niki Parry (QUIHN), Family Members – Emily, Susan & Barry



### Melbourne

**Attendees:** 93

**Speakers:** Hon. Martin Foley MP (ALP), Sam Biondo (VAADA), Ms Fiona Patten (Aust. Sex Party), Tim Bull MP (Nat), Colleen Hartland MP (Greens), Brenda Irwin (founding family partner of Family Drug Help), John Rogerson (ADF), Family Members – Debbie, John

### Adelaide

**Attendees:** 68

**Speakers:** Hon Leesa Vlahos MP (ALP), Hon Stephen Wade MLC (Lib), Ms Simone Cormack (State Director of DASSA), Mr Scott Wilson (Director of the Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council), Mr Michael White (SANDAS), Family Members – Margaret & Angela



### Perth - 2 Events

Event hosted by Palmerston

**Attendees:** 25

Event hosted by WANADA

**Attendees:** 35



### Narrabri

(Event hosted by Centacare)

**Attendees:** 30

**Speakers:** Cr. Les Knox (Welcome), Tony Trimmingham (FDS), Deputy Mayor Cathy Redding - Narrabri Shire

Council, Cigdem Watson - Narrabri CDAT Chair & Centacare, Emelia Saban - Centacare, Owen Atkins - PIR/ CDAT, Marc Glanville – Australian Drug Foundation, Helena Hodgson - Australian Drug Foundation.

We would also like to thank the vital support of our sponsors and supporters without whom the National Day could not have been a success:

Sponsors:

- ❖ Indivior
- ❖ Australian Drug Foundation (ADF)
- ❖ We Help Ourselves (WHOS)
- ❖ Ogilvy CommonHealth
- ❖ Damien Trimingham Foundation (DTF)
- ❖ Queensland Government – Mental Health Commission
- ❖ Department of Premier and Cabinet
- ❖ Family Drug Support (FDS)

Supporters:

- ❖ Alcohol & Other Drugs Peak National Network
- ❖ Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA)
- ❖ Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA)
- ❖ Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)
- ❖ Drug & Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC)
- ❖ Harm Reduction Australia (HRA)
- ❖ National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- ❖ National Indigenous Substance Misuse Council (NISMC)
- ❖ Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PGA)
- ❖ Scriptwise
- ❖ Palmerston Association
- ❖ Narrabri Shire Council
- ❖ Centacare – Narrabri
- ❖ Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (QNADA)
- ❖ Queensland Injectors Health Network (QUIHN)
- ❖ Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA)
- ❖ Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA)
- ❖ WA Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (WANADA)
- ❖ Narrabri CDAT
- ❖ South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol services (SANDAS)
- ❖ Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA)
- ❖ All FDS Staff, Volunteers and Members