



FAMILY DRUG SUPPORT DAY

As many of you may know, especially those volunteers able to attend the recent Mulgoa Workshop, FDS has established an annual National Family Drug Support Day to be held on the 24th of February of each year which will begin in 2016.

The reasons why the National Day was established are many, but basically, when clinicians, politicians and media talk about drug and alcohol issues affecting our communities they often raise the importance of assisting, supporting and engaging more with families. However the reality for many families the reality is much different with limited programs and services available and many policies adversely affecting families, all too often in a cloud of stigma and shame.

Although this is a day for all families and not those just connected to FDS, the National Family Drug Support Day is set on the date of the passing of Damien Trimmingham from a drug related overdose. We hope the day will become an annual event to highlight the need for families to not only be recognised and heard but to be supported and encouraged to speak about their concerns and their needs.

The three (3) objectives of the National Day are to:

- ❖ Reducing stigma and discrimination for families and drug users
- ❖ Promoting family drug support services for families and friends
- ❖ Promoting harm reduction strategies for families and friends

In addition, the following issues are expected to be highlighted:

- ✓ The important role of FDS volunteers in providing family support across Australia
- ✓ Reducing fatal and non-fatal overdoses from drugs including pharmaceuticals
- ✓ Promoting the widespread availability of naloxone products
- ✓ Promoting greater support and resources for treatment services

The Day itself will include a major event in Canberra at Parliament House and include key speakers and invited guests and media. However, on the same day and evening events will be held in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, with potentially some regional areas also hosting events. The FDS Head Office staff and Project Officers will be organising the events.

We also have a number of important National and State based organisations that have already agreed to be key supporters and will be promoting the Day through their networks and in the media.

So What Can You Do To Help?

A number of volunteers and members at Mulgoa asked how they can help and we have come up with a few ways that you can:

- Write to their local MP and ask them to make sure they support the Day and attend the event at their Parliament
- Register online (keep an eye out on the FDS website) to attend or assist at events on the National Day
- Give a donation to help with the pamphlets, posters and badges being produced for the Day

Any Questions?

Should you have any questions regarding the day, please contact Head office and ask for Tony (02) 4782 9222 or email: admin@fds.ngo.org.au