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Welcome to the Winter 2017 Edition of WHOS NEWS

Message from the Executive Director

Winter can be a difficult time for many people. The cold weather seems to make life feel harder for those struggling with drug and alcohol problems. The housing, employment and myriad of other family, social, health and financial issues they often face also have an added bite at this time of the year.

Which is why at these times all the staff and residents of WHOS greatly appreciate the assistance we get from our many corporate and community supporters. The 'lift' it gives everyone here is always remarkable to see.

WHOS, along with many other alcohol and other drug services, has welcomed the recent confirmation of Federal funding for a further two years. It provided a welcome respite from the uncertainty. The availability of further funding enhancements from the Primary Health Networks as a result of new Ice Taskforce related funding has also allowed some expansion of ancillary services at some of our residential services.

I would also like to welcome some of our newest supporters - the Wests Tigers, William Buck and Sydney Motorway Corporation - for their invaluable contributions to the work of WHOS. In particular, the generosity of the Wests Tigers, which as you will see below, is helping so many residents from our Rozelle centres.

As always we also value your feedback and contributions so please let us know your thoughts.

Garth Popple
Executive Director - WHOS



National Alcohol and other Drug Excellence and Innovation Awards

WHOS is proud to announce that it was selected as a winner in the 2017 National Alcohol and other Drug Excellence and Innovation Awards.

The Innovation in the Treatment and Support category award was presented to WHOS for its Residential Treatment for Opioid Dependence (RTOD) program, which is the only service of its kind in Australia. The award was accepted



by Garth Popple at a gala function in Canberra.

RTOD is a stabilisation service that specifically aims to provide a quality service which enables opioid maintained clients the opportunity to stabilise within a supportive environment and to foster health gains within an individualised and streamlined community-based treatment program.

Our congratulations and thanks to all the hard working staff and residents who have contributed to the success of RTOD.



Client Stories

I was in active addiction for seven years. I was using ice and heroin. It started off small at first and maintaining a habit was easy. Over time it became really unmanageable. I started doing crime and I felt I lost my moral compass very quickly. The crime made me feel horrible, but the drug use alleviated the guilt. It numbed me. The more my habit grew the more intense it all got. Being shackled to the drugs made me start to miss having a normal life; I missed having my family. I could not let them see what I was doing so I pushed them away. It got to the point where I needed to make a change otherwise I knew I was going to lose my life. I just didn't seem to have the courage to take that step towards recovery.

Then our home was raided by the police and we were both charged with drug and fraud offences, and refused bail. Basically, we were both thrown straight into prison. Neither of us had ever been to jail before. For the first time in 11 years we were separated and we were in a dangerous environment. It was a totally different world to me.



I was there for three months, then bailed to my mother's place. When I got out, I knew change had to happen, and it had to start with me. My partner, MERIT and my mother all told me WHOS was the best place to get the best chance at recovery, so I started calling. I did a phone assessment and it took three months before I got in.

I was nervous on arrival. I didn't know what to expect, and it was the first time I'd ever made an attempt at recovery. It was like stepping into darkness. The only thing that relieved me was the welcoming and smiling faces when I walked in the door. As I came into the office with my bags I heard laughter, and it made me feel even more relieved.

I was very quiet for the first two weeks. It took me a while to settle in due to my own insecurities. The support I got from the therapeutic community and from staff really helped me come out of my shell. This was mainly due to just being accepted and feeling safe. Despite being gay – and any other differences – we all had something in common which was our addiction. It helped me to start looking at myself and my own behaviours. As well as this, the way the program is set out and how you have to work from the assessment stage through to commitment – each step came with more reward and responsibility which gave me a sense of achievement. It wasn't just automatic. The process of change had begun.

I was learning the tools to stay in recovery. Things like consequential thinking, and taking note of the warning signs like running into old friends and how your mind can trick you into putting yourself into situations that can lead to using again – relapsing. It taught me about building up a structured program that entails things like having a mentor, going to aftercare meetings such as NA, and a network of supportive peers.

I feel I have changed. I am a more confident and assertive person. My passion for a life worth living has come back. I want to continue with the business I was running. I want to return to law school and finish my legal studies. My connection with my family is stronger, and I'm excited to become a functioning member of society again.



NRL Wests Tigers - Our New Partners

WHOS is pleased to announce that the NRL Wests Tigers are now working with over 70 residents at our Rozelle centres each week to improve their fitness, teamwork and leadership skills.

Led by Shaun Spence, the Wests Tigers Fan Engagement & Community Manager, we are finding that his enthusiasm and commitment is being matched by the WHOS residents participating in these weekly clinics with the Wests Tigers. We also understand that the Wests Tigers have been winning more matches since their partnership with WHOS began - however we aren't claiming a causal link...yet...

They also say a picture is worth a 1000 words - and we think these photos tell a great story:



For further information on the Wests Tigers Community Programs [click here](#).



WHOS has been very fortunate in recent times to receive ongoing support from one of Australia's leading accounting and advisory firms. Mr Mark Calvetti, a Director of William Buck, is working closely with WHOS management to help plan for the ongoing development of our services.

The support of William Buck in donating much needed office equipment and furniture has also been greatly appreciated by staff at the Rozelle site.

For further information on William Buck and their history in assisting individuals, progressive businesses and community organisations, including their unique philosophy summed up by the simple phrase, 'Changing Lives' [click here](#).



WHOS is very grateful for the support provided by the Sydney Motorway Corporation to help with some of the upgrade of the kitchen equipment in our Rozelle cafe. This kitchen serves over 120 people every day for lunch and dinner and we think it is probably one of Rozelle's hardest working cafes.

The funding provided by the Sydney Motorway Company provided a brand new commercial griddle - which is already being used regularly by the cafe staff.

For further information on the Sydney Motorway Corporation [click here](#).



WHOS Centres - click for information





Primary Health Network Funding

Recently WHOS has received funding from a number of Primary Health Networks to enhance the services we provide to our residents across our therapeutic communities.

Our thanks go to the Hunter New England & Central Coast, Central & Eastern Sydney, Nepean & Blue Mountains and the Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHNs for all providing the much welcome additional funding.



The new services to be funded include low to moderate withdrawal management to greatly reduce barriers and streamline entry into treatment, supported aftercare programs, mental health liaison and increased partnerships with a number of local service providers. The support to enhance our partnerships with local GPs and medical services, mental health specialists and the court system is particularly welcome by WHOS.

The funding is part of the Federal Government's response to the Ice Taskforce Report.



OzHarvest

For many years now, OzHarvest has been providing an invaluable service to WHOS. Every Friday the OzHarvest van can be seen driving into the Rozelle Campus with a load of fresh fruit, vegetables and assorted food commodities, providing a treasure trove of food for all the residents. More recently, they have also trucked in and prepared a free gourmet lunch for all 120 residents, as well as staff.

OzHarvest is the leading food rescue organisation in Australia, collecting quality excess food from commercial outlets and delivering it direct to more than 900 charities who support people in need across Australia. It operates in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Newcastle and Perth and in regional communities across the country and since 2004, has delivered over 60 million meals and saved more than 20,000 tonnes of food from ending up in landfill.

OzHarvest is the only food rescue organisation in Australia collecting surplus food from all types of food providers including fruit and vegetable markets, supermarkets, hotels, wholesalers, farmers, stadiums, corporate events, catering companies, shopping centres, delis, cafes, restaurants, film and TV shoots and boardrooms.

For further information about the great work of OzHarvest [click here](#).



WHOS in the Media

Recently the Newcastle Herald ran a story about the WHOS Program and the growing need in the community for more places to be available.

[Read the story here.](#)

Awards Follow- Up

Undetected, Untreated and Unbelievably Common



**SUBSTANCE USE
COGNITIVE REMEDIATION**

As we announced in our previous newsletter - WHOS and Advanced Neuropsychological Treatment Services received the support of our peers when our Cognitive Remediation, Improving Clients' Capacity to Successfully Engage in AOD Treatment project, was chosen to take forward as a Network Initiative by the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI).

Here is some further information on this project and a link to a presentation.

Cognitive remediation (CR) is an evidence-based intervention that has demonstrated successful functional outcomes for those with acquired brain injury and severe mental illness. It is estimated that between 30% and 80% of clients accessing alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment have a degree of cognitive impairment (CI), yet no standard or manualised cognitive remediation intervention for this population exists.

Impairment in executive dysfunction, a common form of cognitive impairment in this population, affects an individual's ability to plan, organise, set goals, solve problems, make effective decisions and regulate emotions. These capacities are essential to facilitate positive behaviour change, which is a primary focus of AOD treatment.

Project results demonstrated that clients were 165% more likely to complete the full three month AOD intervention at WHOS if they had completed one month of CR, and 400% more likely to achieve self selected lifestyle goals than the control group. Clients engaging in cognitive remediation showed significantly improved executive function. Furthermore, results demonstrated improvements in goal attainment and retention rates.

There is currently no documented evidence of this work being undertaken in real world AOD treatment settings anywhere in the world, and this project will look to further develop a frontline, user-friendly cognitive remediation program, train staff in the delivery of the intervention and oversee its implementation and evaluation across a number of services in NSW.

[Watch the presentation](#)



**DAILY
MEDIA
SERVICE**

As part of WHOS commitment to improving the information flow in the AOD and related sectors, we were pleased in mid-2015 to introduce our new Daily Media Service. This is a valuable and free service which was previously provided by other organisations and which many in the sector felt was a real loss for them when the service ceased.

Accordingly, WHOS reinstituted a similar media service so many working in our sector and related areas could once again receive a daily summary of media articles and stories of interest. The WHOS Daily Media Service is a free service to subscribe to and all you have to do is send your name and email address to admin7@whos.com.au to receive the daily service.



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