

DASA

Drug and Alcohol Services Australia



Merry
CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY
New Year

OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

December Edition

2018





A Note from the CEO

This is the last newsletter for 2018 and it's been a pleasure being a part of the Outreach journey this year.

It's been a very busy year for our team and they, like everyone else are looking forward to a break over the Christmas period.

Jocelyn and the team seem to have covered the entire Central Australian region, helping people get through their Drink Driver Education courses so that they can get their licenses back. It's been amazing, there is hardly a community that has not been visited this year and of course with things going on out bush they will not get back there until about March 2019.

The team have had their work cut out this year as more clients come on board and more community members seek their help.

They have also been active in their visits to the Sobering up Shelter, where they offer brief intervention to the clients who need it most. This is a big ask as they need to be available from about 6am to catch people before they leave for the day.

I do hope that the team comes back refreshed and is ready to start again in January.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone of you a happy and safe Christmas.

Remember – don't drink and drive and keep yourself and those you love safe.

Carole Taylor



NIDAC18 Conference

The 5th National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference (NIDAC18) was held in Adelaide, South Australia. This Conference consisted of a three-day event held at the Adelaide Convention Centre from 7-9 November. The theme of this Conference, “Responding to Complexity”, acknowledged the range of issues including chronic health problems, injuries from assaults, homelessness, criminal offences, incarceration and social disruptions including family and cultural breakdowns that accompany harmful alcohol and other drug use.

Mental health issues are a common comorbidity, which along with the continually challenging nature of alcohol and drugs misuse, means that people presenting to alcohol and drug services typically have complex, multiple needs. Accordingly, for services to effectively respond to this complexity and restore the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a variety of interventions and supports are required.



The Outreach team and Jordan Lockerbie from the Sobering Up Shelter attended the three day conference. The conference was enjoyed by all, showcasing the many different organisations and all the great work they are doing.



Norm's job is a clean sweep

A cleaner with the Central Australian Health Service, Norm Fitsimmons (pictured) is clearly on a winner in his job, at his workplace. Norman was hired through the Disability Employment Program after a back injury kept Norman out of the workforce for nearly ten years. The program has helped Norman to return to work, where he is the proud cleaner of three buildings at the Alice Springs Hospital and some offices in town. "It's been 10 years since I've had a proper job", said Norman, who had previously worked in security in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. "I've told my supervisor how grateful I am. Everyone's just awesome".



After starting on a 12 month contract, Norman now has a position through to June 2019 and enjoys his job immensely.

The administration team supported Norman from the start, assisting him initially with some online tasks and his supervisor is full of praise for his thorough work and attention to detail. "Everyone knows about my back, and they'll tell me to slow down! I can ask anyone anything. They're always here for me 100 per cent and I get told what a good job I've done quite a bit", Norman said.

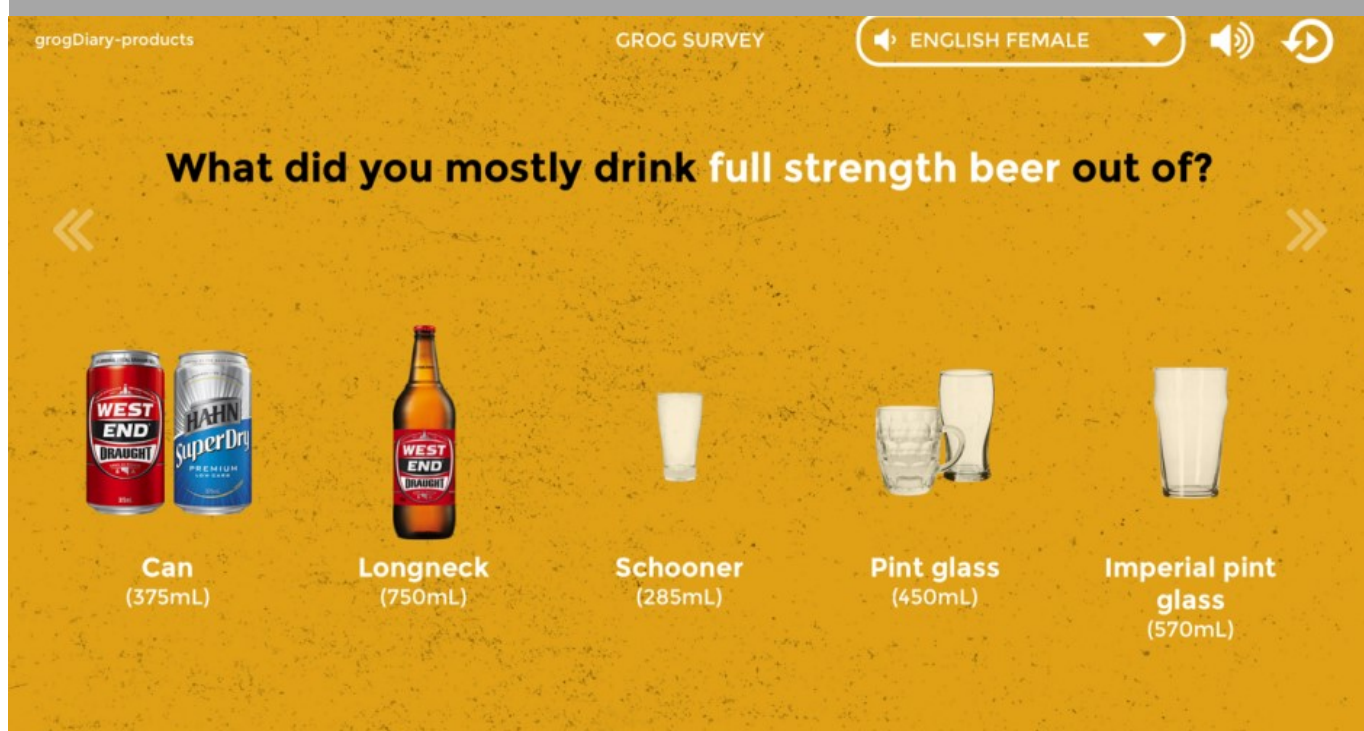
Eleven employees are currently provided with the opportunity to work in the NTPS under the Disability Employment Program (DEP). More than half of these participants are continuing for a second year.

Grog App Trials

A tablet app being trialed in South Australia and Queensland could boost efforts to curb alcohol addiction in Australia's Indigenous communities, researchers say.

They have devised the Grog Survey iPad app, which allows people to electronically keep track of their alcohol consumption and to submit the information anonymously. The researchers hope the app will produce accurate and reliable data that can be used to inform policy and community efforts to tackle alcohol and drug abuse.

Scott Wilson from SA's Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council said the most reliable data dates back to a National Drug Strategy Household Survey in 1994, making it difficult to assess the problem and various interventions. "When they do the big household surveys, they ring people, and so if you don't have a landline for example, you're probably not going to get phoned," Mr Wilson said.




"If you're transient, or if you're actually one of the people caught up in a cycle of drug and alcohol abuse, you're probably not the one who's going to answer the phone at all." Paper surveys can also be problematic where English is not the preferred language.

Professor Kate Conigrave from the University of Sydney said the tablet-based questionnaire, in English and an Indigenous language (initially Pitjantjatjara) may be the answer. "We wanted something that was totally confidential and anonymous, that someone could sit there and use the app on their own with the headphones on, and not have to be telling a person about what they're drinking," she said. "Our chief goal is to get this app working well... and it'll be a tool that can be used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and by local communities and health services, and indeed it can be used by local clinics, to make it much easier to assess what people are drinking."

Outreach workers and volunteers will head to Indigenous communities to ask people to complete the questionnaire. "We'll survey them twice about their drinking, and the third part is a clinical intervention which will them where they fit on the spectrum, and whether they don't have a problem or if they have a severe problem, they'll be able to go to a clinic to talk about their drinking," Mr Wilson said.

The Grog Survey app is the result of collaboration between the University of Sydney, SA's Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council and digital agency Nest. It will be trialled from July in South Australia's Port Lincoln, Ceduna and Yalata, as well as by the Inala Health Service in Queensland.

DASA Christmas Message



DASA, Head Office will be closed
from Monday 24th of December 2018 and
will reopen Monday 7th January 2019.
Best wishes to all our staff and clients
for a safe and happy
Christmas and New Year.