

NewsPoint

WINTER 2010

HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A newsletter produced by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, part of Eastern Health, to highlight issues relating to alcohol and drug treatment and the activities and concerns of the organisation.

Turning Point strives to promote and maximise the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities living with and affected by alcohol and other drug-related harms.

P2 2010 KBS HOST CITY UPDATE ON MCWH TRAINING

P3 CPDD AWARD FOR TP DROP PROGRAM

P4 IN MEMORY OF JAMES SPENCE TP SYMPOSIUM

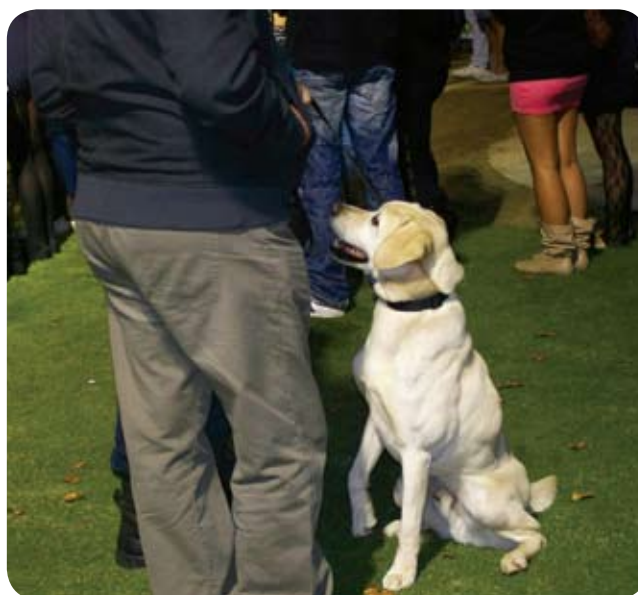
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Turning Point
Alcohol & Drug Centre

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

The Victorian Drug Diversion Program allows people who are apprehended for using and possessing small amounts of illicit drugs other than cannabis to be diverted into the drug and alcohol treatment system rather than the justice system, shifting the focus of the issue to health rather than legal. Offenders are required to attend two counselling appointments to meet the obligations of the program but they may elect to continue with treatment if they wish.



Turning Point operates a statewide 24/7 appointment service for police in relation to people processed via the Drug Diversion Program. The Drug Diversion Appointment Line (DDAL) is utilised by police 24-hours a day to access appointment information across a network of approximately seventy participating treatment services, with Turning Point staff booking treatment for people who meet the eligibility criteria.

As part of the program, Victoria Police conducts a number of drug detection operations at major music and dance events throughout Victoria each year. The operations endeavour to reduce harm at major events by attempting to detect illicit substances entering venues. Police use Passive Alert Detection (PAD) dogs that can detect the presence of drugs on individuals as they queue to enter an event. If the PAD dogs detect an illicit substance, they are trained to sit down next to the offender, who will then be escorted by

police to a questioning area. If the quantity of illicit substance found is a small non-trafficable amount, the person is offered a diversion to a drug treatment service.

Turning Point supports these operations by providing on-site staff, working with police to book appointments for individuals after they are questioned and deemed eligible for diversion. Once the appointment is booked and the substances are confiscated, the party-goers are permitted to re-enter the event. Turning Point staff provide speedy processing to allow police greater detection time in order to minimise potential harms such as overdose. Police have reported that they could not run these major operations without the involvement of Turning Point staff at the events.

At the recent Winter Sound System event at Rod Laver Arena, Victoria Police detected 63 people carrying illicit substances, of which 43 were eligible for drug diversion.

TP 2011 KBS HOSTS

The 36th Annual Alcohol Epidemiology Symposium of the Kettil Bruun Society was held in Lausanne, Switzerland between May 31 and June 4, bringing together more than two-hundred alcohol researchers from around the world. The symposium hosts presentations on an amazingly diverse range of alcohol research, covering an impressive array of disciplines: public health, sociology, criminology, epidemiology, developmental psychology, history and genetics.

Turning Point had a major presence at the conference this year, with nine staff from three research programs presenting their work, along with two recent visitors to Turning Point from London and Stockholm, with the result being our work was well received and widely discussed.

The scale of involvement at the meeting has opened the way for a range of collaborative international projects. Within the AER Centre for Alcohol Policy Research, Professor Robin Room and Dr Anne-Marie Laslett have begun development work around a comparative project exploring alcohol's harm to others, while Professor Room and Jason Ferris remain heavily involved in the large-scale international GenACIS study. In addition, Dr Lynda Berends in the Health Services Research and Evaluation Program is involved in preliminary discussions for international research on alcohol treatment systems.

Turning Point will take on a much more significant role next year, with the AER Centre for Alcohol Policy Research hosting the 37th Annual Symposium in April. Despite tough competition from cities in Norway, Uganda and Italy, Turning Point was successful in securing Melbourne as the host city (the cute penguin and koala pics probably sealed the deal). Mark the date in your diary and keep a look-out for updates on the Turning Point website.



Kettil Bruun Society

SOCIAL AND EPIDEMIOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON ALCOHOL

You are invited to attend KBS 2011 – the 37th Annual Alcohol Epidemiology Symposium of the Kettil Bruun Society.

Where: Melbourne, Australia

When: Monday 11th April- Friday 15th April, 2011

Venue: Karstens at CQ, 123 Queen Street, Melbourne

Key dates and deadlines

September 1, 2010 - Call for abstracts. Registrations open

December 14, 2010 - Abstract submission deadline. Application for travel assistance due. Registration deadline for travel assistance applicants

December 21, 2010 - Notification of abstract acceptance

February 11, 2011 - Early-bird registration payment due, thereafter fees will increase from A\$110-A\$150

February 27, 2011 - Full paper submission deadline

March 8, 2011 - Application Ole-Jørgen Skog award due

April 9 – April 10, 2011 - Pre-symposia and working meetings

Further details will be made available on the Turning Point website via a link from the KBS website shortly.

For more information please contact:

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Proudly brought to you by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre and The Burnet Institute

UPDATE ON CALD TRAINING

Turning Point, in partnership with the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) and the Northern Division of General Practice, has just completed its first round of training in an ambitious three-year project to identify and reduce risky alcohol consumption in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Sixteen GPs attended the three-session course held in April.

Training content identified a range of validated resources for GPs, practice staff and patients, including screening for risky alcohol use and how to use the Drink-less Brief Intervention program.

"This is a really great opportunity to pick up some new skills on how to respond to a patient's drinking behaviour," says Sandra Roeg, Senior Education and Training Officer.

"We were delighted with the level of participation from GPs," adds Kay Dufty, Program Coordinator for Mental Health, AOD and CALD activities at the Northern Division of General Practice. "The training was very engaging and we had the additional help of participation from Dr Matthew Frei and Dr Joanne Gardner who facilitated several sessions of the course."

An added focus of the training was how to effectively engage with members of the CALD community. Pauline Gwatirisa, the Community Development Worker at MCWH and several bilingual health educators attended the course and provided relevant information to doctors about the importance of using interpreters to communicate more freely with patients.

"We feel that attending this training and providing a real life cultural experience for GPs is a worthwhile component of the course," says Pauline, "They can begin to understand some of the complexities that face CALD communities and determine how best to work together and tackle these problems."

The community development activities undertaken by MCWH staff will add to the existing knowledge on alcohol use in CALD communities.

Pauline says, "Unfortunately, not a lot is really known about the use of alcohol in our communities or the problems that drinking can cause.

This project will allow us to actively engage with CALD communities, raise the profile of alcohol as a potential concern and then make direct links to GPs."

One of four demonstration projects funded by the Department of Health to address risky patterns of alcohol consumption in Victoria, Turning Point aims to provide more training of this nature to support GPs in the future.



Risky drinking training for GPs

And the award goes to...

The College on Problems of Drug Dependence is the oldest organisation in the USA concerned with research into addictive behaviour, and along with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), its annual meeting brings together top AOD researchers from around the world, including Turning Point's Professor Robin Room and Dr Suzi Nielsen who attended the 6-day conference in Scottsdale Arizona in June this year.

An early highlight of the event was the presentation of a prestigious NIDA award to Professor Room. The award recognises Robin and his colleague Thomas Babor's collaborative work leading the incorporation of scientific research into public health policy, most recently demonstrated by their new book, *Drug Policy and the Public Good* published by Oxford University Press.

Turning Point projects showcased at CPDD and NIDA included work on pharmaceutical drug dependence, methamphetamine treatment and comorbidity treatment, while Professor Room also presented as

part of a panel of world leading policy researchers including John Strang, Thomas Babor and Peter Reuter discussing drug policy and its role in public health.



Professor Robin Room accepts his award at the NIDA International Forum

Drop in!

The Drug Responsive Outreach Program (DROP) is a Department of Health and Aging funded project to improve awareness of alcohol and other drug issues and services to CALD communities in the City of Yarra. The program, in collaboration with local health and welfare services provides education sessions tailored to the individual needs and concerns of local CALD communities.

In May, a session was delivered to Sudanese women on the North Richmond estate in collaboration with Jesuit Social Services and North Richmond Community Health Centre's Drug Safety Program. Community based workers have an established working relationship with these women and interpreting was provided by Dinka and Arabic interpreters.

Concerns identified by this group included inappropriately discarded injecting equipment, public injecting, people asking for money and cigarettes and overdoses on the housing estate. The session was designed to alleviate concerns and provide straightforward education about related issues. General feedback was positive with the women commenting that two hours was not enough time to discuss all the issues raised. As a result, a follow up session has been

scheduled, and similar sessions have also been organised for Chinese, Vietnamese and East Timorese community leaders on the North Richmond estate.

Feedback from workers in community based services will continue to inform alcohol and drug education and training needs within CALD communities. DROP welcomes communities and related workers to contact Kerri Felemonow on 8413 8463 or 0425 819 789 to discuss educational needs.



Ronan Walsh and Kerrie Felemonow, DROP clinicians

