

## **INSIDER'S NEWS: A PEER MAGAZINE IS A HEP C GAME CHANGER IN NSW JAILS**

Leah McLeod<sup>1</sup>, Dr Mary Ellen Harrod<sup>1</sup>, Thomas Wright<sup>2</sup>, Collette McGrath<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)* <sup>2</sup>*Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network (the Network)*

### **Background:**

Of just over 12,000 people living in NSW jails, 84% have used an illicit drug, 43% have ever injected and nearly 40% have used an illicit drug in custody. Unsafe injecting is responsible for most transmissions of hepatitis C in jail.

NUAA is a peer organization supporting the health, dignity and human rights of people who use drugs. NUAA has a 30-year record in health promotion through peer education models, with a particular focus on hepatitis C.

### **Description of model of care/intervention**

In 2016, NUAA was funded to produce peer magazine *Insider's News (IN)* as part of the NSW government's commitment to hepatitis C elimination in NSW jails. Now at Issue #8, *IN* includes stories of lived experience and reader contributions, alongside peer resources, professional advice and service information.

### **Effectiveness**

Indicators of success include:

- high levels of acceptability among readers;
- prevalence of hepatitis C in NSW jails from 30% down to 15%;
- *National Award for Excellence in Hepatitis C Health Promotion*;
- new joint projects by *IN*'s partners.

### **Conclusion and next steps:**

*IN* is now a mainstay with plans for extending into other media. It is hoped that by promoting *IN* on the world stage, other jurisdictions will be inspired to duplicate it.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement: *See example below:*** *Insider's News is funded by the Ministry of Health as part of a core funding agreement with the NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) and is published in cooperation with the Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network (Ministry of Health) and Corrective Services NSW (Dept of Communities & Justice). The authors are paid employees.*