

# ESTABLISHING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS FOR A STRONGER WORKFORCE

Implementing a Long-Term Partnership-Based Strategy to Build the Competence and Capacity of the Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment and Support System

## Introduction

A long-term partnership-based alcohol and other drug (AOD) Qualification Strategy (QS) has been resourced, implemented and monitored for over a decade to build the competence and capacity of the specialist AOD treatment and support system in the ACT.

## Key Findings

Data from evaluations, focus groups and the ACT ATOD Workforce Profile show that:

- » Training is accessible: 100% of the eligible ACT ATOD workforce has access to subsidised training spots and paid attendance.
- » The Strategy has good coverage and reach: Over 30 workers (of a workforce of approximately 250) are engaged each year.
- » The training is of high quality and achieves outcomes: Pre/post testing shows acquisition of new AOD-specific skills.
- » The training is fit-for-purpose: Uniting ReGen, an industry training provider, delivers contemporary training, responsive to emerging drug trends and new treatment approaches.
- » Long-term approaches meet the needs of existing and new workers: Most of the current ATOD workforce have completed the required training; resourcing can focus on upskilling new workers and responding to turn-over.

## Conclusion

When resourced appropriately, and underpinned by strong partnerships between service providers, trainers and peak organisations, the ATOD sector has demonstrated capacity to establish, maintain and monitor workforce development initiatives that have become accepted core components of quality AOD service provision; and that translate to valued outcomes for service delivery staff, agencies and service users.

## Background to the QS

- » The ACT AOD QS was introduced in 2006
- » It aims to ensure the development and maintenance of a competent and professional alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) workforce in the ACT
- » It aims to ensure that all ATOD workers in the ACT have a shared minimum knowledge and skill base
- » It supports workers to have accredited credentials specific to their field while acknowledging their depth of expertise and skills
- » It is based on nationally recognised standards through the provision of industry endorsed and delivered training
- » It is delivered as a collaboration between the training providers, the ACT ATOD sector peak body (ATODA), specialist ACT AOD services and ACT Health

## Components of the QS

Training is fully subsidised, and includes:

- » AOD Skill Set Course (CHCSS00093)
- » Remaining Units of the Certificate IV in AOD (CHC43215)
- » First Aid training (HLTAID001, 002, 003)

Training is provided by Uniting ReGen, a Victoria-based AOD treatment and education provider with over 40 years' experience delivering a comprehensive range of AOD services to the community.

## Customisation of the QS

Training material was customised to acknowledge and build on the skills and knowledge of professionals working within the sector. This included adapting to local legislation, service delivery contexts and clinical processes.

## Outcomes of the QS

Monitoring and evaluation activities provide a long-term and detailed picture of the QS reach, coverage, implementation and outcomes.

An evaluation of the QS training was undertaken to ascertain:

- » Impact of training on participants' skills and knowledge
- » Participants' satisfaction with training

The effectiveness of the training program was assessed using pre & post evaluation with a focus on identifying the skills and knowledge acquired by the participants using a standard AQTF (Australian Qualification Training Framework) evaluation feedback form.

The pre & post evaluation demonstrated that as a result of undertaking the training participants significantly improved their knowledge, skills and confidence to work with people who experience ATOD issues. Therefore, the sector can be confident that workers are competent (to a basic level) in understanding or providing:

- » AOD knowledge within an Australian context
- » Pharmacology
- » AOD (relevant) legislation
- » Harm reduction
- » Family inclusive practice
- » Referral
- » Assessment
- » Interventions
- » Relapse prevention and counselling skills

To assess students' satisfaction levels with the training overall as well as particular aspects of the training (the training content and materials; the trainers; the students' own learning; and the skills and knowledge gained), an AQTF evaluation feedback form was administered four times, once for each of the competency units delivered during the program.

Overall satisfaction with the different components of the training program were universally positive and participants consistently reported satisfaction with the trainer, the training materials and resources supplied to support the training across all components of the program.

In summary, participants consistently reported satisfaction with the content and relevance of the training and the training provider. This was complemented by a significant increase in skills, confidence and competence of participants to work with people experiencing ATOD issues.

## Authors:

Julie Robert<sup>1</sup>, Bernard Hanson<sup>2</sup>, Amanda Bode<sup>1</sup>, Carrie Fowlie<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA), Canberra, <sup>2</sup>Uniting ReGen, Melbourne.

julie@atoda.org.au / November 2018

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**ATODA**  
Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug  
Association ACT