



Issues 2017

Background

In July 2016, The Drug Education Network (DEN) and the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Council (ATDC) held a state-wide forum Putting Gender on the Agenda to bring together the women's, mental Health and alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD) sectors. The forum attracted 75 participants and identified many issues and gaps in service form women who use ATOD services.

The following is a list identified by participants at the forum and follow up regional workshops, as barriers to women and women with children receiving appropriate services.

Following the forum and workshops, an action plan has been developed to address some of the identified issues and ongoing work will be occurring to improve the sectors responsiveness to women.

Action Area: Gender Responsiveness

- Lack of gender responsive services for women

Action Area: Women with Children

- Lack of residential services for women and women with children
- Lack of accurate non-judgemental information on effects of ATOD in pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Child Safety involvement a barrier to getting help
- Online harassment

Action Area: Family Violence

- Fear of Child Safety involvement is a barrier to women seeking help for Family Violence
- Family Violence intersection with drugs and alcohol
- Inappropriate response from General Practitioner's
- Lack of ATOD support from women's crisis support workers
- Difficulty accessing legal support outside metropolitan areas

- Police response can still be blaming and shaming
- Target groups with high rates of Family Violence -Aboriginal women, women with disabilities
- Sector Siloing

Action Area: Stigma

- Stigma facing users is a barrier to getting support
- Older women suffering greater homelessness and stigma

Action Area Gender Diversity

- Higher rates ATOD use in LGBTI communities
- Women only refuges don't cater for gender diverse people
- Inappropriate response from health care providers and other service providers regarding gender diversity

Action Area: Data and Research

- Lack of meaningful local data

Recommendations

The Drug Education Network request that this brief is used as a basis for funding applications, advocacy and service development across the sector. The information gathered is available for anyone to use to make our sector more responsive to the needs of women.