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# Caring for Communities - Increased Participation with Alcohol and other Drug Services

Initiative Type

Service Improvement

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Deliver

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## Summary

The Cherbourg Alcohol and other drugs (AODS) service has increased consumer and community confidence and engagement with their service through the development and provision of programs in

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their local community. The programs have provided a platform for community engagement, where opportunistic education and brief interventions are provided, to promote healthy lifestyle choices, raise awareness and minimise the harm associated with alcohol and substance misuse and build community familiarity with, and confidence in the local AODS Service. These programs have included: Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies Breakfast Program, Communication Education and Engagement BBQ's, Volatile Substances Misuse Program, Art Therapy.

### Key dates

Jan 2016

Jan 2018

### Implementation sites

Cherbourg Hospital

## Key Contacts

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## **Aim**

Build rapport and engagement with the local community and informs the community of services offered by AODS.

## **Benefits**

- Provides education and brief interventions that increase awareness and minimise harm associated with drug and alcohol misuse.
- Promotes health lifestyle choices with consumers and the local community.
- Contributes to the overall reduction in the burden of disease and injury experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- Increases consumer confidence and engage with the local AOD Service.
- Involves the community to ensure that their concerns regarding local drug and alcohol issues are understood and considered by the AOD service, when planning future programs and service delivery.
- Empowers and encourages the community to be involved in the implementation and management of change in their local community.

## **Background**

AOD services provide people with a range of interventions that influence and support the decision to reduce or cease harmful substance use. Referrals to alcohol and other drugs services can come from the individual experiencing the problem, family and friends, community services, Hospital and Health Services, GPs, Police, Courts and Corrective Services.

## **Solutions Implemented**

- concept Briefs completed and submitted, for approval by the Division of Mental Health & AODS Executive Management
- programs were provided in the local community on a weekly basis, by Cherbourg AODS team, over 12-month period
- effectiveness of the programs were evaluated using identified outcome measures and verbal feedback from the community and other local service providers

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## Evaluation and Results

The programs provided the following results:

- prime opportunities for brief interventions and education around healthy lifestyle and harm minimisation strategies
- community aware of AODS team members and where they can be located if they want to engage further or for ongoing support
- positive interaction and engagement – consumers are now engaging in conversation with AODS staff when they attend programs and are actively participating in activities
- positive verbal feedback from community
- parents/family and carers are also coming and seeking advice from AODS team members around Drug and Alcohol related issues
- 82 per cent increase in presentation and participation in treatment for alcohol and other drugs and Cherbourg.

## Lessons Learnt

The programs have successfully increased consumer and community engagement and participation with the local AODS. The flexible approach provides supportive, least restrictive environments that promote engagement and increases awareness of and confidence in the local service. This has resulted in many opportunities that have contributed to better health outcomes for the Cherbourg community, in line with the DDHHS vision – Caring for Communities: Healthier together.

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