



Substance
Misuse
Limestone
Coast

Global Problems, Local Solutions



Limestone Coast
Local Government
Association

Media Release – October 11, 2021

SMLC HOSTS FIRST LIMESTONE COAST AOD REGIONAL SUMMIT

Leaders and frontline staff working in the Limestone Coast's alcohol and other drug sector are being invited to the inaugural AOD Regional Summit in November, hosted by Substance Misuse Limestone Coast (SMLC).

Gap analysis and future planning for the Limestone Coast's AOD sector will be on the agenda of the full-day event in Mount Gambier on November 4.

SMLC Project Officer Sophie Bouchier said the event was a first for the region and was designed to bring together the multiple agencies that operate AOD services as a united 'think-tank'.

"One of SMLC's key objectives is to advocate for the many agencies and staff working out there in our region and we want to know where the service gaps are so we can begin to address them," she said.

"It will be the first time the region's agency staff and leaders will be together in the one room and big things happen when people work together on shared problems. I'm expecting some very relevant and important themes to emerge."

Earlier this year, SMLC conducted a survey exploring the impact of Covid-19 on local agencies, revealing concerning statistics for both agencies and clients, said SMLC board member Sandi Seymour.

"We know the last 18 months of continued lockdowns and uncertainty have had a major impact on agencies, staff and service delivery and this is a chance to discuss how we can work together to address these concerns," she said.

"This evidence base can then be used to inform SMLC's understanding of the current issues for our sector. We can then begin future-planning and advocating for funding to address gaps and direct programs towards targeted areas."

Ms Bouchier said the lack of funding for effective health promotion around alcohol and other drug misuse led to SMLC's Time for Change campaign in 2020.

“The campaign tackled the rise in at-home alcohol use during the pandemic, was achieved by funding from and partnering with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF),” she said.

“The summit will be a great opportunity to join forces with agencies and provide some targeted outcomes which will have an enduring benefit for the Limestone Coast community.”

Guest speaker at the event will be Jennifer Duncan, the CEO of the Australian Alcohol and other Drug Council (AADC).

How staff recruitment and retention affected service continuity would also be discussed during the day, Ms Bouchier said.

“The client is always at the heart of what we do,” she said.

“Changes to services and staff have a major impact on ongoing client relationships so it’s in our best interests to attract the best and most experienced staff possible to our region.

SMLC is funded by the Federal Government and supported by the Limestone Coast Local Government Association.

The Limestone Coast Regional AOD Summit will be held on November 4 in Mount Gambier.

Media contact: SMLC Project Officer Sophie Bouchier | M: 0429 342 175 | E: sophiebourchier@smlc.com.au