



Substance
Misuse
Limestone
Coast

Global Problems, Local Solutions

Media Release – November 2, 2023

Limestone Coast AOD Regional Summit returns for 2023

Substance Misuse Limestone Coast (SMLC) is preparing to host their second Limestone Coast Alcohol and Other Drug Regional Summit in November, bringing together leaders, frontline workers and key decision-makers from across the state.

The lead topic on the agenda at this year's event is comorbidity, which SMLC Project Manager Sophie Bouchier said is a timely and relevant issue for those working in the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) sector.

"Comorbidity is the term generally used to describe the presence of more than one condition, which could be a dependence on alcohol and a mental health issue, both requiring treatment," she said.

"The balancing act for practitioners and frontline workers is which condition to treat first, sometimes resulting in people being turned away from treatment because the organisation or agency may be an AOD or mental health funded agency and isn't equipped, or funded, to treat both conditions."

Special Guest Speaker for the event is Dr Melinda Beckwith PhD, Senior Research Officer for the University of Sydney, Medicine and Health, and the Matilda Centre for Research on Mental Health and Substance Use.

Other key speakers include South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services (SANDAS) Executive Officer, Michael White and Acting CEO of Warrnambool's Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre (WRAD Health), Mark Powell.

Ms Bouchier said the day's agenda will also include updates on the opening and management of the two Alcohol and Drug detoxification beds at the Mount Gambier and Districts Hospital, referral pathways, gap analysis, and discussions of regional AOD and comorbidity models.

It was also an opportunity for frontline workers from across the region to catch up and connect, Ms Bouchier said.

"One of the main feedback points from our 2021 Summit was the need for regular events, not only to share industry news and local trends, but also to combat the isolation that AOD workers and allied health agencies can experience in the regions," she said.

"It's not often that you can bring leaders, clinicians, researchers and frontline workers together all in the one room and I expect there will be some major outcomes from the day, which will then be incorporated in SMLC's future planning.

“As the region’s peak health promotion, education and advocacy organisation, it’s SMLC’s mission to identify those opportunities and service gaps, and proactively work with local organisations, funding bodies and policy makers to seek funding to fill those needs.”

The 2023 event has been funded by the Stand Like Stone and OneFortyOne Partnership Grant.

The Limestone Coast Alcohol and Other Drug Regional Summit will be held on November 23 at Mount Gambier’s Wulanda Recreation and Convention Centre.

Media contact: Project Manager Sophie Bouchier | M: 0429 342 175 | E: sophiebouchier@smlc.com.au