

## **QLD Government takes strong stand on Vapes**

The Crisafulli LNP Government is taking decisive action against illegal tobacco and vape retailers and suppliers, to undermine their business models and remove the financial incentive of this illegal trade.

Unfortunately, under the former Labor government, hundreds illegal stores operated in plain sight across Queensland. There were no Penalty Infringement Notices (PINs) available to public health enforcement officers to issue to operators found to be trading in illicit nicotine products such as vapes and nicotine pouches.

I am pleased to advise that the Crisafulli Government recently implemented the nation's toughest PINs for the commercial possession and supply of illicit tobacco and nicotine products.

Illegal operators will be hit with on-the-spot fines of more than \$30,000 for the sale of illicit tobacco, vapes and nicotine pouches.

The Crisafulli Government is sending a clear warning to every person trading in these harmful products.

Queensland Health continues to disrupt the supply of illegal products by issuing financial penalties and seizing and destroying illegal products. Between July and December 2024, officers issued \$5.6 million in financial penalties, and seized 9.3 million cigarettes, 2.8 tonnes of loose tobacco, 55,000 vapes and 21,000 other nicotine products.

Queensland Health is also pursuing further action through court proceedings which can result in higher financial penalty of up to \$1.6 million, custodial sentences, and store closures of up to six months.

I am actively investigating other ways to implement new measures to interrupt the supply and sale of illegal tobacco and vapes. I have requested additional legislative changes over the coming months and I am consulting with law enforcement officers about the tools they need to get more illegal tobacco and vapes off the streets.

I encourage you to call 13 74 68 or complete this [online form](#) to report the operation or suspected operation of illicit tobacco and vape stores.

**Source:**

***Tim Nicholls MP, Minister for Health & Ambulance Services  
Member for Clayfield***

**DRUGS & POLITICS - two topics some might avoid but we'd like to encourage you to get chatty on these matters...**

**We've created a Pre Federal Election Survey**

Drug Free Australia is keen to establish that drug use issues are closely linked and in many cases, the cause of problems in our families and communities. In order to gain attention about this during the current Federal Election, DFA is circulating the following survey. We would be pleased to obtain feedback from candidates and any support from all our readers.

We encourage you to pass the following page/survey onto your local candidates...



**Federal Election 2025 - Questionnaire to Candidates:**

Given that drugs and alcohol abuse impact families and communities via Increased incidence of family violence, violence against women, child neglect, road carnage and increased crime in our communities, we seek your response to the following policy areas:

1. What are you going to do to prevent drug use in the community?

---

---

---

2. What specific strategies will you have to reduce road accidents from drug abuse?

---

---

---

3. What specific approaches will you take to reduce drug-related crime and assaults?

---

---

---

4. What is your policy position on ensuring greater community awareness between drug use and mental health issues? How would you achieve your goals?

---

---

---

Thank you for your responses.

**Gary Christian and the Board, Drug Free Australia**

**RSVP: [admin@drugfree.org.au](mailto:admin@drugfree.org.au)**

## KERRYIN'S KORNER

- Advice based on  
Lived Experience



### Introduction to Kerryin:

Firstly, I must say, I am honoured to be a Board Member of Drug Free Australia and to have the opportunity to write regular articles for this monthly e-bulletin.

For my opening article, I would like to share a little of my background and the reason I am so passionate about warning young people about the dangers of substance use.

Mine is a **lived-experience** horror story that began in my teen years. Future articles will include more facts and will answer questions that you, the reader may have.

### My Childhood and Teens:

I had a normal upbringing, with no traumas or broken family. However, like so many young people in their teens, I felt the need to 'fit in'. I followed my peers into the party scene. This is a very common scenario, which I'm sure many people will relate to.

It all just seemed like a bit of fun at first, but little did I know that I was falling straight down the slippery slope that leads to addiction. **Like most people I thought this would never happen to me.** At that time, there was no preventive drug education during my school years.

### Gateway drugs...

It began with smoking a few cigarettes, a little alcohol and before too long, I was offered marijuana. Feeling both curious and a little daring, I joined in. I had dropped my guard and unwittingly crossed that line into a world I knew little about. Over the following year or so, this progressed to hallucinogens, speed and eventually heroin. As I look back now, it astounds me at how easily this happened.



**MORE**



### Life threatening events:

After 7 years of this crazy lifestyle, while still working at a full-time office job, I became quite unwell and took time off to recover. However, my illness continued to progress until I was eventually rushed to the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, where I was diagnosed with **acute drug related heart and kidney failure**. At that point I was given less than two hours to live, with no chance of survival!

Quite miraculously, I survived, but I went on to spend almost 5 months in hospital, enduring several grand mal seizures, a coma and a few further close encounters with death. More than once my heart stopped beating and I received emergency CPR to return me to life. I left hospital very frail and on medication to keep me alive. I continue to take some of these life-saving medications to this day in mid-life. Very few medications are without side-effect.

I have lived and seen the dark side of drug use first-hand and I yet am just one of millions of people who endure this nightmare across our nation and around the world.

### The legacy I offer:

In 2010 I published my first book, '**Out of the Darkness**' and a senior-school teacher, who had read it, invited me to speak with the students in his class, to educate them on the reality of substance use. My talk was well received, and I realised I have an incredibly important perspective to share with people in all age groups.

Over the past 15 years I have developed and delivered powerful presentations in senior schools and corporations across Australia. The response I receive from students and staff and other audiences is always amazing. Lived-experience stories have high impact, but it's not just about 'stories'. My presentations include other real-life stories intertwined with up-to-date information and facts on substance use.

More widely, I have also done several media interviews and TV appearances and featured in an SBS documentary on marijuana.

You are invited to email your questions to Kerry and these will be published in our forthcoming monthly e-zines to help more young people and families across Australia. [kerryn@kerrynredpath.com](mailto:kerryn@kerrynredpath.com)


 Rotary

 AUSTRALIA  
**RAG AP**  
 Rotary Action Group  
 for Addiction Prevention

# THE MAJOR BRIAN WATTERS YOUTH PREVENTION INFLUENCERS' AWARD



COULD YOU BE THE NEXT **YOUTH INFLUENCER SCHOLARSHIP** RECIPIENT?

Drug Free Australia (DFA) is an NGO that is working in close cooperation with the Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention. In partnership, DFA announced an award to be offered in honour of the work of Major Brian Watters AO, to young people between the ages of 17 and 25 who are interested in training to be Youth Prevention Influencers.

## WHAT'S ON OFFER

- 1) Financial assistance for YPI training, up to \$500 as follows:
  - the first \$100 being awarded at commencement of training as a YPI;
  - \$100 awarded upon successful completion of the training; \$300 awarded upon completion of practical policies and practice to help prevent addiction to nominated community groups/ individuals.
- 2) Training – either a 4 hour online or a 1 day face to face session in the nature of addiction and current strategies being used to prevent and/or help people deal with their addiction.
- 3) Mentoring to encourage the development the YPI's own strategies for drug prevention in their communities.
- 4) Assistance with travel to Vienna to be part of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at the United Nations headquarters – held in mid-March each year, to join other like-minded young people in their endeavours to influence world governments in drug prevention.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Individuals between the ages of 16-29 can be nominated by Rotary Clubs, Senior Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions OR they can nominate themselves and seek the backing of their local Rotary club or other body.

Submit a registration of interest, giving reasons for applying. This should include:

- (a) Resume with at least 2 referees including those involved in a Rotary Club or other community body.
- (b) A minimum 500-word statement/essay/video entitled – 'Why and How we could stay Drug Free'

## KEY DATES

Registration of interest due: Round 2- **Wednesday April 30, 2025**

Scholarship recipients notified by: **Friday May 30, 2025**

Training commences: **Thursday June 26, 2025** (commemorating the United Nations' International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO APPLY CONTACT: **Jo Baxter** International Board Member

Rotary Action Group For Addiciton Prevention - [admin@drugfree.org.au](mailto:admin@drugfree.org.au)

**DRUG  
FREE  
AUSTRALIA**

**Rotary**



AUSTRALIA  
**RAG AP**  
Rotary Action Group  
for Addiction Prevention

**DRUG  
FREE  
AUSTRALIA**

## ABOUT Major Brian Watters AO

Major Watters devoted his life to working tirelessly to help people of all ages, gender and ethnic backgrounds to return to health when drugs and alcohol had destroyed their lives. In addition, he spent many years as Vice President of the *United Nations International Narcotics Control Board*.

Major Watters was well qualified in this important field, with:

- an Arts Degree from Newcastle (NSW) University, majoring in Medical Sociology.
- Qualified Psychiatric Chaplain and trained at Newcastle University in Addictions Counselling.
- In 1998-2010 he was appointed as Chairman of the Australian National Council on Drugs, the peak Drugs Policy Advisory Body to the Australian Federal Government.
- A member of the National Board of Drug Arm, Australia;
- Member of the Leadership Council of International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition.
- Past President of the N.S.W. Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (NADA) with a Membership of more than 100 Agencies.
- Served on the N.S.W. Health Minister's Drug Advisory Council.
- In 2005 he was elected to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) of the United Nations – based in Vienna.
- In 2007 appointed Vice President of the International Narcotics Control Board and
- was the Chair of the Prime Ministers Drug Advisory Council (ANCD) for over 10 years.
- President and Board Member of Drug Free Australia from 2002-2024.



FOR MORE VISIT: [RAG-AP.ORG](https://rag-ap.org)



**DRUG  
FREE**  
AUSTRALIA

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AUSTRALIA?

FIND OUT HERE >

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?

FIND OUT HERE >

Stay drug free  
HOW & WHY

CHECK OUT OUR  
LATEST BLOG POST  
TO READ MORE...



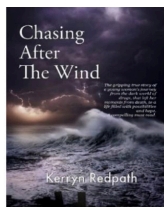
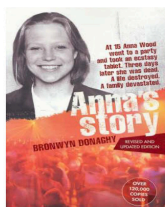
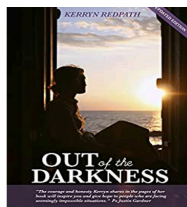
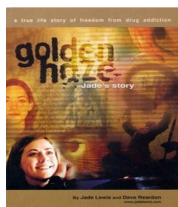
**DRUG  
FREE**  
AUSTRALIA

## RESOURCES

Click on the images below to access the online resources



### Books and more...



For WCTU Primary & Secondary programs contact Dawn Stark:  
[drug-free@bigpond.com](mailto:drug-free@bigpond.com)

DAESY



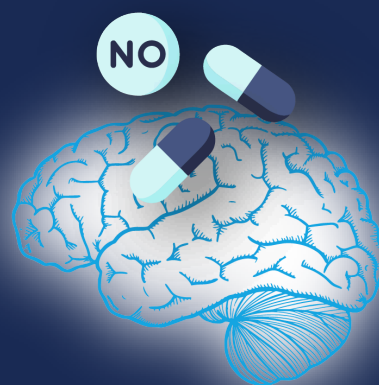
For more information on any of the above, contact:  
[admin@drugfree.org.au](mailto:admin@drugfree.org.au)

**SAVE YOUR BRAIN  
SAVE YOUR BRAIN  
SAVE YOUR BRAIN**

Stay connected and up-to-date follow us...

@saveyourbrain\_dfa

facebook.com/saveyourbraindfa



**BE PART OF THE SOLUTION - CAN YOU DONATE?**

**FOR A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO DRUG FREE  
AUSTRALIA'S WORK CLICK BELOW...**

**DONATE NOW**



**VISIT THE DRUG FREE AUSTRALIA WEBSITE  
TO LEARN MORE**

**CLICK HERE**

