

SUPPORTING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING & ABUSE

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DAY:

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, or World Drug Day, is marked on 26 June every year to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving a world free of drug abuse.

WHAT IS THE THEME?

The theme for the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (World Drug Day) on June 26 is "The evidence clear: invest in prevention".

Who participates? All United Nations Member States are encouraged to participate, together with (and often in partnership with) Non-Government health groups.

Drug Free Australia participates in partnership with the Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention to spread the Youth Message – seeking advice and help from our present and future youth generations. We also work closely with the Netherlands' One Voice, One Message.

HOW CAN MORE PEOPLE GET INVOLVED?

Be in touch with:

Drug Free Australia: admin@drugfree.org.au

The Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention click [HERE](#)

Visit ovom.org



A staff member of the Liberia National Police Anti-Drug Squad reviews the municipal dump outside Monrovia, Liberia, where they are burning nearly 400 kg of marijuana and other drugs that were confiscated between 2011 and 2012.

PHOTO:UN Photo/Staton Winter

KERRYIN'S KORNER

I recently had the honour of representing Drug Free Australia by attending the virtual 2-day AddictionZ 2026 conference held in Queensland on 27-28 May.

Watching presenters who represented several organisations, from my Demand Reduction perspective, was extremely interesting. As we have all come to understand, the main focus regarding drug policy has, over recent years, become increasingly directed towards Harm Reduction. Of course this is a necessary part of the equation. However, I am convinced that making HR the major focus is a huge mistake, denying the desperate need for more Demand Reduction.



Addictions that were included:

Some of the addictions touched on included alcohol, Vapes, flavoured tobacco, Nitrous Oxide (nangs), AI addictions, gambling, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, phone/social media addictions, Methamphetamines, pre-natal meth exposure and a newer deadly synthetic opiate called nitazenes (more potent than Fentanyl). The ease at which youth and even young children can acquire illicit drugs was covered and of course, quite alarming.

There was a reasonable amount of content covering addictions in the indigenous and the LGBTQI+ (or rainbow+) communities as these are demographics with high levels of substance use and related issues. Neurodiversity and mental health issues were also covered.

Keynote speaker – Johan Hari

I was particularly interested in hearing from the first, highly promoted speaker, Johan Hari, whose theories regarding the 'Rat Park' experiment, I had read about a few years earlier. Some of his theory regarding "connection between humans" as a preventative or healing factor in addiction, are absolutely relevant, however, this is clearly not the cure-all many of his supporters seem to think. The fact that Johan's books on these theories have been NYC Best-sellers indicates huge support for this theory. He also seemed to infer that trauma was almost always the driver for addiction. Although often the cause, this is far from the only factor, as I can attest to in my own personal story.

However, as another presenter pointed out, despite Johan's theory relating to the need for human connections to overcome addiction, many people gravitate towards negative connections with like-minded people, in this instance, other substance users. This type of connection would naturally increase substance use, rather than reduce it.

Another of his theories (in his book) was the fact that heroin users in Vietnam, during the war, often stopped using heroin when they returned to their homeland and back to the love and support of their families, which is a reality. However, the point missed here is that many of these traumatized veterans swapped their opiate addiction for other, more easily accessible substances like alcohol and cannabis etc.. And tragically, the suicide rates have also been high among these same traumatized people. Positive connection is extremely valuable, but the entire issue of addiction is far more complex.

continued...

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Naloxone issues:

Another presenter spoke on the use of naloxone (used for rapid reversal of opiate overdose) in particular regarding a move to make this drug more easily accessible. This was followed by a comment calling for "Harm Reduction not abstinence" which the speaker likened to "Moral judgement"!! While I don't disagree with the concept of having a wider availability of a life-saving drug, to me this is clear evidence for a greater need for Demand Reduction and more prevention-based education.

Of course, the topic of 'lived' experience was covered, and I give my full support for that. However, the current name for this practice is "Lived and LIVING' experience. In other words, those currently using drugs are being utilised to educate other users on how to "get stoned" safely. Given the known harms of substance use, I find this idea a huge step backwards in really helping those in need.

Although there were presenters and organisations that focused on the need for prevention, it was exceedingly obvious that this is not being emphasised or applied anywhere near enough.

A massive standout to me was the fact that much of the focus on Harm reduction, was involving the recovery side of HR with a focus on rehabilitation. Ie. picking up the pieces after the damage has been done.

This is a clear indication that far more prevention or Demand Reduction is desperately needed. We all know "Prevention is better than cure!"

Prevention

A huge shout out to those who did focus on prevention, in particular, Commissioner Ivan Frkovic who has worked in the area of Mental Health and addiction for 30+ years. He listed the need for investment in Prevention, Treatment, Harm Reduction and Supply Reduction in that order on two occasions.

I must add that I am sure that people promoting and practicing Harm Reduction are doing this with good motivation, believing it is the only answer. I/we just happen to see this from a very different perspective. Harm Reduction is actually normalizing substance use, which can only lead to increased levels of addiction nationally and globally.

There was a forum for discussion where I entered a few personal comments and promoted the DFA Save Your Brain link etc., however, I did not see any other comments on this forum, so I have no idea if anyone else saw these comments or promotion.

Drug Free?

Another thought that came from this heavily recovery-based conference is regarding the use of the name 'Drug Free'. This name is often criticized by those who state, "this country will never be Drug Free." However, the angle that clearly stood out to me, is that so many drug users are desperately trying to become "Drug Free", supporting the fact that Drug Free Australia is an accurate name for an organization that is based on the promotion of Demand reduction. Ie. prevention and recovery. Just a thought.

- Kerryin Redpath *Executive Committee Member DFA, Director DAESY*

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Featuring 'One Voice, One Message' – ovom.org

Enough weed to roll sixty million joints. That's how much comes out of the former tomato greenhouses of grower Calendar every year. Legal, because since last year the company has been supplying all 72 Dutch coffee shops participating in the cannabis experiment. With this trial, the government wants to find out in ten municipalities in the coming years whether the legalization of cannabis in the Netherlands makes sense.

The American Altria Group has now joined the company through a multimillion-dollar transaction. Altria is the current name of tobacco manufacturer Philip Morris, known for the world's most iconic cigarette: the Marlboro Red. This is how the international tobacco industry is entering the Dutch weed, according to research by Investicowith De Groene Amsterdammer and NU.nl. Tobacco giants set their sights on the legal cannabis market

Dutch cannabis is no longer exclusively Dutch. The Dutch government opened the door for the global cannabis industry. The international tobacco industry is getting involved in the Dutch cannabis experiment. But according to experts, the cannabis market is not prepared for players with deep pockets and expensive lawyers. Tobacco giants set their sights on the legal Dutch cannabis market.

To stop them, people need to stop using it. So **prevention, prevention and more prevention** is the key.

We ask that you go to the website and **sign the petition for Drug Prevention:** ovom.org



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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?

FIND OUT HERE >

Australia's Meth Epidemic at Record Levels: Time to Double Down on Prevention Before It's Too Late

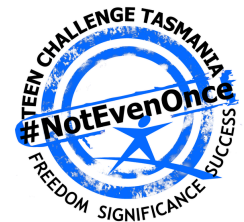


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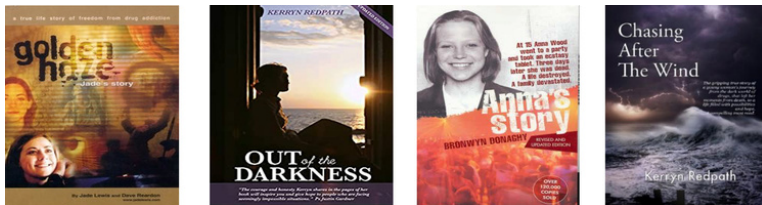


RESOURCES

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



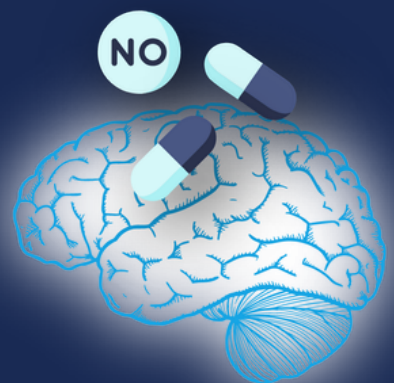
For more information on any of the above, contact: admin@drugfree.org.au

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