

23 February 2017

See the person, not the drug

Queensland will take part in a campaign to end the shame and stigma often experienced by families of people living with problematic alcohol or other drug use.

National Family Drug Support Day on **24 February** highlights the need to look past the stigma of drug use and instead see the person who is someone's son, daughter, sister, brother, mother or father.

Prominent campaigner Tony Trimmingham of Family Drug Support said: "Behind every statistic of a drug-related overdose death, arrest or hospitalisation there is a family suffering pain. All too often in a cloud of stigma and shame."

Family Drug Support is marking 20 years helping families adversely affected by alcohol and other drugs use. This year also marks two decades since Mr Trimmingham's son, Damien, was lost to a drug overdose.

The Queensland Mental Health Commission is supporting National Family Drug Support Day (Qld) with a \$41,500 grant from the *Stronger Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants Program*.

As well as seeking to reduce stigma and discrimination for families and drug users, National Family Drug Support Day helps promote support services for families and harm reduction strategies, also key approaches under the *Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Action Plan 2015-17*.

Dr van Schoubroeck said demand and harm reduction were as important to tackling problematic drug use as supply reduction, and families were at the frontline.

"Families and communities play a big role in supporting people to recover from dependency and reconnect with the community.

"Families are often caught in the middle of a situation they've never dealt with before, over which they have little control. They can feel judged, misunderstood, isolated and at times overwhelmed.

"At the same time they are often the most important source of support and recovery for their family member.

"With the right support for individuals, their families and communities, people who become dependent can and do recover to live lives with purpose."

Mr Trimmingham will attend a number of the Queensland National Family Drug Support Day events.

GOLD COAST

23 February 2017, 1.00–2.00pm

Venue: Elanora Community Centre, 26 Galleon Way, Elanora

BRISBANE

24 February 2017, from 1.30pm

Venue: Premier's Hall, Parliament House, George & Alice Streets, Brisbane



Dr van Schoubroeck said community consultation to renew alcohol and other drugs approaches under *Queensland's Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan* had recently commenced.

Information about Strategic Plan Renewal consultations can be found at www.qmhc.qld.gov.au

Find support: The Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) provides confidential and anonymous telephone counselling and information for individuals, families and others. ADIS is available 24/7 by calling freecall **1800 177 833**.

Uninformed conversations that take place in community, online and media settings, may reinforce myths and/or stereotypes, and this adds to the families' stress and wider community stigma.

ENDS

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