



Alcohol and Drug Foundation



# Strengthening community-led prevention across Australia.

The Local Drug Action Team (LDAT) program fosters partnerships in communities across Australia, helping build knowledge and skills to address local issues associated with alcohol and other drugs (AOD), including methamphetamine (ice).

LDATs can be a mix of schools, educational institutions, health workers, police, community organisations, businesses and local government who unite to drive a community-led response to local issues

There are 274 LDATs who are supported by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) to work with communities and develop a tailored Community Action Plan (CAP), which guides them to implement evidence-based activities at the grassroots level to minimise AOD harm.

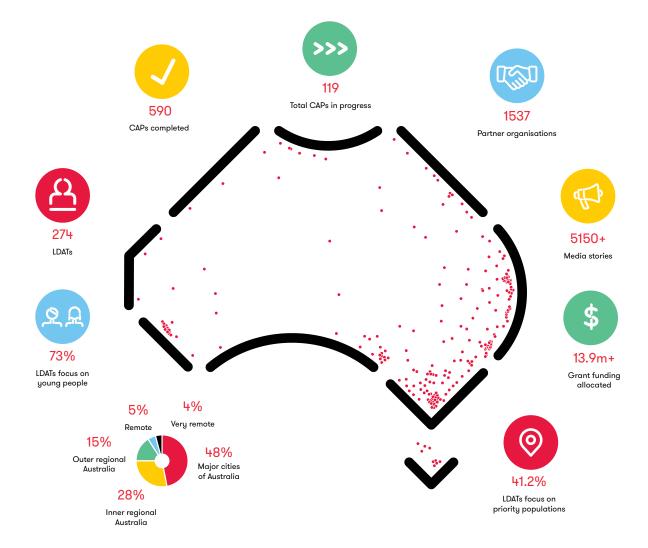
# **Building protective factors**

The LDAT program emphasises building 'protective factors' in local communities to counteract identified 'risk factors' as a means of reducing alcohol and other drug harms.

AOD issues can change at different stages in people's lives and each life stage carries with it different

protective factors, which either increase or decrease a person's chance of developing or being impacted by AOD issues.

Some of the proven protective factors harnessed by LDATs include participation in recreational activities, evidence-based drug education, mentoring, peer support and increasing a sense of belonging and connectedness with school, family and community.



## Helping communities do it better

Helping communities help themselves is the success formula behind the LDAT program.

We know that a place-based approach, driven – and delivered - by locals, where they live and work, is the best way to build AOD protective factors and create sustained behavioural change.

We also know that the evidence to prompt this change continues to evolve, as we learn more and trial new approaches; as does the capacity of local communities to plan, implement and evaluate their activities.

That's why the LDAT program has been finetuned this year, on the back of a comprehensive analysis, feedback from LDATs gleaned through a consultation process and an in-depth literature review to capture new and changing evidence.

This work means we are better positioned to help communities:

Understand local needs – we've been working
with researchers and data custodians to identify
information that will help LDATs understand which
protective factors are weak, and where risk factors
are strong, to guide their thinking around appropriate
action to reduce AOD harm. This information is woven
throughout our updated suite of toolkits and the new,
improved AOD Lifecyle Planner.

- Create targeted plans we've taken the LDAT program online and launched a new digital platform that is enabling a stronger focus on using evidence to drive CAP development, linking to relevant resources and evaluation tools to ensure an evidence-based approach throughout the whole process – from conceptualisation to completion.
- Strengthen community action we've upgraded our popular suite of support toolkits to include the latest evidence and information on proven programs as well their potential adaptability, helping LDATs develop custom made approaches that suit the needs of their community and draw on evidence-based principles.
- Measure success we've created new evaluation tools specifically to reflect the intricacies of the LDAT program. These new, easy-to-use tools provide measures that allow communities to understand their impact, and help us build knowledge of 'what works'. As we build this evidence, we can continue to update resources and learning opportunities for LDATs to further strengthen community impact on AOD.
- Network and learn we've built an online Community
  of Practice for LDATs, regularly bringing them
  together to share learnings and hear from experts
  in AOD prevention, fostering collaboration between
  LDAT members, increasing knowledge and building
  capacity.

# Evidence-based drug education



# **Education**

# Alexandrina LDAT, SA

# **Project partners**

Alexandrina Council, Goolwa Secondary College, Tindale Catholic College, Milang Old School House, Reclink.

# **Target audience**

Young people in rural South Australia.

# Local challenge

The lack of activities for youth in a small rural town had led to young people gathering at a payphone with a public Wi-Fi connection after school – right across the road from the local pub.

At the same time, three schools identified that their school curriculum didn't have a sufficient drug and alcohol education program for students, parents and teachers.

### **Solution**

An old regatta club sat unused on the Lake Alexandria foreshore. The LDAT pulled together existing local partners and developed some new strategic partnerships to help transform the club into a space for young people to get involved in weekly recreation activities.

The Alexandrina Council and Milang Old School House and Community Centre recruited community volunteers to clean up the old premises. And simultaneously, the LDAT brought on Reclink as a valued partner, who hired a youth activities coordinator to attend the youth centre on a weekly basis.

The three concerned schools joined forces to develop a plan for educating students, teachers and parents on AOD harms, and the best ways to support young people. A range of sessions were delivered by a local service provider to the schools, and to the broader community in partnership with local sports clubs.

### **Impact**

Having a consistent safe environment for young people in the small community has had a noticeable, positive impact.

The youth centre has attracted eight or more young people, aged from 10 to 17 years, each week for the past 12 months and attendees have said they established new friendships, along with a stronger sense of community. The young people have begun to take ownership of the activities that are run in the space.

The education sessions have led to a greater understanding for young people across the Alexandrina area about the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs, and how to support their friends if something goes wrong.

The whole-of-community approach reinforces the messaging young people are hearing in school, with parents, teachers and sporting clubs receiving similar messages about alcohol and other drug harms.

# Around Australia | LDAT snapshots

# Sons of the West Daughters of the West (SOTW DOTW) LDAT, VIC

Under the auspices of AFL team, the Western Bulldogs, the SOTW DOTW LDAT is breaking down barriers for young First Nations people, aged 12 to 15 years. Its Nallei Jerring Youth Leadership Program ('Join and Unite' in Woi Wurrung Language) works in partnership with local community and schools, connecting participants with community and culture. Activities include AOD education, cultural excursions, practical team building activities, leadership development, sessions with respected Aboriginal Elders and leaders, and AFL visits.

# Impact Alcohol: Prevention Through Connecting Allied Sectors in the ACT LDAT, ACT

This LDAT developed a pilot program for an alcohol prevention training package for allied sector workers in the ACT. It empowers professionals who interact with clients at significant risk of developing a dependence on alcohol, providing information on resources and tools that can help their clients. The LDAT delivered the program to 52 participants over three half-day training sessions in mid-2023.

# Participation in positive, structured social activities/sport



# Social

# ReaL8 Program LDAT, NSW

# **Project partners**

Street Industries, University of New South Wales (UNSW), Canterbury Bankstown Council, Georges River Council and Inner West Council.

# **Target audience**

Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in western Sydney.

# Local challenge

The LDAT's Project Reimagine emerged on the back of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns to provide a platform for young people to voice their experiences, confront challenges, and articulate their aspirations. It was driven by feedback from young people which highlighted the lack of support and opportunities, particularly within hard-to-reach and marginalised communities, and the gaps in New South Wales' youth services.

### Solution

The LDAT ran a mapping exercise to identify which populations were not engaged with key youth and outreach services. It highlighted that young people from culturally diverse groups, including Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian, and from low socio-economic backgrounds, such as those living in social housing estates and those involved in the criminal justice system, had no contact with mainstream services. Canterbury Bankstown is one of NSW's largest local government areas and this lack of engagement highlighted the need for targeted efforts to reach marginalised groups of young people.

Recognising the power of sports for connection, the LDAT collaborated with three local sport competitions – soccer, basketball, and rugby league. This provided a platform to start conversations and establish rapport with young people. Through these competitions, Project Reimagine established a welcoming environment where young people felt comfortable sharing their thoughts, experiences, and aspirations. These activities fostered a sense of belonging and facilitated building trust between young people and service providers.

## **Impact**

The LDAT engaged with 191 young people in Canterbury Bankstown. It observed improved mental health indicators, strengthened social connections, and increased awareness of available support services among the target audience. Stories of success were heartening and showed the project's positive influence on participants' lives. The activity's holistic approach addressed immediate needs and inspired participants to envision a brighter future.

Project Reimagine also delivered a report from the voices of the young people with key recommendations for organisations and community to improve outcomes for young people.

# Around Australia | LDAT snapshots

# Uncle Alfred's ThulguRrie Healing LDAT, QLD

Music as healing, through beat box sessions for high-schoolers, is the focus for this LDAT. The beat box lessons provide an opportunity for mentoring and peer-support for at-risk young people, as well as education about health, lifestyle choices, and alcohol and other drug harm. At the end of the program, students will have the opportunity to showcase their skills by performing at two concerts. The activity aims to increase access to support services and connection to community.

# WACFL Club Leadership Pilot Program LDAT, WA

The LDAT engaged 20 WACFL players from the regional town of Carnarvon in a men's health education session on mental health to increase participants knowledge of the importance of social connection, and also formed the Carnarvon Working Group of service providers and community members. The successful pilot program is now being introduced into other WA regional zones in the Pilbara and Kimberley.

# Sense of belonging and engagement with community



# Belonging

# Isaac Region LDAT, QLD

# **Project partners**

Mackay Cutters NRL Club, Mackay State High School, Queensland Police, Deadly Choices, NRL Development, Moranbah Miners, Clermont Bears, Coppabella State School, Valkyrie State School, Kilcummin State School, Mistake Creek State School.

### Target audience

Young people in rural and remote north and central Oueensland.

# Local challenge

The transition from primary school to high school is a time of significant change for young people, as they adapt to a new social and academic environment. It can be a time of anxiety and stress as they need to develop new friendships, while dealing with the physical and emotional changes of puberty.

Local school counsellors, Headspace and other youth agencies in the district report that once a young person from a remote or isolated community has completed their early learning years in their town, the next step is to leave their comfort zone of a small close-knit setting to a much bigger and busier school, often as boarders.

Without support, young people can have problems socially and emotionally, and can often feel vulnerable and alienated.

# **Solution**

To address these challenges, the Isaac region LDAT's Community Action Plan is building on protective factors so students in their remote communities can foster positive peer relationships, reduce social isolation and increase social supports and connectedness.

The focus is on upskilling young local sporting heroes to be positive role models. The LDAT is preparing junior elite athletes (15 to 17 years) as peer leaders who receive training in leadership skills and are supported to help younger students in remote communities transition to high school life away from home.

The LDAT is also delivering a series of fun community sport activities for local families across six remote towns in the Isaac LGA. The events include positive messaging around health, wellbeing, and alcohol and other drugs.

# **Impact**

While the Community Action Plan is still being delivered, the junior elite athlete peer leaders report that they have learnt about the harms related to alcohol and other drugs, have the tools to support younger peers and are prepared for their important role in community.

Through the local events, parents and family are more aware of the impact on students as they transition to high school and have more knowledge to support them.

# Around Australia | LDAT snapshots

# Gumbaynggirr LDAT, NSW

Lead by the Miimi Aboriginal Corporation in Bowraville, the LDAT is using art to bring social connectedness, belonging and purpose. The Aboriginal Elders of the Bowraville community proposed the idea of creating a family tree artwork to be displayed in a prominent position in town. This is a place the community can come to see where they belong, creating connection to culture and identity and providing protective factors against harms from alcohol and other drugs.

# Program Inclusion and Empowerment LDAT, VIC

On the back of community consultation, this LDAT launched the City Drug Support Services flyer. The flyer provides Melbourne CBD residents, workers and visitors with information on who to contact if they come across someone experiencing AOD-related difficulties and includes details of all the wraparound services in the city. It was created in collaboration with people with lived experience of alcohol and other drug use, with data gathered through a survey. Partners include cohealth, the City of Melbourne and outreach support services.



# Sense of connectedness to community, culture, school and family



# **Community connection**

# Cardinia Strategic Reference Group LDAT, VIC

## **Project partners**

Konnext Right Now, Living Learning Pakenham, Victoria Police.

# Target audience

African migrant and refugee community in Pakenham, southeast of Melbourne.

## Local challenge

Following a widely reported "riot" at a major public event in Melbourne in 2016, young people of African backgrounds have been profiled by the media and political leaders as anti-social, criminal gangs. Despite this perception not being supported by data, the racial profiling and stigmatisation of this group has continued in the community. Young people have reported classroom and schoolyard experiences of racialised bullying and have not felt supported by teachers and school administrators.

These experiences have left many of the young people with a sense of powerlessness and exclusion from the broader Australian community. This impacts their identity, self-esteem and wellbeing, creating risk factors for alcohol and other drug harms.

### Solution

This project addresses the anxiety and powerlessness felt by these young people by cultivating resilience. The LDAT held a series of workshops that included relationship building with local organisations and creating positive networks with Konnext RightNow, Centre for Multicultural Youth, YSAS, Foundation Health and Monash Health.

During these sessions, a range of issues was discussed, such as understanding mental health and unpacking anxiety, responding to racism and bullying, how to manage uncertainty, effects of alcohol and other drugs, identifying addiction and support referral.

The sessions also included dance lessons where participants of the program learnt about their traditional dances and had an opportunity to showcase them – providing a sense of culture and connection to their community.

### **Impact**

The young people involved in the program reported that they found it positive and moving.

Throughout the sessions, they gained knowledge of tools

and strategies to use in their everyday life to manage and recognise racism and bullying. Participants learnt about the effects of different drugs and alcohol, and now feel more aware of, and confident in, accessing the support services available to them.

# **Around Australia | LDAT snapshots**

# **Get Connected Toormina LDAT, NSW**

Community safety was one of the key issues for Blue Sky's Groundworks Youth and Family Hub. The Get Connected Toormina LDAT led a collaborative approach between community services and young people to reduce anti-social and criminal behaviour and increase positive engagement. One of the LDAT activities included the re-development of Graff Ave Park, providing better facilities for young people and families to use as a space to socialise, gather and connect.

# Growing Strongbala Way with the Banatjarl Strongbala Wimun Grup LDAT, NT

The Banatjarl Strongbala Women's Group, led by the Jawoyn Association Aboriginal Corporation, delivered the Reconnecting Songlines project. A series of cultural camps were held to bring the cultural knowledge and ceremonies back to Jawoyn country, where pride and sense of self are a healing pathway for loss of identity and culture. Elders educated young people in dances which carry the stories, traditional healing and wellbeing practices. The camps also included educational workshops around health, self-care, alcohol and other drugs, and domestic and family violence.



# Access to training and employment pathways



# Upskill

# Basketball Kimberley LDAT, WA

# **Project partners**

Broome Basketball Association, Ardiyooloon Basketball Association, Derby Basketball Association, Halls Creek Basketball Association, Kununurra Basketball Association, DLGSC Kimberley, West Kimberley High Performance Squad, East Kimberley High Performance Squad.

# **Target audience**

Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# Local challenge

Communities in the Kimberley face many challenges, including social and economic disadvantage.

Disengagement from school, family, culture and positive recreational activities are all risk factors for harm from alcohol and other drug use in young people.

### **Solution**

In designing the LDAT's Community Action Plan, it was all about building protective factors and providing pathways for young locals.

The program starts off with basketball 'come and try' sessions for kids, which include education sessions about the harm of alcohol and other drugs.

Young people can then progress to regional and state development programs like the Basketball WA - Kimberley's High-Performance Squad. Some of these squad members make up the Healthy Hoopster Heroes, a group of young people who work to encourage their peers through peer support approaches. The Heroes assist in the AOD education sessions for new players.

The Tier 2 LifeSkills Program supports High Performance Squad members to build up skills so they can become resilient, confident young people. It's based on an evidence-informed prevention model for schools, families and communities.

## **Impact**

Several participants made it to state teams or have represented Western Australia at the Basketball Australia National Championships. The Heroes have developed into confident young leaders who mentor and inspire others.

Aussie Hoops and 3×3 Streetball are delivered at 31 sites across the region, with messaging on alcohol and other drugs and LifeSkills embedded in each program.

Over 50 young people have been trained to be coaches and referees so far, providing pathways for them and addressing the lack of volunteers in the region.

### Around Australia | LDAT snapshots

### SCHEMA Action Team, QLD

SCHEMA LDAT is organising 12 skate and music events around Brisbane. The events target young people 10 to 30 years of age, and the LDAT is working closely with young community leaders to train them in all aspects of event coordination. Events involve skate, bike and scooter competitions, music concerts, art activities, exposure to positive engagement opportunities and mental health support. Each event will be led by a new young volunteer who will learn all aspects of event coordination with SCHEMA's support.

## Nambucca Heads LDAT, NSW

The local youth hub, funded by the LDAT, provides a positive experience and inclusive environment with youth programs, employment pathways, advocacy and referrals. Young people at Nambucca Youthie have access to counselling services, an open pantry for tea, coffee and snacks, barista training, a community garden, computers and a music studio. Recently Australian rapper, Tasman Keith, has been generous in providing his skills and time to facilitate Nambucca Youthie's music program.



# In their own words

# Longreach and Central Queensland LDAT, QLD



The Central West Queensland Youth and Wool Industry Program, based in the rural town of Longreach, uses hands-on shearing camps to mentor Torres Strait Islander young people (aged 14 to 18 years old) who are at high risk of disengaging from education and community. Through these camps, participants learn practical skills and are able to complete their Certificate 2 in Agriculture, creating employment pathways.



Image above: Leilani having fun with the young program participants



Image above: Dawn Amit

# Leilani Ah Wong, LDAT lead and Senior Constable at Barcaldine Police Station

Before we became an LDAT, the program started with Laurie Bateman – a police officer and shearer. He set up camps for disadvantaged kids, country children who are academically challenged and who are looking into agriculture. It's a way for youth to be exposed to police and job prospects in the shearing and wool industry. We get to know each other for a whole week on a personal level, working side by side and building relationships.

As with any initiative, it requires funding. That's where the LDAT program and Alcohol and Drug Foundation comes in. So far, we've run three camps in partnership with LDAT.

Dawn [our Relationship Manager] is fantastic. For one, she's got children within the age group. She understands the attitudes and motivation. It allows her to relate to what we're doing. Dawn's communication and follow through is really good. I'm a person you need to follow up, and she does that well!

She often sends me extra information. Recently I was on a call with Dawn, she'd just come from a seminar on vaping and was able to share her insights. When we had down time in the sheds, I asked the young people what they thought of vaping, and we were able to have that discussion.

We're grateful that ADF has supported and taken a chance on us, and that we can fund the camp necessities such as food. We do 10-hour shift days in the sheds. We need the snacks and refills. Through these camps, the kids get to complete the Agricultural Cert 2, so they're important for job prospects.

# Dawn Amit, Senior Community Development Officer at the Alcohol and Drug Foundation and the dedicated Relationship Manager for the Longreach and Central Queensland LDAT

This LDAT has 25 partners; I'm normally in contact with Leilani and Matt from Barcaldine Police. They're just really engaging. Leilani enjoys spending time with the kids and getting the best for them. Even though these were her first camp experiences, she seems to really like it and can build that rapport with the young people.

Leilani is constantly thinking about how it can work for the next camp, already planning. She understands it's creating employment opportunities for young people to pursue something after school that allows them to stay in the community with their networks, or to work anywhere else in Australia. Leilani is super passionate, she understands the need to build connections, and the hopes and dreams of these young people.

A lot of these young people come from disadvantaged backgrounds. They don't have the opportunity to go to university. What the LDAT gives to those young people is a chance to finish their Certificate 2 in Agriculture. They experience working on a sheep station and see if they want to pursue any of the skills they've tried. You've got responsibilities like mending fences, rustling sheep and cattle, cooking dinner.

I've been in this role for three years. What I like about this job is getting to know the lead of an LDAT and building a relationship of mutual trust – getting to see their ideas develop. I get to visit all the communities, getting to know the people and how it all plays out. I enjoy helping LDATs to understand what alcohol and other drug prevention is.

It's great seeing the community come together, to see something being born out of it with our support. It's about creating partnerships, building community capacity and resilience.



# In their own words

Hoi Sinh LDAT, SA



The Hoi Sinh LDAT runs culturally appropriate alcohol and other drug information sessions for young people and parents in north Adelaide's Vietnamese and Afghan communities.



Nhung Huynh and My Phuong

My Phuong Sramek is the Practice Manager at Community Access and Services SA (CAaSSA), the lead organisation for the LDAT. My Phuong works closely with her colleague Nhung Huynh on the project.

We've spent many years now working with the Alcohol and Drug Foundation to build prevention and early intervention initiatives for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

We're really grateful and happy to partner with ADF through the LDAT program and to be able to reach many local communities. That's our mission at CAaSSA. The ADF team supports grassroots initiatives like ours and is very understanding. I really appreciate that – the open communication and partnership.

Ishra, our Relationship Manager, is very friendly. She's open-minded. I listen to her input and to her guidance. She provides us with information – always sharing upcoming events, activities and tools, and guiding us through planning and evaluation.

In the CAaSSA team, we know that alcohol and other drug use can be well hidden and stigmatised in CALD communities, among new arrivals, refugees, and non-English speaking people. This is why I want to do this work. We want to reach out to people who are less

We have many other programs at CAaSSA, which help make the project better. For example, we have programs around mental health, AOD, community connections and community education. It helps us reach the target group, making the program more successful.



# Ishra Prasad - Senior Community Development Officer at the Alcohol and Drug Foundation and the dedicated Relationship Manager for the Hoi Sinh LDAT

The Hoi Sinh LDAT is so well connected. The LDAT team is super open and happy to share their information and ideas.

Because CAaSSA does firsthand delivery of alcohol and other drug services, they see the real examples of people being affected. They understand the importance of prevention through the LDAT program. It's eye opening.

In Adelaide, the Vietnamese and Afghan communities are quite established as they've been there for many years now. They're strong groups. The LDAT targets these communities, but also the newer refugee and migrant

groups. The reason it works so well is because they hire people directly from those groups. They really do work intimately with the community, the mindset is that the answers must come from them.

And it shows with the engagement for the alcohol and other drug education sessions that the LDAT has run for young people and families. All the attendance numbers were way over what was expected. They have a good reputation among the locals.

Working with My Phuong is really great. We started working together in October last year. One of the qualities I like in My Phuong is that she perseveres. She's someone who is assertive and advocates for the communities she works for. I feel like she's not fully recognised for all of the amazing things she does. And she always feeds me when I meet with her!

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Ishra Prasad



# Piloting Planet Youth in Australia

Planet Youth is an evidence-based prevention model from Iceland that's internationally renowned for significantly reducing alcohol and other drug use among young people.

The model focuses on boosting protective factors against alcohol and other drug harms, including increased family time and stronger access to supervised extracurricular activities such as youth clubs, arts programs and sport.

Since the introduction of Planet Youth in Iceland in 1998, youth alcohol and other drug use rates have transformed from some of the highest in Europe, to among the lowest. The country has also seen reductions in bullying and juvenile crime.

Planet Youth shows that long-term investment in community-led prevention leads to significant reductions in alcohol and other drug use. The model is now being implemented in over 30 countries.

# **LDAT** pilot sites

Since 2019, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation has been working with Planet Youth to assess the applicability of its evidence-based model in the Australian context through a pilot program with LDATs in Lithgow and Blue Mountains (NSW), and Port Pirie, Salisbury, Limestone Coast and Murray Bridge (SA), supported by Wellbeing SA.

Surveys of local Year 10 students are integral to the Planet Youth model providing an understanding of the AOD experiences of young people, the environments they are living in, and risk and protective factors. September 2023 saw the third round of surveys for four out of the six pilot sites.

The survey findings allow LDATs to work collaboratively with local stakeholders to plan and implement community-led actions to influence young people's environments and build protective factors against AOD harms.

Planet Youth LDAT initiatives have included a marketing campaign targeting supply of alcohol from parents to their children; community and school vaping workshops; recreational before-school programs for students; mentoring programs; community events; and, a new drop-in youth space.



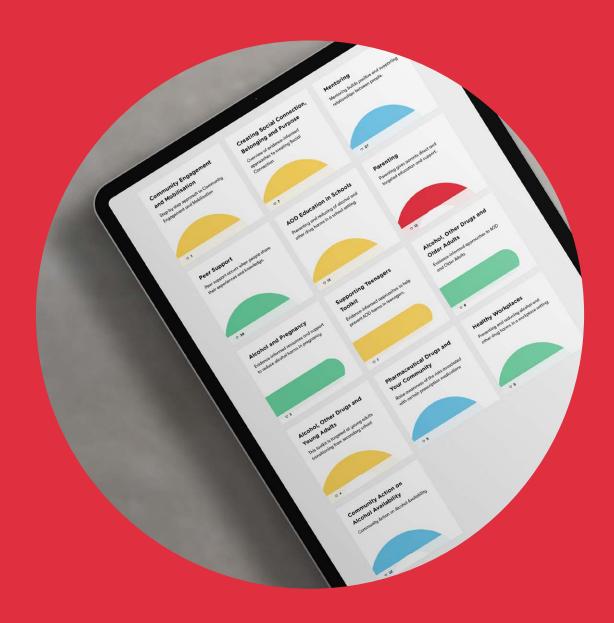
Pictured: Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill, Pall Rikhardsson, CEO of Planet Youth Iceland and Craig Martin, Head of Evidence and Innovation at the ADF.

# Jump on board the ADF's Community Hub

For LDATs, the online ADF Community Hub is a one-stopshop when it comes to accessing evidence-based tools and resources to guide their grassroots' activities. For others in the community seeking to make a difference locally, it's also a source of inspiration and ideas.

There are toolkits, local government tools and guides, LDAT stories, promotion guidelines and more. It's updated regularly and it's free for all. There's also a useful Community Hub monthly email newsletter that anyone working to reduce AOD harms can subscribe to – find it online.

# community.adf.org.au



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# **Alcohol and Drug Foundation**

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