

Shaping positive futures in Alice: what's working in the alcohol and drug, justice diversion and youth sectors?

Chair: Cassandra Wright

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Aim: To bring together clinical, public health, youth and Aboriginal perspectives on how Alice Springs is rising above complex social challenges with innovative, place-based and evidence-based initiatives.

Panellist 1: Dan Wilson

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Panellist 3: Blair McFarland

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Panellist 4: *TBC Youth representative

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Detailed description of topics to be discussed:

While media and political discourse on Alice Springs in 2023 have been largely deficit-focused, leading AOD sector representatives will reflect on the significant strengths and opportunities for growth within the community. Panellists will provide insights from their varied perspectives on what they see on the ground in Alice Springs. They will discuss programs and initiatives, both new and ongoing (such as the Alternative to Custody program run by DASA Alice Springs and Central Australian Youth Link Up Service), that they see creating change and providing hope for young people and community. Panellists will also be asked to provide perspectives on where further investments are required to improve health and social outcomes in Central Australia.

Discussion Section:

This session will consist of a moderated panel. The Chair will provide opportunity for panellists to discuss topics mentioned above before opening up the floor for audience questions. The Chair will challenge the audience to consider strengths-focused questions as a practical learning exercise in challenging deficit discourse. This topic can spark curiosity but also sometimes highlight misunderstandings in public discourse; for this reason, participants will be asked to submit questions using the app so that the Chair can screen questions. This will assist in protecting cultural safety of panellists. We hope the audience will take away a deeper understanding of the strengths of the Alice Springs community, the complexity of the challenges and some insight into approaches that are working well in the alcohol and drug, community and youth sectors.

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