

Towards 21st Century Management of Opioid Dependence: Defining the Future of ODT Through Interdisciplinary Consensus, Lived Experience and Policy Dialogue

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Aim: *This symposium will explore how interdisciplinary knowledge exchange, lived and living experience, and structured national consensus can shape the future of opioid dependence treatment (ODT) in Australia. Drawing on findings from a national eDelphi study involving specialists, general practitioners, pharmacists, nurses, and people with lived and living experience, the symposium will examine areas of strong consensus, emerging reform priorities, and unresolved tensions within contemporary ODT policy and practice. The session aims to foster critical discussion regarding the future direction of evidence-based, person-centred, and culturally responsive ODT systems in Australia.*

Panellist 1: Professor Suzanne Nielsen

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Panellist 2: Professor Nicholas Lintzeris

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Panellist 3: Carolyn Stubbley

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Panellist 4: Sione Crawford

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Detailed Description of Topics to be Discussed: *Australia's ODT system continues to face significant challenges including limited treatment access, workforce shortages, stigma, fragmented care, and regulatory inconsistency across jurisdictions. This symposium will present findings from a national two-stage eDelphi study involving a diverse panel of 56 experts in ODT from each of 5 strata (specialists, general practitioners, pharmacists, nurses and people with lived and living experience) across all jurisdictions, aimed at defining priorities to guide long-term reform in Australia over the next decade.*

The symposium will be structured across four complementary perspectives. Prof Suzanne Nielsen will outline areas of broad consensus regarding the future vision for ODT, including

patient-centred care, integrated service delivery, equity of access, and flexible treatment models. Prof Nicholas Lintzeris will examine recommendations that align with emerging guidelines reform directions and contemporary evidence-informed practice. Carolyn Stubbley will explore areas where consensus was limited or where recommendations diverged from current policy directions, highlighting ongoing tensions surrounding supervision, regulation, and models of care. Sione Crawford will provide a lived and living experience perspective on how storytelling, stigma reduction, autonomy, and consumer engagement should shape future ODT reform.

Together, the presentations will explore how interdisciplinary collaboration, structured consensus methodologies, and lived experience perspectives can inform evidence-based, culturally responsive, and future-focused ODT policy and practice in Australia.

Discussion Section: *The symposium will conclude with a facilitated 15–20-minute interactive discussion involving panellists and audience members. Discussion will focus on translating consensus recommendations into practical policy and service reform, identifying barriers and enablers to implementation, and examining how differing clinical, policy and lived experience perspectives can be constructively integrated within future ODT systems.*

Audience participation will be encouraged through moderated questions and reflective discussion regarding contested reform areas, implementation challenges across jurisdictions, and opportunities for more person-centred and culturally responsive models of care.

Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of emerging national reform priorities, areas of ongoing debate within ODT policy and practice, and the importance of interdisciplinary and lived experience-informed approaches in shaping the future of ODT in Australia.

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