

Gorman Unit Group Program

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Background: Consumers entering care experience disruption to daily routines, social connection, and coping capacity. Re-establishing structure and reintroducing meaningful, enjoyable activities are components of sustained recovery for those preparing to return to the community or transition to residential rehabilitation. The Gorman Unit group program aims to strengthen motivation, enhance readiness for change, and support the development of daily rhythms that mirror expectations in structured rehabilitation environments and life in the community through a varied group based program.

Intervention: The Gorman Unit is an inpatient drug and alcohol withdrawal management unit in inner Sydney. In late 2025 a redesigned structured group program complementing biomedical interventions was developed by the Social Work team, with implementation facilitated with the peer workforce. The program integrates a diverse schedule of therapeutic, educational, creative, and social groups (e.g. SMART Recovery "soundbites", mindfulness groups, art therapy, Smoothie Friday's, trivia, popcorn and movie night).

Effectiveness: Program evaluation used a mixed-methods survey incorporating 10 point Likert-scale scales and open-ended questions to assess both individual groups and the program as a whole. Preparedness to move to the next stage of treatment improved post group program participation (mean difference = 2, $p=0.003$). Qualitatively, consumers report that the program helps them practise routine, reconnect with pleasurable activities, and build foundational skills for managing cravings, stress, and emotional triggers.

Conclusion and Next Steps: Initial findings suggest the Gorman Unit's group program is a meaningful adjunct to medical withdrawal, supporting consumers' perception of their readiness and functional stability, which may support transition to other treatment modalities. Next steps include expanding the evaluation to capture longitudinal outcomes, refining group offerings, and exploring opportunities to strengthen continuity between inpatient, residential, and community-based supports.

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