

“A ROAD LESS TRAVELLED” – REPRESENTING PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

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This presentation will focus on Annie's experience of representing people who inject drugs and people on opioid pharmacotherapy treatment for over 20 years both within Australia and internationally. She will reflect on her experiences of representing the 'voice' of people who use illicit drugs at the highest levels including at ministerial and prime ministerial levels and to parliamentary inquires in Australia and as the first identified drug user globally to be part of an official government delegation to the UN General Assembly. The presentation will also examine the effectiveness of existing mechanisms to support consumer engagement in drug policy and research and raise questions about notions of 'representation' and 'authenticity' for such a criminalised and stigmatised group in society. The presentation will conclude with some reflections on the future of peer-based drug user organisations in Australia and with suggestions on potential strategies for strengthening the meaningful participation of people who use drugs in the policies and research that affect their lives.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The Australasian Professional Society for Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD) recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in all written publications.

There are no conflicts of interest to disclose associated with this presentation.