

## **APSAD Conference: abstract for 10-minute oral presentation**

**Title:** “The NSW Centre for AOD Consumer Reference Committee turns 5: building consumer engagement in NSW”

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### **Background:**

Consumers, including people with lived and living experience, are regularly engaged by NSW Health to represent the voice of their community during the co-design of new healthcare strategies and models. The first formal meetings of the NSW Ministry of Health’s Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAOD) Consumer Reference Committee (CRC) commenced in 2019.

### **Description of Model of Care/Intervention:**

Each year our 12 member CRC meets for 4 hours bimonthly and holds 2 full day face to face Planning Days. Collaboration also takes place via out of session work and project advisory meetings. We have a consumer co-chair and a co-chair from the CAOD. The CAOD also has a Liaison Officer who provides support to CRC members and maintains communication between CRC and the CAOD. The NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) has been a member of the CRC from its inception, and the Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) has also joined the CRC. Both NUAA and NADA have a member representing their organisation attend meetings.

### **Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:**

We aim to show how establishing our CRC has increased consumer engagement in NSW, to highlight the role of collaboration with NUAA in this work, and to share learnings.

The themes of our discussion include building capacity and opportunities for consumers and for CAOD staff, building trust and important partnerships, high points so far, and identifying what comes next.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps:**

Taking small steps, building skills and relationships, and not letting perfect get in the way of good have all helped build consumer engagement in NSW. This evolving collaboration will positively impact the health outcomes for people affected by drugs and alcohol, and their loved ones.

**Implications for Practice or Policy** (*optional*): NA

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The CRC and NUAA receive funding from NSW Health in relation to the projects discussed in this symposium.