

Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2021-2027

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Specific population groups

The harms arising from the use of ATODs are felt across the community and all levels of government.

Some population groups are not inherently more at risk of ATOD use, but may experience greater rates of trauma, discrimination, isolation and other forms of social exclusion that can impact on ATOD use. This strategy acknowledges the increased levels of risks and harms of ATODs use on some specific populations.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Cultural dislocation, personal trauma and ongoing stresses of disadvantage, racism, alienation and exclusion can all contribute to heightened risk of ATOD use, as well as mental health problems and suicide. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples experience disproportionate harms from ATOD use which plays a significant role in the disparities in health and life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous people (IGCD, 2014).



Children and young people including children whose parents use ATODS

Parental history of ATOD use is a key risk factor for children's subsequent use, and includes increased risk of developing anxiety, depression, suicide, eating disorders, school absenteeism and failure.

There is an established link between alcohol and illicit drug use with violence, anxiety and depression and suicide among young people (Hall, Patton et al, 2016).

There is also an overlap between young people who experience child protection, youth justice supervision, mental health disorders and problematic ATOD use (AIHW, 2018c).



People experiencing family violence

Alcohol is involved in approximately half of family violence incidents reported to police (Miller, et al, 2016).

The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence heard that between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of women accessing mental health services and AOD services had been victims of child abuse or domestic violence (State of Victoria, 2016).



People in or leaving the criminal justice system

Prison entrants are four times more likely than people in the general population to report illicit drug use (including use of illegal drugs and non-medical prescription medication and volatile substances), with almost two-thirds (65 per cent) having used an illicit drug in the previous year (AIHW, 2019c). In Tasmania, that was 86 per cent.

There is lots of research to show the strong but complex association between ATOD-use and crime and re-offending (Department of Justice, 2017)



Older people

Between 1995 and 2010, recent drug use rose among older Australians (60+). Illicit drug use increased among men from 1.8 to 5.5 per cent, mainly due to non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs. Schedule 8 opioid and benzodiazepine medications are also prevalent among older Australians. Ambulance attendances for alcohol intoxication rose from 3.3 to 8.2 per 10,000 individuals aged 65+ between 2004 and 2008. Those in non-metropolitan areas are also more likely to die from alcohol-attributable conditions (NCETA, 2017).

