

Note from the General Manager

Hello!

Hepatitis C remains one of the major health issues that people who inject manage each and every day and it is great to see such a focus on this complex virus during Hepatitis C Awareness Week.

This week gives us the opportunity to reflect on the successes and focus on the challenges ahead and there are many. However, until there is removal of the legislative obstacles that prevent people protecting their health, then our successes will be minimal.

NUAA is hosting a number of events, locally here in Surry Hills and beyond, in partnership with peers and organisations. We are also participating in a forum on Friday 22 May where the Analysis for people who inject drugs who require HIV/AIDS and STI services in the South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Area Health Service will be launched.

If you are in Sydney and are interested in drug user organisations and what we do, then you can sign up for a workshop that we are hosting on the 17th June. For more information please email sarad@nuaa.org.au

Also, NUAA is conducting an online survey of both the Bulletin & Newsflash newsletters. Please take the three minutes or so to complete the survey, which can be found on NUAA's website or go to:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VcY_2fCM9TfIKKeCZ8cHdK1w_3d_3d

Bulletin Survey

Have your say on the NUAA Bulletin & Newsflash! Go to nuaa.org.au to complete the brief online survey.

Community Mobilisation Team

The Community Mobilisation team has just finished a very successful PeerLink workshop in Newcastle. We had seven very smart and very keen peers turn up to do the training which we ran at the new community space at ACON in Newcastle. If you are from a local Newcastle service and you are needing some well trained peer workers to do some work or to help you consult with local users, contact NUAA in Newcastle or in Sydney and we can ask the peers if they are interested. The group is currently planning a community event, such as a picnic, to be held in Newcastle in June so keep your eyes out for the date so you can tell your clients or service users. It will be advertised at the needle and syringe program, the Newcastle clinic and at ACON. So thanks to ACON and to all the peers who participated. We look forward to working with you all in the future.

A NUAA open day is being held at ACON in Newcastle on Thursday 21 May. If you are interested in participating and learning more about the work NUAA does and about your drug user group, give Scott Berriman a ring on 4927 6808.

The Asian project has nearly finished a series of arts based workshops. This group has decided to call themselves Lotus as the lotus is a symbol of a flower which grows from a muddy soil and transforms into a symbol of purity and beauty. A core group of 10 to 12 peers have participated in the workshops and have produced some beautiful and thought-provoking art works. We look forward to sharing some of these works with you in the second half of the year.

Education Team

This month the Education Team has been getting ready for Hepatitis C Awareness Week. We have planned two main events, although we aren't limited to these two activities with lots of things happening all week in the NSP.

The highlight of our week is the Hand Washing workshop using the amazing kits that have been produced by AIVL.

The Information Support and Referral Service has had a slight increase in contacts in the last month. We think that this must be due to the promotion we've undertaken in the past few weeks. If you would like a ISR promotion poster, please contact Sarah at sarahd@nuaa.org.au, who will post it out to you. Please make sure that you are referring the people who use your service to our NUA A ISR service.

Policy, Campaigns and Communications Team

Over the past month NUA A began writing a discussion paper that we hope will have an impact on an important aspect of the lives of people who inject drugs: the distribution of injecting equipment. At present it is not legal for anyone not registered with NSW Health to distribute injecting equipment. This means that individual users are not supposed to give another user a clean fit! This seriously affects the kind of advice we can give users and the kinds of projects we can do with our peers. This document will be completed by the end of June and will up on our website soon after that.

There appears to be a lot of support amongst other organisations for changing this situation. This became clear at the recent Mid-Term Review of NSW HIV, Hepatitis C, and Sexually Transmitted Infections Strategies, 2006-

2010 and the Implementation Plan for Aboriginal People, 2006-2010. At the opening plenary Carla Treloar from NCHSR forcibly and movingly expressed her frustration and wrong-headedness of the situation.

The entire mid-Term review process is an important one for NUA A to be involved in as it gives us a say in the direction that NSW Health is heading in its responses to hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS. A number of NUA A staff attended and took part in the workshops and exercises and ensured that the perspective of injecting drug users was clearly stated.

Lastly, we'd like to thank Erin Halligan, who has recently departed the position of NUA A Policy and Campaigns coordinator. We are sorry to see her go and wish her luck in the future.

Staff Member Profile

My name is Donna and I am NUA A's Finance Officer. I have been working at NUA A for four years and am responsible for the financial day-to-day running of the organisation.

My duties are varied including paying the bills, contributing to the overall finance management of all of our funds

and best of all making sure that everyone that contributes to User's News get paid.

Although I live an hour and a half away from NUA A, I get immense job satisfaction from keeping the wheels running smoothly.

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