



drug.ARM

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

175 YEARS OF SERVICE



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king after those who ne

drug.ARM

Celebrating
75 Years

DRUG AWARENESS &
RELIEF FOUNDATION
(AUSTRALIA)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where our teams provide alcohol and other drug support. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We work respectfully alongside First Nations' People to understand the health challenges they face and liaise with Elders and communities towards closing the gap on health inequalities.



GUIDING US EVERY DAY

VISION

Flourishing people and communities living free from the harms of alcohol and other drugs.

MISSION

To deliver the highest standard awareness, rehabilitation and management solutions to address the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs.

VALUES

Drug ARM's values were developed in consultation with staff in 2019. The values represent the qualities our staff admire and respect in their colleagues, and strive for in their practice.

DEDICATION

Committed to generously working above and beyond.

LEADERSHIP

Providing positive examples and progression.

COLLABORATION

Working with individuals, teams and communities to achieve transformations.

OPTIMISIM

Belief in achieving positive outcomes.

EMPATHY

Cultural connection and individual respect.

COURAGE

Strength to do what is required, not what is easy



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the Board, I'm pleased to present Drug ARM's 2023/24 Annual Report, in what is our organisation's 175th year of continuous service in Queensland.

Over the past financial year, Drug ARM assisted thousands of people and families through dedicated alcohol and other drug support and group programs.

Outcomes of support included helping people to address problematic alcohol and other drug use, improve health and wellbeing, connect with relevant services, set achievable goals and boundaries, better manage emotional responses, gain information, tools and strategies, rebuild confidence and repair troubled relationships.

During 2023-24, your support to individuals increased. A total of 10,709 alcohol and other drug counselling sessions were delivered (up 21.69% on the previous year), and as many as 2,290 group support sessions were held. Because you cared, we:

- connected with over 2,500 families
- provided education and support in correctional centres throughout Queensland
- and patrolled the streets to provide 9,043 occasions of support to people experiencing homelessness, an increase of 24% on the previous year.

While committed to delivering support, education and advocacy, we paused to reflect and give thanks to an enduring and rich history of service as Drug ARM's guiding body, The Drug Awareness & Relief Foundation (Australia), entered its 175th year.

To celebrate this significant milestone, various activities were held throughout the year in metropolitan and regional areas, allowing as many as possible supporters, donors, volunteers, students and staff to mark the occasion.



During this reflection, we acknowledged that it was community concern in relation to the harmful use of alcohol that prompted our mission. This led a group of church-affiliated and community volunteers to establish the Moreton Bay Temperance Society on 8 May 1849, founding our organisation.

Today, we continue to respond to concerns around problematic substance use, and mobilise volunteers, supporters and qualified teams to assist people and families to rebuild their lives.

I would like to take this formal opportunity to welcome Brad Strong, appointed to the role of Executive Director/CEO of Drug ARM in October 2023. I thank Brad for his first nine months of leadership, during which time he oversaw an expansion of our Street Outreach Services and Community and Family Support Services, several service relocations, a centre dedication, the outfitting of a new Op Shop in Kelvin Grove and increased our capacity in fundraising and business development.

Brad has also respectfully steered deliverance of our 175 Year celebrations with a focus on gratitude for the support that has underpinned and sustained this legacy of service.

Thanks also goes to the full Executive Team and my fellow Board Directors and Committee Members for their contributions and support throughout the year. Happy 175th everyone.

Harold Peacock
Drug Awareness & Relief Foundation
(Australia) Chair
BA, GDipAppFinInv, MAICD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In this, my first report as Executive Director, I honour the trust and faith placed in us by our valued supporters to deliver on a mission founded on community care 175 years ago.

We exist because we must.

People turn to substances for all kinds of reasons, and in times impacted by social stresses – such as the current housing and cost-of-living issues, we've seen additional challenges.

Thanks to your contributions, Drug ARM teams on the streets and in dedicated spaces stepped up and increased support, making a difference in community to people and their families.

Helping to meet the demand, we've volunteer clinical students on placement at Drug ARM. A higher student intake delivered 3,438 counselling sessions during 2023-24, a sharp increase of 65% on the number of sessions delivered in the previous reporting period. Not only were more adults and families supported, but more students gained valuable workplace learnings.

Several Drug ARM services relocated throughout the financial year, moving into larger and more comfortable surrounds for clients in Mackay, Ipswich and Toowoomba. I thank these teams for assisting with the moves, ensuring smooth transitions.

Drug ARM's parent organisation was also pleased to purchase a centre in Boggabilla, providing our local support team with greater security in relation to their program delivery. The centre was dedicated with a community celebration in June 2024.

In early 2024, two new leadership roles were created in support of our strategic goals. They were a Chief Services Officer and a Fundraising and Business Development Manager.



In May 2024, we secured a lease and fitted out a new Op Shop within the Kelvin Grove Urban Village. This expanding retail arm raises vital funds for our Street Outreach Services, which this financial year expanded its reach and support. We thank community supporters for allowing this expansion at a time when street outreach patrols encountered longer queues for assistance.

After serving on the organisation's Board for 12 years, I stepped into Drug ARM's Executive Director/CEO role on 3 October 2023. As a priority, I visited each of our services, and in meeting each team was struck by their dedication to the wellbeing of those seeking support.

I also give praise to our volunteers, around 250, and our donors, sponsors, partners and funders who have given in support of our mission. We simply can't thank you all often enough.

Early in my role, the organisation turned 175. We took the opportunity to gather with as many as we could in fitting celebrations, most of which are outlined in this report. Thank you to everyone who attended.

While inspiring to reflect, we are all too aware there is still much to be done. Our eyes remain forward as we get on with the job of providing alcohol and other drug support.

In closing, on behalf of the Drug ARM Executive, I thank our Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance. Thank you, one and all, and God Bless.

Brad Strong
Drug ARM Executive Director/CEO

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS



10,709

AOD counselling sessions (adults and families), up 21.69% on previous year



2,290

group support sessions (adults and families)



9,043

occasions of support from Street Outreach vans, up 24% on the previous year



6,124

resources in the Annerley Library



NEW PARTNERSHIP

Drug ARM Street Outreach delivered with Ipswich Railway RSL Sub Branch & Ipswich Salvation Army



175 YEARS

of service (inaugural Foundation Day celebration, 8 May 2024)



95%

of surveyed clients satisfied to very satisfied with Creating Options program's learnings



SUBSTANCES

methamphetamine (42.56%), alcohol (38.56%), cannabis (14.24%), cocaine (2.4%), buprenorphine (1.28%) and heroin (0.96%).



NEW OP SHOP

in Kelvin Gove Urban Village established



15 JUNE 2024

Boggabilla property purchased and dedicated



40 YEARS

of library lending celebrated



35 YEARS

of Street Outreach acknowledged



250+

volunteers (student placement, outreach, Op Shops & Schoolies Week)



2,955

counselling sessions to people on probation or parole



100+

attended Student Showcase at Queensland Parliament House



31,500

cups of water handed out by Drug ARM volunteers at Schoolies Week

REACHING FURTHER

Your support allows us to do great things in communities. This year was no exception. This report showcases how your support was put into action and the impact it has had on thousands of people and families.

It was also a year of reflection as we entered 175 years of service. This milestone gave us an opportunity to be grateful for the community support we have received over this rich and robust history. As such, we have spent much of this year saying thank you to our supporters, past and present, for the legacy of care we all build upon today.

STREET OUTREACH SERVICES

Thanks to the support we receive through kind donations, monthly giving and our Op Shops, this financial year our Street Outreach teams increased support to people experiencing homelessness and alcohol and other drug issues.

Volunteer teams delivered a total of 9,043 incidences of care during the patrols, representing an increase of 24% on the previous year when 7,298 incidences of care were delivered.

An incident meant a hot cuppa in a hand on a cold winter night, a meaningful conversation, a referral to a support service, some crisis information provided or, at times, companionship over a barbeque lunch.

It takes a special kind of person to provide this support and we thank the 65 kind-hearted and committed volunteers who provided an impressive 280 patrols during 2023-24. Each patrol visited multiple sites, meeting anywhere from 10 to 40 patrons per site.

During 2023-24, patrols were conducted in six key locations across Queensland. They included visiting hotspot sites in Airlie Beach, Brisbane, Ipswich, Mackay, Maryborough and Toowoomba, with plans to launch a new service on the Gold Coast.

Often patrons waited in queues on street corners or in parks for an interaction with Drug ARM volunteers. Sadly, what our volunteers noticed this year was the larger number of mature-aged patrons sleeping rough in both CBD and suburban areas.

Another heartbreaking issue identified was the reduction in food being made available by food relief organisations due to increased demand, which limited what we could access and provide to patrons.

In October 2023, we employed a Team Leader for our Brisbane night patrols, which has led to greater consistency around delivery. We welcomed Zach Fleming into this position.

“From families in cars, to people in tents or simply on ragged blankets out in the cold, your support meant they weren’t alone”

NEW SITES


Thanks to the generous, ongoing support we received for Street Outreach, we were able to establish new sites during 2023-24.

They included:

- Thursday morning in Mackay from January 2024
- Monday lunchtime in partnership with Ipswich Railway RSL Sub Branch and the Salvation Army in Ipswich from April 2024
- various days launched at BHC housing complexes (Yeronga and Fortitude Valley) from July 2023
- Friday morning BBQ MOSHPIT in response to an invitation by Community and Elders at West End from May 2024
- Friday lunchtime BBQ MOSHPIT at 3rd Space (largest drop-in centre in Brisbane) from July 2023.

We thank our partners and are grateful for the support received from Brisbane City Council's Safer Communities Team, BHC - affordable housing, Community + (West End), Murri Watch (West End), 3rd Space, Ozharvest, Second Bite, Hope St Café, Ipswich Railway RSL Sub Branch and Ipswich Salvation Army.





**"I'm listening to them,
just like the team
used to listen to me."**

JOSEPH'S STORY

While we were celebrating 175 years since foundation, another key milestone was reached in 2024 when we marked 35 years of delivering outreach. Wanting to acknowledge our outreach history, we spoke to Joseph, one of our earliest patrons.

Thirty-five years ago, in May 1989, concern and goodwill from community volunteers saw our first Street Outreach vans hit the streets.

Joseph's story begins when the service was still in its infancy in the early 1990s. At that time, volunteers went on patrols in Brisbane's suburbs, seeking to engage at-risk young people.

So, it was that an outreach team came across Joseph. He was a young teen, around 12 or 13, and was spending time at night wandering the streets in north-west Brisbane, drinking with mates.

Joseph says when he looks back on those years, it's through a haze of guilt and remorse. "We would drink and get drunk and then be bloody stupid," he said.

This entailed everything from damaging people's property to stealing whatever they could. While he came from a loving family, he had fallen in with friends who liked to drink and wreak havoc.

Except for those nights when the Drug ARM team visited his local skate park. On those nights, he and his friends chose to wait for the team to arrive to engage in a friendly chat. "I looked forward to them coming," he said. "They would listen and give advice... it's something I'll never forget."

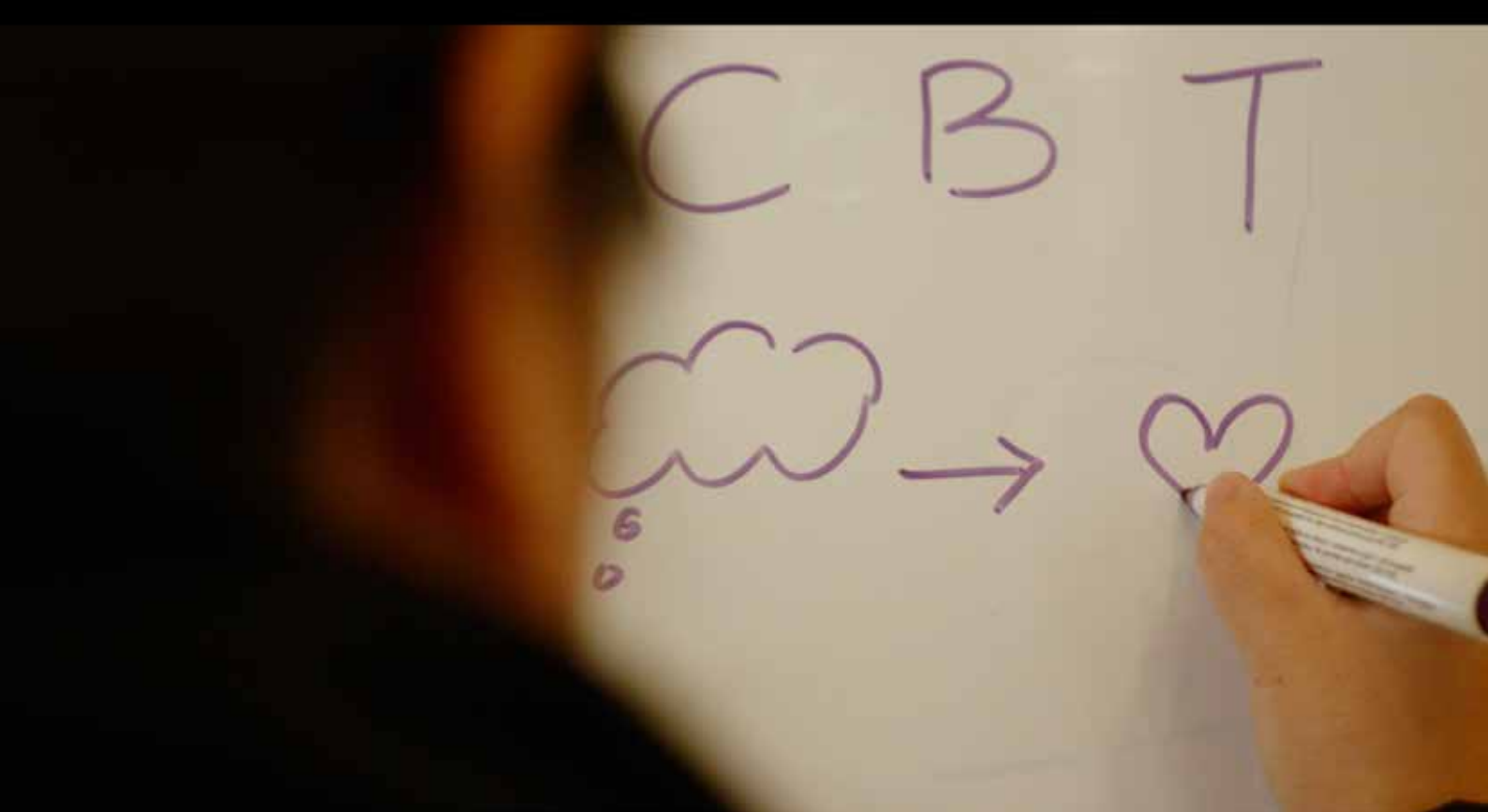
Joseph said the Drug ARM chats would keep him out of trouble for at least that night and sometimes ended with getting a lift to a safe place. "The visits left a real, life-lasting impression on me," he said.

Despite the care shown by our outreach team, he was not ready to be shaped by it, and in his later teens and early adult life, became dependent on methamphetamine. Eventually, he started to see the impact his problematic drug use was having on those around him and got the help he needed through several intensive support programs, putting the drug use behind him.

What's so amazing about his story, is that now, every second Friday night, he gets ready and goes out behind the wheel of a Drug ARM Street Outreach van. "I want to repay the community in a positive way for all that I did back then," he said.

Because he's been on the other side of receiving, Joseph has much to give. He is open with patrons about his lived experience, which helps put them at ease.

"They talk to you because they know you're listening and not judging. It's surprising how much they share. They tell you when they're cold and need a blanket, when they last ate...



ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG TREATMENT

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

Over the past financial year, your support enabled us to deliver a total of 7,108 individual counselling sessions to 1184 adult clients in community. Of these sessions, about 47% were delivered by our Community and Family Support Services (CAFSS) in Brisbane South and Ipswich.

Other counselling sessions were delivered through Creating Options and our Day Programs, which supported people experiencing severe and complex issues related to substance use. They were also delivered through our other family programs, including Breakthrough for Families and Toowoomba's Family Support Program.

"I'm now digging through 30 years of stuff. They target things that I didn't even know needed targeting."

DRUG ARM CLIENT

KEY STATISTICS

7,108
individual
counselling
sessions delivered
to adults
and families

40%
increase on
previous year

411
groups delivered

GROUP PROGRAMS

411 group sessions were held for adults seeking alcohol and other drug support during 2023-24.

These were delivered through our Day Program at Ipswich which ran 292 groups and through our Creating Options program which ran 119 groups.

ABOUT AOD COUNSELLING

Drug ARM's alcohol and other drug counselling and support provides clients with tools, information and strategies to turn their lives around and reduce or cease harmful substance use.

Our Day Program is a non-residential, intensive program, providing a structured approach to recovery through group sessions, individual support, and skill-building activities.

Clients have a chance to learn helpful and practical techniques such as emotional regulation, communication and conflict resolution skills, anger management and relationship building.

"A lot of clients wish they'd learned this earlier or were taught it in school."

DAY PROGRAM CLIENT - WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE SUPPORT RECEIVED

"I thought it was going to be more like drug rehab and just focus on drug management, and be telling us what we can and can't do, but when I went, it was much more than that, more of a behavioural course.

DRUG ARM CLIENT 

"I would redo the program a hundred times over. It helps you to relearn your core beliefs, rebuild structure and scheduling – a lot of us have lost this along the way.

DRUG ARM CLIENT 





“I was ashamed and scared to pick up the phone and ask for help.

CHRISTIAN’S STORY

In the lead-up to Men’s Health Week 2024, we spoke with a client who had been engaging in counselling with Drug ARM’s Community and Family Support Services for just under a year.

When we first met *Christian in August 2023, he had reached “a dark space”.

His long-term use of methamphetamine had led to a number of serious life events. He had separated from his wife after a long marriage, lost his job, been in a road accident and was steadily getting himself into deeper legal trouble and putting his safety at risk, including one day being stabbed.

“I was tired of the rollercoaster ride that I’d been on for the past few years and so I got the courage to make the call (to Drug ARM). I really wanted to make a difference to my life...” he said.

Even so, making the initial call to Drug ARM proved difficult.

“I was ashamed and scared to pick up the phone and ask for help. I didn’t know what my peers would think of me. But, now in my mid-forties, I know I’m not getting any younger...”

After participating in counselling, Christian has been able to fulfil some life goals. He has since completed a certificate course at TAFE and enrolled in a diploma. He quit smoking and implemented boundaries to help prevent substance use triggers.

“They’ve helped me get a lot clearer around boundaries,” he said. “I close my doors to people that I need to. It has helped with managing my emotions and understanding my triggers around anxiety and depression, especially around bumping into old peers. They’ve helped me to open my eyes and get a lot clearer.

“I’m finally growing up... and have all these new beginnings. I believe with my life experience, I can make an impact – I really want to make a difference in community and give back what I took.”

*(*Name was changed to protect privacy).*

“I wanted to live my life the best that I could.”

CREATING OPTIONS IN PROFILE

95% of Creating Options clients who responded to our feedback survey said they were satisfied to very satisfied with the Drug ARM counselling program they participated in.

GENDER

Creating Options' clients mostly identified as male (51.9%) while (47.2%) identified as female and 0.9% identified as neither male or female, or did not provide a gender response.

AGE

Creating Options is an adult treatment service receiving referrals for people aged 18 years and over.

The age breakdown among clients by gender was as follows:

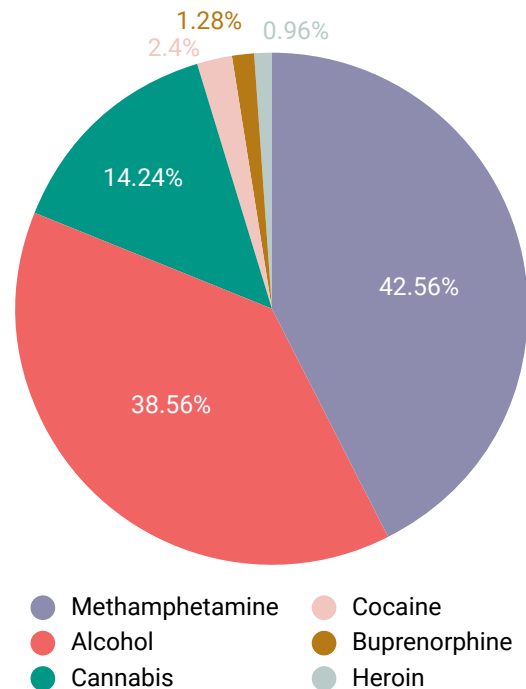
- > Of our male clients, most were aged between 35 and 44 years, followed by the 25-34 age group and then the 45 to 54 group.
- > Of our female clients, most were aged between 25 and 34 years, followed by the 35 to 44 age group and then the 45 to 54 group.

Our youngest Creating Options client was aged 16 years, and our oldest was aged 74.

"This program has changed and saved my life."

DRUG ARM CLIENT 

PRIMARY DRUG OF CONCERN



CLIENT FEEDBACK

"Really appreciate the support provided by my support workers, they helped me understand why I was feeling the way I was and provided me with tools to move forward."

DRUG ARM CLIENT 

"My support worker has been so helpful throughout these last few months, I wouldn't be where I am today without his help & support."

DRUG ARM CLIENT 



YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

This year you've helped connect 2,565 families and significant others.

Our teams provided these families with information about alcohol and other drugs and, at times, gave them tools and strategies to help in the support of a loved one who has a problem with substance use. Often when a partner or a teen or adult child has a problem with substance use, breakdowns in relationships result. The program worked to provide empathy, understanding and practical tools for helping families improve their communication, coping skills, mental health, and boundary setting, in support of greater cohesiveness during what can be a difficult time.

Family members connected with one of our three family programs:

- Breakthrough for Families Queensland (BFFQ), delivered broadly across 21 locations in 4 regions
- Community and Family Support Service (CAFSS) which sees people for their own substance use issues as well as significant others
- and our dedicated Toowoomba-based Family Support Program.

BREAKTHROUGH FOR FAMILIES QUEENSLAND (BFFQ)

In all, a total of 1,693 people attended a BFFQ group information session during 2023-24, with 140 groups being held in community or online. The BFFQ teams held 463 family counselling sessions.

In this reporting period, our teams were involved in running successful alcohol and other drug information and education sessions in communities, including tailored sessions in Toowoomba for multicultural families and TAFE students, and regular sessions at a homelessness drop-in centre in Mackay.

We partnered with our Outreach services in Mackay and Airlie Beach, strengthened our community connections in the Ipswich region through Beddown and community centres, held a variety of workshops including ones with a focus on mocktails and budget meals, and for the first time attended Farmfest in Toowoomba and the Cunnamulla Lights Festival.

BFFQ HIGHLIGHTS 2023-24

EVENTS IN COMMUNITY

Our BFFQ teams are often in community attending events to help increase awareness around AOD, make valuable connections and gain a better understanding of community issues. Some of the places and events where our teams provided information, often with pop-up stalls, included:

- Farmfest and Cunnamulla Lights Festival – a first for our teams
- NAIDOC Week and Mental Health Week events
- Kingaroy Community Services and Health Expo
- Show Days (Tara, Dirranbandi, Dalby, Roma, St George, Charleville)
- Roma Library Book Club (workshop)
- Festivals and local shopping centres etc.



AOD EDUCATION IN MACKAY

In Mackay, our BFFQ team attended the homelessness drop in centre, CHANCES House, every Thursday morning. The centre provides a safe space where people experiencing homelessness can have breakfast and have access to clothing, blankets, activities, a lounge area and information and support from a range of representatives from community and health services. People and their families benefitted from having regular access to AOD information and support.

BFFQ PARTNERSHIP

Our BFFQ Mackay Team has been working closely with other service agencies including mental health workers to provide AOD information and support to their clients' families. We have also been working in collaboration with the YWAM Chapter (Youth with a mission), Whitsunday Housing and a dedicated volunteer, Patrick, who runs his own clothing brand, Airlie Beach Crew. Through these community connections, in January 2024, our Family Support Facilitator, Barb, began co-ordinating regular Drug ARM Street Outreach support to sites in Mackay and Airlie Beach. The Airlie Beach

outreach service has attracted support from local paramedics who occasionally attend to help check in and connect with patrons.

BFFQ's participation in the outreach service brings the program into contact with members of the community who support, donate or volunteer, kickstarting valuable conversations about the program towards reaching more families.

THANK YOU, PATRICK

A very special thank you to Airlie Beach volunteer, Patrick, who this year generously started donating food for a Street Outreach BBQ in Airlie Beach.

A FAMILY STORY

This year, a father contacted Whitsunday Housing regarding his daughter who was sleeping in her van and needed assistance. The housing service went on to refer the to Drug ARM's BFFQ program, as his daughter had a problem with substance use.



Pictured: Patrick and BFFQ's Barb in Airlie Beach.



The father shared that he had travelled from Western Australia to see his daughter, who had come to the Whitsundays to “live the dream of working on the islands and travelling in a van”. However, her new lifestyle led to an introduction of methamphetamine (ICE) and, due to other environmental factors, she developed a dependence upon it.

Her father only became aware of her substance use issues when he visited and became “distressed and upset”. Thanks to support from BFFQ and Street Outreach, along with other services, the young woman received the support she needed and has since travelled to another Queensland region where she has reconnected with other family and is looking to engage in AOD support.

ROMA LIBRARY & BOOK CLUB

Our BFFQ team in Roma is grateful this year for the support received through the Maranoa Regional Council. In particular, the program has benefitted from wonderful support from the local library and its book club. We thank the library for providing information about the BFFQ program to community members and helping link local families to it.

TOOWOOMBA TAFE AOD EDUCATION

Our Toowoomba BFFQ team this financial year continued to provide AOD education to Toowoomba TAFE students studying Cert. IV and Diplomas in Community Services, Youth Work, Child Youth & Family Intervention, Legal Studies, and Nursing. We have been running the sessions at the local TAFE on invitation from the teachers for the past two years.

Feedback this year included such comments as:

“Engaging, informative, practical, no judgement.”

“The presentation and conversation was amazing!”

“Really informative session and a big asset to the course at TAFE.”



YOUNG PEOPLE AND VAPING

In March 2024, Drug ARM Toowoomba's Family Support Facilitators joined other service providers, Lives Lived Well and Family Drug Support, to talk to teachers and other educators about the range of free alcohol and other drug support programs available. We thank Queensland Health AOD and Dovetail for this great opportunity to present at their well-attended "Young People and Vaping Workshop", held online and at Toowoomba State High School. The free session was open to Queensland educators and any staff who work directly with young people aged 12-17. We enjoyed being part of this excellent collaborative effort between South West Queensland health services.

MULTICULTURAL AOD EDUCATION, TOOWOOMBA

In late 2023, our Toowoomba's BFFQ team was approached by police and community service representatives about running AOD education for concerned members of the multicultural community. In response, our team began meeting with community members to gain better cultural understandings and awareness, and to hear directly from families about their concerns regarding peer influence and the introduction of substance use, as well as a need for more information about the signs and effects of substance use. The first of these AOD education sessions was subsequently held at our Toowoomba office in May 2024. More sessions are planned.



FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM - TOOWOOMBA

This family program provided support within the Toowoomba region for a range of emotional and mental health issues and concerns.

As such, we worked more intensively with each family, providing a total of 99 intervention sessions. The program also delivered 69 group sessions.

Groups included the launch of the Triple P Parenting Program, which commenced on 30 April 2024. Participation in this positive parenting program is on the rise.

"Families tell us they are scared of saying something wrong, setting them off or pushing them away."



ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Our program's Family Case Worker welcomed the opportunity to share insights about healthy relationships and self-confidence with high school students at a NAIDOC Community event in July 2023. This was arranged through a Teen Connection group at Harristown State High School.

We are thankful for the support and interest shown by the Mayor of Toowoomba, Cr Geoffrey McDonald and the Harlaxton community hub & local charity. We also thank St Stephens Church for the opportunity to deliver a presentation during a Sunday service.

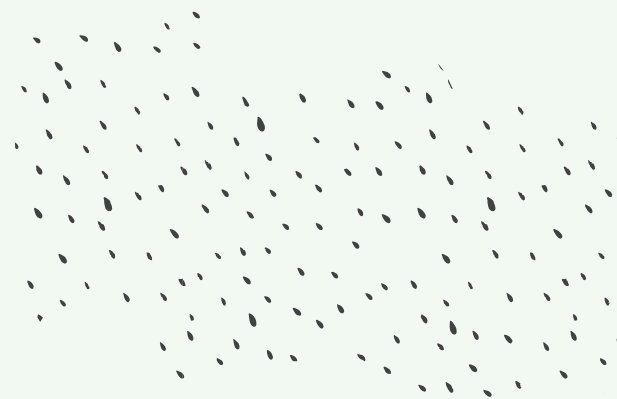
CLIENT STORY

Our Family Support Program was honoured to support a mother and her teen son through the stress of a medical intervention, which involved the son undertaking major surgeries. It was a privilege to support this family as they faced this life-changing and potentially life-threatening treatment. We are pleased we could assist the Mum by providing her with strategies and a safe space for her to share her emotional responses.



PERSONAL HIGHLIGHT

Our program's Family Case Worker, Terri, raised around \$500 this financial year for Drug ARM through her own fundraiser, *I Can Do Hard Things*, which involves her personal challenge to run a full marathon in 2025. She will continue to raise money up until the event is held. Money raised is put towards Drug ARM's Street Outreach Services.





TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

NORTHERN NSW AND GOONDIWINDI

Your support made its way to regional areas where we provided early intervention programs. These involved individual and group support to young people and their families within the rural communities of Queensland's Goondiwindi and NSW's Boggabilla, along with outreach to Toomelah.

GROUPS

Thanks to you, our teams delivered over 200 group sessions throughout 2023-24, including playgroups, parenting groups and life skill sessions. These groups were aimed at providing information, support and community connections for families. They also allowed for timely alcohol and other drug early interventions and check-ins.

BEFORE SCHOOL BREAKFASTS

A key support our teams delivered during the reporting period was to provide local school children with a cooked breakfast before school, setting them up well for a day of concentration and learning. The breakfasts were served two times per week in Boggabilla and once a week in Toomelah.

CULTURAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORTS

Our dedicated teams worked with families to provide cultural and practical supports including assistance with transport to medical and other essential appointments, mentoring, information, holiday activities and referrals.

“Children went off to school after a hearty breakfast, setting them up well for a day of learning, all thanks to your kindness.”



CORRECTIVE SERVICES

This year you've helped us be there for people who were in Queensland Correctional Centres, or on probation or parole, due to drug-related offences.

A key aim of our support was to ensure that when they returned to community, they had the information, tools, strategies and support networks they needed to rebuild their lives and go on to make positive choices around their health and wellbeing.

A total of 1465 alcohol and other drug information and support groups were held, with the vast majority of those held in correctional centres.

In community, 2955 one-to-one counselling sessions were attended by those referred to us by Community Corrections. This counselling was provided across 17 sites in Queensland.

We thank the following correctional centres for their assistance throughout the year; Southern Queensland, Wolston, Arthur Gorrie, Brisbane, Brisbane Women's, Woodford, Numinbah, Palen Creek, Maryborough and Capricornia.

KEY STATISTICS

1,336
groups delivered in a
correctional centre

589
individuals
participated in
counselling at
our community
corrections hubs

2,955
counselling
sessions to people
on probation
or parole

NEW PILOT GROUPS

Drug ARM developed two new group programs to be delivered as part of the Queensland Corrective Services programs. The first was a prep program aimed at orienting participants towards helping them understand what it is like to engage in a group, raise their motivation for treatment and help identify the pathway for further learning that will best suit them.

The second group was a maintenance program to be delivered a few months after they have completed one of our other programs. This group focuses on reinforcing the strategies that they have learnt and builds on this learning to help maintain their treatment goals.

FEEDBACK

HOW OUR GROUP EDUCATION WAS RATED

95% of group participants rate their strategies for dealing with their alcohol and drug use as “excellent” or “good”

97% of group program participants rate the information they have received in the program as “excellent” or “good”

Just over 90% of participants who start our group program will successfully complete it.

“I found the program to be very helpful in showing me the habits I put myself in and work on strategies and plans on how not to put myself in some very vulnerable positions.”

GROUP PARTICIPANT 
FEEDBACK

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING CLIENT FEEDBACK

“Counsellor was very insightful and helpful with my progression. Gave me different prospective and reasonings/understanding to my drug seeking behaviour. Helped me put steps and goals in place to initiate changes.”

DRUG ARM CLIENT 

“I liked that I was spoken to with respect and easy hassle-free way to do counselling.”

DRUG ARM CLIENT 

“I’m glad I had to do it; it’s been good having a chat each week.”

DRUG ARM CLIENT 



EDUCATION

OUR LIBRARY

We congratulate our library on 40 years of lending alcohol and other drug resources.

This year our Annerley-based library had 6,124 resources available for loan. Our dedicated librarian assisted with information requests, improving library access, growing our collection, providing a chill-out zone and celebrating our history.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO ONLINE RESOURCE DATABASE

This financial year, our library began working to provide our workforce with greater access to EBSCO's electronic database of over 6 billion resources covering all kinds of subject matter. The resources also include a wide range of alcohol and other drug and mental health journals and articles.

By September 2024, our staff and volunteers, even those working in remote areas, were able to search and download full test articles from any device anywhere, using a single sign-on.

LIBRARY HISTORY

Our librarian consulted with former and current staff and did research to compile a timeline of our library's history. The timeline was displayed in the Annerley library to celebrate 40 years of library services along with our organisation's 175th anniversary. Key dates are shown below:

- 2024 – A chill-out zone created in the Annerley library for staff and volunteers
- 2024 – Partnership with Trove enabling library's collection to be searched nationally
- 2020 – Partial donation of archives to State Library of Qld
- 2020 – Lunch box sessions commenced to improve staff engagement
- 2020 – Digital literacy program offered for clients and visitors
- 2020 – Archive display in library
- 2019 – Professional development blog moved to Drug ARM website
- 2019 – Library gets an active web presence on Drug ARM website
- 2019 – Online and print catalogues merged – EBSCO Discovery Service
- 2018 – Subscription to Psychology Tools for all program staff
- 2018 – Library moves back to Brisbane

- > 2017 — Librarian presents at National Library Conference about library services for people in correctional services
- > 2016 — Library moves to Southport
- > 2015— First online books available
- > 2015 — AOD and Mental Health News commenced
- > 2014 — Partnership with headspace Redlands to use library resource
- > 2014 — Online journals available
- > 2014 — Journal club started by library
- > 2013 — Professional development blog started
- > 2013 — Co-facilitated seminar series that was available to staff and outside workers
- > 2003-2004 —Table of contents alerts circulated
- > 2003-2004 — Resource centre moved online with major upgrade including library technician and new library management system
- > 2003-2004 — Open access library catalogue freely available
- > 2003 — Partial donation of archives to John Oxley Library
- > 2001 — Centre for alcohol research & education (CARE) established
- > 1988 — First full-time librarian employed
- > 1984 — Drug ARM resource centre opened at Canberra Hotel
- > 1950s — Displays of leaflets & resources about alcohol at the Canberra Hotel corner shop

TRAINING

Drug ARM partnered with Queensland schools and other government and non-government agencies to help raise awareness and understanding of alcohol and other drug use and associated harm reduction strategies through delivery of specialist training. Out training initiatives during 2023-24 included:

- > Salvation Army Stafford: a lunchbox session was facilitated with a focus on alcohol and other drug awareness and interventions. In attendance were Family Support workers who engaged in an open forum discussion.
- > Transport and Main Roads staff: training on Managing Difficult Callers.



Drug ARM staff at the AddictionZ Conference: (back from left) Sharon, Sharyn and Rika and (front from left) Kate and Kirsti.

- > BUSY Schools: Alcohol and Other Drug Awareness presentations delivered to students (aged 16 to 19) who have completed Year 10 but are experiencing difficulties or are disengaged from school. Presentations occurred at the following BUSY Schools campuses:
 - > Shailer Park
 - > Coolangatta
 - > Brisbane City (2x)
 - > Cleveland.
- > Wellington Point State High School: Alcohol and Other Drug Awareness presentation to the Year 9 cohort in May 2024. About 155 students attended
- > Queensland Correctional Services professional development training – participant journey and counselling programs, held in March and May 2024 respectively.

CONFERENCES

We delivered a presentation about Addressing Waitlist Concerns in Addiction Support: Drug ARM's Waitlist Management Pilot Project at the AddictionZ Conference on the Gold Coast in April 2024.



175TH YEAR CELEBRATIONS

As our 175th anniversary of service approached, it was suggested by our incoming Executive Director, Brad Strong, that we should do 175 things to celebrate. We may not quite have got there, but we sure gave it our best shot.

Thank you to all who attended, supported and helped organise events and activities. It's not every year a community organisation turns 175!

LIBRARY LOVER'S DAY

Each year, we celebrate Library Lover's Day on Valentine's Day, 14 February, to celebrate Drug ARM's public lending library, and our love of books. This year, for our 175th year, we turned back a page, and celebrated our library's history.

This was only fitting given our library was recognising its own impressive milestone of 40 years of lending alcohol and other drug resources.

In keeping with the historic theme, several former Drug ARM staff members attended the library event and shared their memories, while contributing to the creation of a library timeline.



Top: Drug ARM former and current staff (from left) Mark Brown, Heather Pitt, Peter Henderson OAM (Treasurer), Dr Dennis Young AM, Betany Bickford, Dana Kinderis and (front) Judith Hart and Leonie Short. **Bottom:** ED Brad Strong presents a Valentine's rose to librarian, Debbie, for Library Lover's Day!



The Canberra Hotel, on corner of Edward and Ann Streets, Brisbane.

LIBRARY FLASHBACK

Did you know our library first opened in 1984 on the first floor of The Canberra Hotel in Brisbane? The 10-storey, alcohol-free hotel was located in central Brisbane and was run by our organisation for 56 years (1929-1985). Hotel revenue was used to help fund alcohol and other drug advocacy and education activities, which included our dedicated library.

HAPPY FOUNDATION DAY

Our organisation was founded on 8 May, 1849, with the forming of the Moreton Bay Temperance Society. Fast forward 175 years, on 8 May, 2024, and Drug ARM teams celebrated this momentous occasion by gathering for morning teas across nine locations. The events gave teams an opportunity to reflect on the legacy they have inherited and continue to deliver on today, as well as enjoying some fun with their colleagues.

How we celebrated our foundations in pictures...



CELEBRATIONS LAUNCH IN COMMUNITY

In the same week of our foundational anniversary, on Sunday 12 May 2024, celebrations were officially launched in community. The event involved over 160 supporters gathering at the historic Ipswich Uniting Church for a Hymns of Praise service. Attendees described the service as “uplifting” and “joyous”.

The church building, only a little older than our service work, was a fitting venue given many of our founding members were affiliated with Christian churches.

Conducting the launch was Harold Peacock, current chair of the Drug Awareness & Relief Foundation (Australia) – Drug ARM’s parent body.

Church Moderator Reverend Bruce Moore paid tribute to our significant milestone, offering words of hope that our 175 years of continuous service may inspire the flame of compassion for many years to come.

We are grateful to all who attended and shared in our celebration, including Ipswich Cr Marnie Doyle. Special thanks to The Salvation Army Bundamba Corps’ Major Lai the Greenaway who led the singing, Cambrian Youth Choir with Michelle French, The Salvation Army Bundamba Songsters with Renae Strong, The Salvation Army Bundamba Band with Gary Rule, Organist Peter Clem, Rev Daniel Hobbs and Rev Hon Pat Comben, Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church and Adventist Church and our Board Directors Harold Peacock (*pictured below cutting the cake*), Rev Graeme McKay and Ken Walker.





BOGGABILLA DEDICATION CEREMONY

Our regional teams in Boggabilla, Toomelah and Goondiwindi provided leaders with a warm Welcome to Country on 15 June 2024. The leaders, including our Board Directors and some senior staff, including our Executive Director/CEO Brad Strong, travelled together to visit the region and hear firsthand about the wonderful work they are doing in communities.

The visit also involved celebrating 175 years of service and dedicating the Winangalabaa 'Place of Knowledge' Centre, a property that Drug ARM's parent Foundation had purchased for the program this financial year.

Our Drug ARM teams have been delivering supports from the leased centre for about seven years, however, the purchase of the property has provided more certainty around the program's future.

Three Aunties joined with Brad Strong to preside over a ribbon cutting and a cake cutting, which was served along with morning tea as part of the dedication ceremony.

Images clockwise from top: Leadership team board a bus for Boggabilla; Lance and Aunty Thora cook breakfast; Board Chair Harold Peacock with our team's Reg and Aunty Elaine at the Canoe Tree; Aunty Dawn cuts the ribbon with Brad Strong and Reg; and Aunty Elaine, Brad Strong and Aunty Thora with the celebratory cake.

175 YEAR LUNCHEON AND HISTORY BOOK LAUNCH

A celebratory luncheon and history book launch was held at the Brisbane Club on 7 August 2024, with 130 people coming together to reflect, connect and commit to furthering support for our mission to empower people to transform their lives and flourish after the harmful impacts of substance use.

We thank special guest speaker – former prime minister and long-time supporter of Drug ARM, John Howard OM AC for being part of the event. During his time as prime minister, Mr Howard's government helped to resource our Community and Family Support Services (then known as HART).

Also speaking were Drug ARM's Maryborough Street Outreach Team Leader and volunteer, Marty Erlandson, Executive Director/CEO, Brad Strong, Chief Advocate and Company Secretary, Dr Dennis Young AM and Reverend David Baker and Reverend Graeme McKay.

Among those in attendance were the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Cr Adrian Schrinner, Lady Mayoress and Chair of the Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust, Nina Schrinner, Scenic Rim MP the Hon Jon Krause, Cr Tracy Davis, Civic Cabinet Chair of the Environment, Parks and Sustainability and Councillor for McDowall Ward and Olympic Gold Medallist in Australian swimming, former world record holder, Duncan Armstrong OAM.

We also welcomed to the event other Drug ARM supporters including representatives from Auto & General, the Queensland Former Parliamentary Members' Association, the Rotary Club of Toowong and the SAS Group.

A key feature of the event's program was the launch of a coffee table history book entitled, *175th Anniversary of Drug Awareness & Relief Foundation (Australia) & Drug ARM; A history of community service from 1849 to 2024*.





The Foundation commissioned the writing of the book to capture the highlights, key figures and memorable moments in honour of 175 years of service.

The business luncheon not only celebrated our impactful past but was an opportunity to showcase Drug ARM's high relevancy today and to link with future corporate partners and supporters towards expanding on our service delivery.



Image: Drug ARM ED/CEO Brad Strong (far right) with Maryborough volunteers and supporters celebrating our 175th Anniversary.



CELEBRATING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Drug ARM kickstarted National Volunteer Week 2024 by holding a 175-Year Celebration on 19 May at the Maryborough Baptist Church with our Maryborough Street Outreach Services' volunteers and supporters.

Executive Director, Brad Strong, attended the special church service and thanked our local outreach team, presenting each volunteer with a National Volunteer Week certificate.

Certificates were also issued to all our volunteers across the organisation in token of our sincere gratitude for all that they do.

The Maryborough volunteers had been delivering street outreach in the town since July 2023, marking the first time the service had operated in Maryborough in its 35-year history.

"These compassionate local volunteers identified a need and gap in services and rallied to bring this support to the town's inner-city," Mr Strong said.

"It takes a special kind of person to be a volunteer and to give up a night to go out in all-weather to provide a friendly smile and check in on the welfare of others. I deeply thank our fledgling Maryborough volunteers for all they've done and keep doing.

"And, in this year of reflection, I express my humble gratitude to all our past volunteers and the huge immeasurable impact they've had over decades."

This year's Volunteer Week focused on the theme: *Something for Everyone*, recognising the diverse passion and talents that everyone brings to the act of volunteering. At Drug ARM, we are grateful to have over 100 volunteers who have the skills and compassion to help deliver outreach support, counselling and assistance in our Op Shops.

"Outreach volunteers mean people on the streets get to speak to someone, often breaking a long drought of silence"

CELEBRATING WITH PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

While we spent much time celebrating with supporters from our past and present, we also looked ahead to share our history with people who may consider working with us in the future.

In May 2024, Drug ARM for the first time took out a stall at the Brisbane Careers & Employment Expo held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, promoting our long-standing work as an employer within the alcohol and other drug sector.

Our presence at the large event which attracted over 160 trade stalls and thousands of visitors, gave us an opportunity to showcase our various job roles and career pathways, and to highlight our commitment to building skills and capacity within the sector through our offerings of student clinical placements.

In a competitive recruitment market, it was important to put forward our profile as a proactive employer, always on the lookout for quality applicants across metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

Enhancing our recruitment processes was a focus throughout 2023-24. Works in support of this included revamping our Careers page on our website and producing three staff profile videos. The website and videos allow job seekers an avenue to learn more about what it's like to work at Drug ARM and within the alcohol and other drug sector.

We thank our staff, Wei in Goondiwindi, Jo in Rockhampton and Harpreet in South Brisbane for participating in the profile videos and sharing their views on working in their various roles.

CELEBRATING WITH STUDENTS

Our students had a chance to celebrate our 175-year milestone, and their own learnings, at a special Student Showcase event held at the Parliamentary Annexe on 27 June 2024.

The event brought over 100 people together to interact with, and hear, from students, who were currently on placement at Drug ARM.

Several students spoke about their learnings, while all had a chance to chat with workplace exhibitors about career opportunities and enjoy a supper alongside former members of parliament.



Above: Drug ARM's HR Manager, Katie Farmer, and Senior Communications and Marketing Manager, Alex Davis, talk with prospective employees at our stall at the Brisbane Careers & Employment Expo



Above: Jo being filmed at our Riverview Farm site in Ipswich.

We sincerely thank our exhibitors, the ACSO Australian Community Support Organisation, Family Drug Support QLD, Queensland Corrective Services and QShelter. Thanks also to Queensland Former Parliamentary Members' Association for hosting the evening in the Premiers' Hall, and to those from the association who joined us.

We were also joined by our organisation's Chair Harold Peacock, Executive Director/CEO Brad Strong, Chief Advocate and Company Secretary Dr Dennis Young AM, several Board Directors and senior staff, demonstrating Drug ARM's strong support for building AOD skills and capacity within the sector.

We acknowledge our Community and Family Support Services funder, Brisbane South PHN, and our program co-ordinators, Lani and Nanna, who run the popular and successful student placement program.



REACHING OUT

During 2023-24, Drug ARM delivered alcohol and other drug awareness, rehabilitation and management across New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland from 21 service hubs and 2 Op Shops, with a third Op Shop set to open. Our teams also provided mobile and telehealth outreach, and delivered programs in correctional centres, extending our arm of support to even more people. Our national office is located in Annerley, Brisbane. The following map shows our service hub locations in 2023/24.

SERVICE LOCATIONS

- > Biloela
- > Boggabilla
- > Bowen
- > Brisbane
- > Charleville
- > Cunnamulla
- > Gold Coast
- > Goondiwindi
- > Gympie
- > Ipswich
- > Mackay
- > Maryborough
- > Moranbah
- > Rockhampton
- > Roma
- > St George
- > Stanthorpe
- > Sunshine Coast
- > Toomelah
- > Toowoomba
- > Warwick

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all these lands upon which we work and serve, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



Our Community and Family Support Service team at our new premises at Riverview Farm

RELOCATIONS

During 2023-24, Drug ARM established new spaces for our clients in Toowoomba, Ipswich and Mackay, providing them with more space and comfortable surrounds in easily accessible locations.

Our Toowoomba services team moved into their new office at 3 Duggan Street in January 2024 and later celebrated with 40 supporters at an opening event in April. Among the special guests were Toowoomba Regional Mayor, Cr Geoffrey McDonald, and other local support service leaders along with community, church and media representatives.

Our Ipswich team moved into their new premises at The Salvation Army Riverview Farm at Riverview in May 2024, settling into homestead-style accommodation on the extensive property. The site can be found at the end of Endeavour Road, accessed from Riverview Road, and not far from Riverview Train Station. The move has provided our clients with a tranquil, private and rural setting in which to engage in our many Ipswich-based support programs. The team was planning to celebrate their new space with an open day in September 2024.

Our Mackay team moved into a larger space on 27 June 2024 located on the second floor at 45 Victoria Street (Suite 204), on the corner of Brisbane Street. They are planning to hold an opening event soon.



Drug ARM ED/CEO Brad Strong addresses guests at our Toowoomba office opening



OUR COMMUNITY

Our mission was founded on community care and continues not only to be driven by it, but sustained by it.

For it is only with community support that we can go on to assist thousands of people and families each year through our programs, services, education and advocacy.

Support comes in many forms... from donors, sponsors, funders, volunteers, partners, Op Shop donors and customers as well as other service providers.

We thank each and every one who engaged positively with Drug ARM throughout 2023/24. Your support made a difference in our communities.

OUR FUNDERS

Thank you for the faith you put in us to deliver support in communities.

Queensland Health

Brisbane South PHN

Western Queensland PHN

Country to Coast PHN

Department of Communities and Justice (NSW)

National Indigenous Australian Agency

Queensland Corrective Services

Department of Transport and Main Roads (Qld)

Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities, and the Arts (Qld)

Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (Qld)

OUR DONORS AND SPONSORS

Thank you for your monthly giving, your generous donations and legacy gifts which allow us to provide much needed support.

We know that each gift is a choice to give to your community, to people who have fallen on hard times and who need a helping hand through our Street Outreach Services, or who are seeking to transform their life through alcohol and other drug counselling. Our patrons and clients are grateful for the kindness you gift them.

We especially thank our Monthly Giving Champions for the stable source of funding you provide to ensure these vital services continue.

FUNDRAISING

CHILDREN AND FAMILY EXTRAVAGANZA EVENTS

Thanks to the support of our generous sponsors, we were able to send thousands of children and families experiencing disadvantage for a day of respite, fun and memory making. Events were held throughout the year at cinemas, zoos and circuses in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia all to raise funds for our community mental health or alcohol and other drug programs.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

We were honoured to be beneficiaries of some of Brisbane's most popular fundraising events this year receiving \$3000 from Rotary's Opera in the Gardens and \$28,708.20 from The Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust BrisSizzle and Sounds.

We are proud to be supported by these highly successful community events and thank everyone who attended. Special thanks to our Rotary friends and to The Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust for your ongoing support.

Opera in the Gardens is presented by the Rotary Clubs of Brookfield, Karna Bellbowrie and Toowong in partnership with Drug ARM.



Hundreds brought a chair and enjoyed a picnic hamper of goodies while taking in an afternoon of alfresco entertainment in support of Drug ARM and Rotary clubs

Hundreds attended this year's event held at Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens on Sunday 28 April 2024. The event featured international Soprano sensation – Mirusia – otherwise known as the "Angel of Australia" or "Australia's Songbird".

The annual **BrisSizzle and Sounds** event was held on Saturday 11 May 2024 in Brisbane at Victoria Park/Barrambin. This year's event featured live music, food trucks, two sessions of the Bluey Live Interactive Experience, raffle prizes and free activities for children.

Drug ARM also hosted a stall and a pop-up Op Shop at the event. Raffle tickets sold on the day raised funds in support of Drug ARM's Street Outreach Services and other charities. We thank everyone who attended and bought a raffle ticket!



Brisbane Lord Mayor, Cr Adrian Schrinner with Drug ARM's Alex, Cally and Dr Dennis Young AM at our stall at this year's BrisSizzle and Sounds event.



New Fundraising and Business Development Manager, Cally Zammit, oversees the fit-out and establishment of an exciting new Drug ARM Op Shop located within Brisbane's inner-city region at Kelvin Grove

FUNDRAISING TEAM

In March 2024, we began to pull together a specialist team dedicated to building on our business partnerships and fundraising initiatives in support of our programs. The more we can invest in our services, the more people and families we can assist through difficult times.

Towards this end, new roles were established and recruited to, including a Fundraising and Business Development Manager, a Community and Fundraising Engagement Officer and a Fundraising and Enterprise Officer.

NEW OP SHOP

The first significant project the team has undertaken has been to establish an Op Shop in the Kelvin Grove Urban Village. The expansive space is in a busy location within QUT's education precinct and is due to officially open in October 2024.

The Op Shops raise vital funds to keep our Street Outreach vans on the roads, and we are grateful to each person who donates items to the store, or purchases them.



Treasured volunteer, Janice, joined our CEO and Toowoomba Mayor to cut a cake at an event, where we marked her long service milestone


JANICE'S 10 YEARS OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE COMMENDED

While there were some new faces this year, Drug ARM paused to celebrate a team member who has been with us for some time, a team member, we treasure!

Janice can only be described as a "once-in-a-lifetime" volunteer!

Janice has been working in our Toowoomba Op Shop for an incredible 10 years. Long service of this kind is rare among community volunteers and so we feel extremely fortunate and grateful to have had Janice with us for the past decade. She has contributed too many hours to count in the store, giving of her time selflessly in support of our work in community.

Janice was acknowledged for this impressive service milestone at the opening of our Toowoomba Office in April 2024, when Drug ARM Executive Director/CEO Brad Strong and the Mayor of Toowoomba, Cr Geoffrey McDonald, joined with attendees to congratulate her and present her with a gift.



“Our teams could not have had this positive impact without your support.”



OUR PEOPLE

A COMPASSIONATE TEAM

Motivating our professional team are fundamental beliefs that people can change and that people deserve a life of health and happiness. We also believe that families and friends shouldn't be left alone when their loved one has a substance use problem. We want to be there for them to help with tools, strategies and support.

While there are team members among us who might not have set out to work in alcohol and other drug support, once they came on board, they quickly saw the positive impact they could have on people and families, and are now mapping a career within this rewarding sector.

Our teams could not have had this positive impact without your support.

WHO WE ARE

As of 30 June 2024, Drug ARM had a team of 95 dedicated, kind and open-minded staff.

About 60% worked full-time, 28% part-time and some were in casual roles. The majority of our team (almost 73%) identified as female.

HOW WE SUPPORTED OUR TEAM

We know that providing support to others can lead to a tendency to put the needs of others first. That's why at Drug ARM we work to ensure our teams don't forget about themselves and take time for selfcare.

- Key people-related initiatives this financial year included:
- The introduction of the Water Cooler, a staff-led initiative aimed at providing some wellness and interactive staff activities in support of a caring and respectful workplace culture
- Planned for a new HR Platform, Employment Hero (rolled out September 2024)

- Delivered HR training with MJSP for all managers
- Conducted valuable internal consultation through an All Staff Wellness Survey
- Fostered professional development and team building through an All Staff Workshop at Victoria Park/Barrambin, Brisbane, in October 2023
- Embraced our history with internal 175 Year celebrations
- Supported birthday, study, Christmas leave; offered salary sacrificing and access to an Employment Assistance Program and other professional development
- Had in place compliant frameworks, passing ISO and HSQF audits.

ACKNOWLEDGED LONG SERVICE

At our All Staff Workshop, a certificate presentation was held to acknowledge team members for long service. The following staff were acknowledged for their long service to Drug ARM:

5+ years

- Tony Aggett
- Sandi Barry
- Montana Durkin
- Jessica Goodwin
- Sam Kawane Jr
- Ngaire Michaels
- Sharyn Taylor

SUPERVISION

In 2023-24, our clinical staff had access to internal, external and group supervision, with 92 internal sessions provided by 22 supervisees and 115 group sessions delivered. Staff also had access to our Clinical Lead for more immediate secondary consultations if they required on-the-job advice. During the reporting year, 236 secondary consultations were provided. All new clinical staff attended induction training as part of our onboarding process, with 51 induction sessions held throughout the past financial year.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

We are truly grateful for our 250 volunteers who provided dedicated and caring service during 2023-24. Each volunteer generously gave time, effort and skill towards ensuring people had someone to turn to and who would listen and respond with care and compassion.

During National Volunteer Week 2024, Drug ARM's Executive Director Brad Strong said that our volunteers were the backbone of our organisation. "We can't thank them enough for all that they do to make real, transformative differences in people's lives."



MEET EMMELINE

At the end of the financial year, we were looking for a special someone who could help lead and manage our growing volunteer team. Thanks to the increase in our CAFSS student intake this year, we saw about a 70% lift in our overall volunteer numbers on what we had the previous year.

As such, we welcomed Em, our new Volunteer Co-ordinator. A volunteer herself, who had been working in one of our Op Shops, and with a background in managing a hospital's mental health unit, Em was the perfect fit to lead and inspire our amazing team.



Our May 2024 CAFSS student intake with some of our team members at a training session

STUDENTS

Most of our volunteers, 145 of them, were students on placement with our Community and Family Support Service (CAFSS).

Of those students, 92 worked in Annerley and 53 in Ipswich. The program provided students an opportunity to work with clients presenting with low to moderate service needs. The typical progression of a CAFSS student is a six-month placement which involves delivery of free co-counselling.

In the past financial year, we took students from various bodies including ACAP, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland, Western Sydney University, Monash University, Open Colleges, Australian College of Community Services, Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors, TAFE, Torrens University, Stotts College Brisbane Campus, Upskilled, Christian Heritage College, IKON Institute of Australia and Australian College of Ministries.

OUR CAFSS PROGRAM EVALUATED

During this year, our Community and Family Support Service (CAFSS) program was evaluated from the perspective of its effectiveness as a workforce development program.

We found that students and volunteers were highly satisfied with the program and were much more likely to consider working in the alcohol and other drug sector after completing a placement in CAFSS. We are looking at better ways to promote the program to our partners in the sector and how to quantify the learnings and capabilities gained through the program.



MEET LEANNE

This year, in the lead-up to National Volunteer Week 2024, we talked to one of our longest serving outreach volunteers, Leanne, who has served a total of eight years over two separate stints.

Leanne volunteers at our Aspley outreach site every Thursday when a free barbecue lunch is provided to about 10-15 people doing it tough and experiencing homelessness.

"I don't judge how they (our patrons) look or where they live... I come as a friend to show kindness and I want to be there for them so they don't have to feel so alone," Leanne said.

"They always have a back story – you just never know a person's history and what they've been through.

Leanne's compassion and understanding

perhaps stems from her own lived experiences. She said some of her earliest memories were of alcohol and other drug misuse and associated violence which occurred in her childhood home.

"I think it's why I can have real empathy for the struggles people have with alcohol and drugs and can understand the effects it has on the whole family," she said.

When it comes to doing street outreach, Leanne feels it's a good use of her support skills, which she developed previously when working in crisis phone support.

"It's a pleasure to be there – I love working face-to-face. While they will talk about their darkest moments, and it is an honour that they share those with you, generally it is just an all-round great feeling as you get to see their strength and resilience and be amazed at what they can live through," she said. "There's a real community feel to the group – they enjoy some banter and they like to support each other."

"After all the stories I've heard, I think I can't be shocked any more, but then I am."





Brisbane Street Outreach volunteers were gifted pizza as a thank you for their efforts during National Volunteer Week 2024 – however, they willingly shared their pizza with patrons during their shift, a sign of how much they care!

STREET OUTREACH SERVICES VOLUNTEERS

We thank our extraordinary volunteers who teamed up and went out in vans to conduct night or day Street Outreach shifts in hotspots across various Queensland locations in support of people sleeping rough who may have issues with alcohol and other drugs.

To go out and meet waiting queues on street corners in all kinds of weather takes a special kind of person and we were lucky to have 65 such kind-hearted, inspirational and proactive people working with us during 2023-24.

Teams provided patrons with a free hot cuppa or some other refreshment or donation, a chat and some crisis information or referral to a service for support. Often patrons valued the friendly interaction, the smile, the respect and the sense of hope that came from knowing that there were people and services who cared.



One of our wonderful volunteers in Drug ARM's new look Capalaba Op Shop

RETAIL OP SHOP WORKERS

Throughout 2023-24, Drug ARM Op Shops raised much needed funds to help keep our Street Outreach Services rolling. About 20 volunteers worked in our Op Shops, located in Toowoomba, Capalaba and Kelvin Grove, contributing to that important cause during this period.

Not only that, our retail volunteers enjoyed a sense of teamwork and being part of a community. They learned valuable and transferrable skills in retail and customer service and provided a friendly face to our donors and supporters. We thank each volunteer for the many hours they put in to take and sort donations, display and price stock and serve customers.

This year, our volunteers also helped refit-out our refurbished Capalaba Op Shop and fit-out our new and large Kelvin Grove Op Shop. We appreciate the extensive efforts that went into getting the Kelvin Grove store ready for opening. Those efforts will have a lasting legacy for that urban community and, ultimately, for people experiencing homelessness as each Op Shop item sold helps place a hot cuppa in a hand on the street.



SCHOOLIES WEEK 2023

Since 1999, Drug ARM has been sending volunteers to the Gold Coast for end-of-year Schoolies Week celebrations to help keep young school leavers safe by providing free water, check-ins and a Recharge Zone.

Schoolies Week 2023 was no exception. Attending the event were 18 Drug ARM volunteers who provided a total of 405 volunteer hours. They handed out 31,500 cups of water and assisted 69 young people.

Our Executive Director/CEO Brad Strong and Chief Financial Officer visited our Recharge site to thank each volunteer personally and present them with a certificate of thanks.



images: Our Executive Director/CEO Brad Strong and Chief Financial Officer visited our Recharge site to thank each volunteer personally and present them with a certificate of thanks.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

A sincere thank you to our funders and supporters who contributed to our mission over the past year to help improve the lives of people impacted by alcohol and other drugs.

Your support enables and empowers our teams to get on with providing quality alcohol and other drug service programs across 21 hubs in Queensland and across the border region in northern NSW.

We thank our monthly givers for your care and commitment, our corporate sponsors for your loyalty and friendship, and our government funders for your trust and investment in community.

To anyone who donated goods to our Op Shops or made a purchase – thank you. Your support helps to keep our Street Outreach Service vans on the roads.

Much heartfelt gratitude goes to those who left a gift to Drug ARM in their will. This support is crucial and ensures we can provide vital care for people and families in our community.

We continue to invest in the four key pillars of our 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan, which are:

Our People

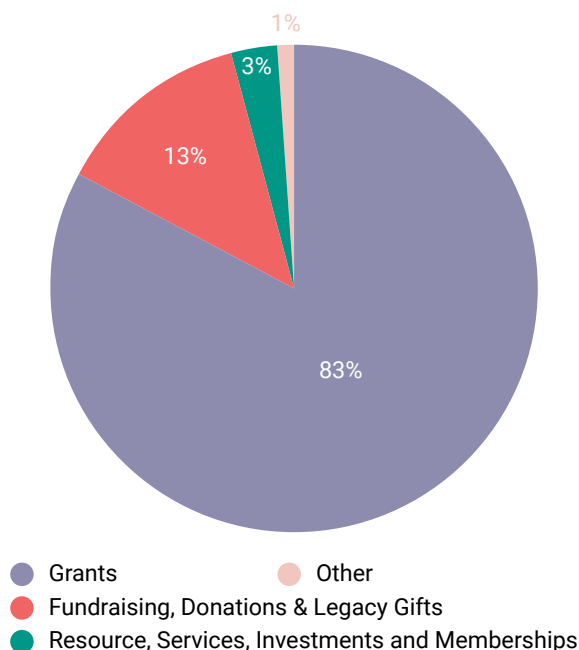
Our Programs

Our Influence

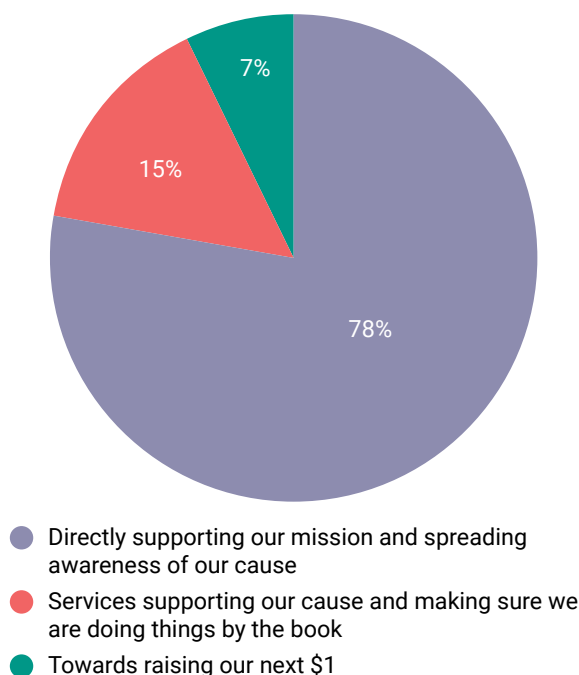
Our Impact

We are committed to investing your resources wisely to achieve our mission of delivering the highest standard of awareness, rehabilitation and management solutions to address the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs, including related issues such as mental health. Thank you for your trust in Drug ARM.

WHERE FUNDING FOR DRUG ARM'S PROGRAMS CAME FROM IN 2023/24



HOW YOUR SUPPORT WAS INVESTED IN 2023/24





OUR PRAYER

Drug ARM has adopted the serenity prayer as its organisational prayer. “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

The logo consists of a red semi-circle on the left and a white semi-circle on the right, forming a full circle. The text "drug.ARM" is written in white, lowercase letters, with "drug." on the red part and "ARM" on the white part.

drug.ARM

AWARENESS
REHABILITATION
MANAGEMENT

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