



## **Study launch reveals mental health and alcohol and other drug services are harder to access for culturally and linguistically diverse clients**

A study named *'Finding the right help: Pathways for culturally diverse clients with cannabis use and mental health issues'* will be launched at the University of New South Wales' National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC) on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The study, found that culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australians with co-existing mental health and cannabis use issues (amongst other drugs) found it more difficult than Anglo-Australians to access treatment services. The study was conducted jointly by the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC) and NCPIC and was funded by the NSW Health Department, supported by Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (NADA).

The research involved qualitative in-depth interviews with over 50 clients of mental health or alcohol and other drug (AOD) services in Sydney and Wollongong, 26 of which were with clients who self-identified as CALD.

The research found that while service use history was largely fragmented and disjointed across the client group, it appeared even more so for the CALD clients. Less of the CALD clients had ever had a service-to-service referral compared to their Anglo-Australian counterparts. Successful service engagement appeared largely contingent on clients' capacity to engage with services and navigate the system themselves, regardless of the referral source.

For CALD clients, family featured prominently in relation to attitudes towards seeking help and how those impacted on whether or not clients wanted family members involved in their help seeking. Hospitals were more prominent among CALD clients' service use history, and residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation was less accessed compared to clients of solely Anglo-Australian background.

The results from this study highlight the difficulties experienced by those with co-existing drug use and mental health issues accessing specialist care, particularly when faced with additional cultural and language barriers. This research provides further understanding for improving service access and outcomes for those with co-existing issues, pointing to the importance of understanding people's contexts and backgrounds and responding appropriately. The launch of this research comes at a timely place on the AOD field's calendar, being at the tail end of both Drug Action Week and Refugee Week.

**LAUNCH DETAILS:**

**Venue:** UNSW Randwick Campus, 22-32 King Street, Randwick, NSW 2031  
NDARC Building R1, Level 1 – R1 Lecture Theatre

**Date:** Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2010

**Time:** 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

The National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre (NCPIC) is an Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing initiative. Its mission is to reduce the use of cannabis in Australia by preventing uptake and providing the community with evidence-based information and interventions.

**Cannabis Information and Helpline – 1800 30 40 50**

**NCPIC website – [ncpic.org.au](http://ncpic.org.au)**

**DAMEC website – [www.damec.org.au](http://www.damec.org.au)**

ends

**Contact Details:**

**Kelvin Chambers (CEO, DAMEC)**, tel. (02) 8113 1302 or 0412 433 441, email [ceo@damec.org.au](mailto:ceo@damec.org.au)

**Connie Donato-Hunt (DAMEC)**, tel. (02) 8113 1304 or 0412 247 084, email [conniedh@damec.org.au](mailto:conniedh@damec.org.au)

**Paul Dillon (NCPIC)**, tel. (02) 9385 0226 or 0419 402 099, email [p.dillon@unsw.edu.au](mailto:p.dillon@unsw.edu.au)

**Clare Chenoweth (NCPIC)**, tel. (02) 9385 0218 or 0401 718 548, email [c.chenoweth@unsw.edu.au](mailto:c.chenoweth@unsw.edu.au)