



MEDIA RELEASE

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN DRUG TREATMENT PRESENTED

Awards for Excellence in Drug Treatment were presented recently at a special dinner in Fremantle, which was held as part of the annual conference of the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA). The ATCA conference brought together national and international researchers, policy makers and practitioners working in drug treatment, and particularly focused on the work of Therapeutic Communities.

Therapeutic Communities provide a wholistic approach to treatment and rehabilitation, working to address the underlying causes of alcohol and other drug abuse, all of which impact on the person's ability to recover. The ATCA is the peak body representing Therapeutic Communities in Australasia.

The award for significant contribution by a program, service or intervention in Australasia was presented to the Saranna Women's and Children's Program, which is part of the Cyrenian House Program in Perth. The Saranna Program has been providing a unique residential program for Indigenous and non-Indigenous women who are affected by alcohol and/or other drug misuse. It is tailored to meet the needs of vulnerable children, providing treatment that engages the 'whole relationship' and addresses issues most relevant to the mother/child dyad.

Individuals receiving awards for Significant Contribution to the Therapeutic Community Movement in Australasia had each worked within the drug treatment sector for many years. The award acknowledges and publicly recognises the exceptional work done by people who have worked tirelessly over a number of years to promote and develop the therapeutic community approach to treatment within the sector.

James McGregor has been at the forefront of improving quality standards in the TC sector and is an Accredited IHCA Reviewer. His commitment to continuous quality improvement has provided many benefits to Mirikai and the Gold Coast Drug Council, where he has worked for the past 15 years, improving consumer input through evaluation, promoting reflection on growth and improved strategic planning and implementing a two yearly policy revision cycle.

The second recipient of the award, Murray Sutton, first commenced work within Therapeutic Communities in 1999 and was promoted to the position of Coordinator at Mirikai in 2005, a position he has held since that time. He is a firm proponent of 'community as method' and provides a hands-on role within the TC, which provides 40 beds for young dual diagnosis clients. He is well regarded by staff and residents, and provides a wide-ranging liaison role within the community.

The third recipient of this award, Carol Daws, has worked vigorously as a champion of the TC model since 1987, when she first commenced work as a counsellor. Since that time, she has worked in a number of senior roles and was appointed CEO of Cyrenian House in 2002. She was instrumental in moving her service from a residential rehabilitation program to a therapeutic community in 1999 and has since played a key role at state, national and international level.

On a personal level, since 1994 Carol has pursued academic studies as a psychologist, and is a member of the Golden Key Honour Society for Academic Achievement. In 2011 she received full registration as a Clinical Psychologist.

Associate Professor Lynne Magor-Blatch, Executive Officer of the ATCA stated, "These awards acknowledge and publicly recognise the exceptional work done by people who have worked tirelessly over a number of years to promote and develop the therapeutic community approach to treatment within the sector, as well as the programs which are making a difference in people's lives".

Therapeutic Communities (TCs) are unique in their treatment method, in that the community itself is the main method of treatment. While staff play a vital role in guiding treatment, there is an important emphasis on self-help and mutual help.

"TCs work with a wide range of people, including young people, parents and children. Last night's awards particularly recognise some of the special populations with whom we work, and we congratulate the programs and individuals who have been recognised in this way", A/Prof Magor-Blatch said.

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