

E Tū Kāhikatea - Standing Strong: Navigating Change & Building Resilience

ATCA CONFERENCE 25-27 November 2025, Auckland, New Zealand

Abstract Guidelines

About the ATCA

The ATCA is a member-based organisation, representing non-government alcohol and other drug organisations across Australia and New Zealand. Our membership is comprised of services operating under the Therapeutic Community Model or aiming to become a therapeutic community. Our members provide residential and non-residential treatment, day programs, withdrawal management services and prison-based alcohol and other drug programs.

ATCA invites abstract submissions for oral, lightning round and poster presentations, and workshops for the 2025 ATCA Conference, being held in Auckland, New Zealand. This is an opportunity for you to showcase your innovative practice or research.

We encourage staff and services across all ATCA members and the broader alcohol and other drugs and health and human services sectors to submit an abstract. Interactive and practice-focused sessions are encouraged to maximise opportunities for conference participants to exchange practice wisdom and experience.

Conference themes

Presentations may focus on topics related to the conference theme '*E Tū Kāhikatea – Standing Strong: Navigating Change and Building Resilience*' which celebrates the strength, innovation, and resilience of TCs, the workforce, and those accessing ATCA member services in an ever-evolving landscape. It acknowledges the power of standing together through change and challenges.

'E Tū Kāhikatea' translates to 'Stand Tall Like the Kāhikatea'. "The Kāhikatea, one of the tallest trees in New Zealand, lives in the low wetlands and stands tall by intertwining its roots with others. It's this interconnectedness that enables it to withstand storms and droughts and is a powerful metaphor symbolising resilience and standing strong together" (Peter Sciascia, Pou Matua, Cultural Lead, Odyssey House, Auckland).

Conference themes are:

- Sustaining change: Interventions, services and research supporting long-term recovery
- Nurturing growth: Innovations in the Therapeutic Community approach - residential and community-based
- Safe spaces, Strong Communities: Culturally safe and inclusive practices
- Standing strong together: Building a resilient workforce, for stronger TCs, clients and communities
- Voices of experience: The Power of Peer Support and Lived Experience
- Building bridges: Collaborative and cross sector approaches

ATCA encourages abstract submission from people who are working with or identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Māori or Pacifica, culturally and linguistically diverse, gender and sexuality diverse communities and peoples, and individuals with lived experience.

Abstract submission process

- Abstracts are welcome from ATCA members and the broader AOD sector and other health and community services across Australia and New Zealand.
- Abstracts must be submitted by **5pm, Monday 5 May 2025**.
- Notifications will be sent from the end of May 2025.
- Abstracts must be submitted online, using the application link below -

<https://form.jotform.com/250727283039863>

What is an abstract?

An abstract is a summary of your presentation. It helps the selection committee understand your topic and decide if it fits the conference. Think of it as a snapshot of your session—highlighting its key focus, why it matters, and what attendees will gain.

How to choose a topic for presentation

Abstracts should consider how their practice or research is relevant to the conference themes, as well as the audience who will be attending the conference. Attendees of the conference will include:

- frontline staff and managers in Therapeutic Communities (TCs), residential and non-residential services across the AOD sector
- sectors working with clients with AOD issues
- researchers with an interest in responses to AOD
- policy makers and funders
- clients, consumers and significant others.

Presentation/abstract types

All abstracts must be written in complete sentences, not dot-points or in table format.

- **Oral paper:** 20 minutes long, oral papers provide authors the opportunity to present original work related to conference topics. Each presentation is limited to 20 minutes, with an additional five minutes allocated for questions and answers.
- **Workshop:** 30–40 minutes long, workshops provide authors the opportunity to present their work in a highly interactive manner that maximises audience participation. Workshops should have at least 25% of the total time allocated to questions and answers, or to group interaction.
- **Lightning round:** Ten minutes long, lightning round presentations provide authors the opportunity to share their work in brief oral presentations. Each presentation is limited to ten minutes, with an additional five minutes allocated for questions and answers
- **Poster presentation:** Poster presentations are an opportunity for you to present your work, in a graphical/textual, not oral, poster presentation. It is an opportunity to demonstrate the nature of your work or your TC innovation or research outcomes. The

final poster will mostly rely on diagrams, charts and images rather than text. The maximum poster size is 850mm x 1100mm and font used should be size 18 or larger.

Abstracts will be assessed on the following points:

1. Addressing a conference theme
2. Innovation and originality
3. Whether the project, research or policy has a practical application, and
4. Whether the abstract submitted clearly explains the outcomes of the project, research or policy and its implications for the sector.

Dos and don'ts

- **Avoid:** The use of harmful language that can perpetuate stigma towards people experiencing AOD issues, mental health problems and other concerns.
Instead: Use person-centred language and words that empower people. For more information refer to these resources:
www.mindframe.org.au/our-words-matter-guidelines-for-language-use
[www.uts.edu.au/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Top-10-Tips-for-Terminology.pdf](http://www.uts.edu.au/Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Peoples%20Top-10-Tips-for-Terminology.pdf)
[PWDA Language Guide: A guide to language about disability](#)
www.transhub.org.au/language
- **Avoid:** Giving a general overview of the program you provide or your service.
Instead: Specifically address a lesson you have learned through service delivery or a particular best-practice example from within your program. Think about what you would want the audience to take away and how your submission is relevant to the conference theme.
- **Avoid:** Using jargon or acronyms, especially without explaining it first. (e.g., adults with FASD are much more likely to experience AOD issues)
Instead: If you must use jargon/acronyms, explain it the first time it is used. (E.g., Adults with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) are much more likely to experience alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues).

Permission for publication

Submitting an abstract indicates permission for the abstract to be published on the conference website and in the program.

Conference attendance

Presenters are required to attend the conference in person and purchase a ticket. Presenters will receive a code which gives them early bird conference registration cost at any time before the conference.

Abstract enquiries

All enquiries should be sent to the atca@atca.com.au.