

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS (AOD) AMONG YOUNG NOONGARS IN ALBANY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Authors:

Stearne A<sup>1</sup> Gray D<sup>1</sup> Wilkes E<sup>1</sup> Butt J<sup>1</sup> Wilson M<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University

The National Drug Research Institute worked the Southern Aboriginal Corporation to assess the level of AOD use, and service need by Aboriginal young people (8–17 years) in Albany, Western Australia.

**Method/Approach:** The study utilised a community consultation process to assess the alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among Aboriginal adolescents, to identify risk and resilience factors and opportunities for intervention. A survey of Aboriginal young people aged 8–17 years living in Albany was conducted in early 2014. Following initial analysis of the data, a community action plan (CAP) was developed to address identified opportunities for intervention. A comprehensive consultation process was conducted around the proposed CAP.

**Key Findings:** Of those aged 13–17 years: 45% identified as non-drinkers; 18% reported never having consumed alcohol; 21% identified as current smokers. Half of those who had consumed alcohol reported at least one negative experience while drinking. Nineteen per cent reported having tried at least one of illicit drug. The majority of participants identified the local health service as their main source of information and assistance. **Discussion and**

**Conclusions:** Opportunities to reduce harms from AOD use were identified – with many service providers being conscious of the gaps in services available for young people. Many of the identified opportunities are programs that have operated historically in the town, or currently exist but require improved access for Aboriginal participation.

**Implications for Translational Research:** There are a number of opportunities to translate the findings of this research into practice; the findings of the survey identified many gaps in services and key areas that can be developed to address the needs of the aboriginal young people in the region.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** This project was funded with a grant from the Australian National Preventative Health Agency (ANPHA).