



Country Women's Association of NSW

*Incorporated in 1931 by an Act of NSW Parliament
Constituent Society of the Associated Country Women of the World*

ABN 82 318 909 926

Media Release

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CWA of NSW funds mobile Salvation Army drug-support pilot for Regional NSW

The Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW has provided \$277,874 in funding to The Salvation Army to provide mobile drug-support services in Western and North Western NSW.

CWA of NSW President Tanya Cameron said, "Alcohol and other drugs [AOD] have a horrifying impact on people, their families and communities.

"Many drugs, including alcohol, are a problem, however, the one we hear most about in the news is 'ice'. Addictions, such as to ice, are devastating and have life-changing consequences. They change people's personalities, hurt families and rip apart the fabric of rural communities.

"Unfortunately, across many areas in the state's West and North West, NSW Police recorded more than 1,207 drug-related offences per 100,000 people just between October 2014 and September 2015. These offences included trafficking, dealing, possession and use."

Mrs Cameron said ice could quickly take a grip in regional areas where unemployment was high and police were under resourced or not present. With nearly non-existent treatment facilities available west of the Blue Mountains, the AOD problem continues to grow in regional areas.

"For someone with a drug problem, having to travel from their regional home to a metropolitan area is another barrier to seeking help. So often for those in the grip of an addiction it can be easier to just keep doing what they're doing — despite the pain and losses."

Mrs Cameron said this is why the CWA of NSW's two-year pilot to partner with The Salvation Army was so important. The Rural AOD Support Service (RAODSS) will provide a mobile and responsive weekly service directly into the Dubbo, Cobar, Bourke, Walgett and Narromine local communities.

Gerard Byrne, Operations Manager of Recovery Services for The Salvation Army's Australia Eastern Territory, said, "Today, precious few lives are left untouched by major social problems associated with drugs and alcohol. Rural communities are impacted by harmful AOD use just as metropolitan communities are, but sadly, North Western NSW has some of the highest statistics in the state

“Addiction is not choosy — it affects people from all walks of life. The Salvation Army has a range of AOD treatment programs, but we know people in rural communities — particularly in North Western NSW — do not have ready access to AOD treatment programs locally. Our partnership with the CWA of NSW will certainly go some way towards addressing this gap.”

The RAODSS program includes support, assessment and educational services.

“Assessment, including mental health screening, allows us to tailor support to individuals and deliver appropriate case management, social and emotional support, one-to-one therapeutic sessions, advocacy on legal matters and access to housing, employment and job-training services.”

Mrs Cameron said key parts of the program will be supporting families with information and education on AOD issues, as well as emotional support and group programs. She said the Salvation Army’s long and solid drug-rehabilitation programs were the reason the CWA of NSW approached them, to see how the organisation, which has been instrumental in changing and improving lives for 90 years, could help with issues surrounding illicit drug use.

“The latest Illicit Drug Data Report, which gives an overview of Australia’s illicit drug market, shows arrests and seizures nationally are the highest on record. This is a concern for everyone. The CWA of NSW has been involved in many contemporary issues that affect rural and regional communities. We know that by cohesively working together with other front-line organisations we can respond to the community’s needs quickly, effectively and efficiently.

“We are very pleased to be partnering with The Salvation Army to provide this essential, on-the-ground, practical service to rural families — especially those devastated by the increased incidences of the use of amphetamine-type substances.”

Referrals to the program can come from any source — the person themselves, other AOD services, hospitals, GPs, the police or courts, or family and friends.

“Referrals can be made in person or by phone, fax or email; the ‘how’ doesn’t matter — we just want to see people benefit from this program.”

The CWA of NSW donation of \$277,874 will fully fund the two-year Rural AOD Support Service project.

Ends

IMAGE 1: CWA of NSW President Tanya Cameron (R) presents \$277,874 to Salvation Army’s Gerard Byrne

IMAGE 2: L-R Salvation Army’s Gerard Byrne, Maj. Christine Martin and Lt. Mark Townsend with CWA of NSW State President Tanya Cameron and State Vice President Ruth Cargill.

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