



Family Drug Support

"Supporting families since 1997"

The Committee Secretary
Queensland Parliament Mental Health Select Committee
By email: mhsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re: Inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders

Dear Committee

Thank you for providing Family Drug Support (FDS) with the opportunity to provide a submission to your Inquiry.

As you may know, FDS is the only national non-government organisation which provides non-judgemental, non-directive support and information to families, friends and carers of people who have problematic alcohol and other drug use. Since its inception in 1997, FDS has staff and volunteers to assist in the development and delivery of evidence-based programs including a national 24hour toll-free telephone support line, a wide network of support groups for families affected by someone else's alcohol and other drug use and educational programs and online information and services. Currently, FDS has contact with thousands of families every year including Queensland's urban, rural, and regional communities.

There is a wealth of evidence regarding the health, social and economic impact of alcohol and other drug use in communities. Some research has identified the social cost to the Australian community as being in excess of \$15 billion. Addressing alcohol and other drug use can have a very positive impact on family life, the health and safety of communities and just as importantly on the cultural and business opportunities in a community. FDS seeks to provide families with a set of opportunities to learn and understand about alcohol and other drug use and ways of dealing with its consequences. As these families often feel a sense of shame with the alcohol and other drug use related problems they face, they also often tend to reduce their level of community participation in a range of activities. This can create significant economic and social impacts in smaller communities and reduce the potential for growth and development. There is little doubt that addressing alcohol and other drug use problems will lead to many positive outcomes across the community and FDS has proven itself to be the most effective service in addressing the issues faced by families.

Accordingly, our mission quite simply is to assist families throughout Australia to deal with alcohol and other drug use issues in a way that strengthens relationships and achieves positive outcomes.

A critical feature of the alcohol and other drug use problems often raised by communities is the devastating impact it is having on families and community safety in the community. While the delivery of services for affected people is critical it is also important to help families deal with the issue as this will have a strong influence on the current and future behaviour of the person with the alcohol and other drug use problems.



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FDS has a long and respected history of providing services and support to families dealing with alcohol and other drug use to address this need of families. Addressing alcohol and other drug use can have a very positive impact on family life, the health and safety of communities and the engagement of these families in community life. There is little doubt that addressing family alcohol and other drug use problems will lead to many positive outcomes across the community and FDS has proven itself to be the most effective service in addressing the issues faced by families. FDS already provides its range of services for families in Queensland, but the needs of many communities remain unmet as they are unaware of the support FDS can provide.

Providing families with greater knowledge, understanding and access to the services FDS can and is experienced in providing. Please see attached some of the recent comments from families accessing our FDS Online service as an indication of the feedback we regularly receive from families across after participating in our programs and services.

I would like to refer to you our website and a few relevant publications below for your consideration and would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to give evidence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information or details regarding this submission.

Yours sincerely

Tony Trimmingham OAM

CEO & Founder
Family Drug Support
18 January 2022

<https://www.fds.org.au/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26365113/>

https://www.fds.org.au/FlippingBook/FDS_Support_Group_Evaluation_2013-14/files/assets/basic-html/index.html#4

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/calls-from-kids-to-drug-support-line-spikes-as-government-tips-in-900-000-20200223-p543go.html>



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Some Comments from Participants using FDS Online - see <https://www.fds.org.au/> :

"Watching this series is like watching our story. It's helped me understand our different reactions & responses to our son's drug use, highlighted coping strategies & the importance of boundaries & self care. When & how to communicate was invaluable."

"Very well presented, in stages so it's easy to understand and connect the concepts. Also seeing and hearing others experiences which are like mine. Feel less desperate and alone. Also feel like a support group isn't such an impossible scary option! Thank you."

"I found this video unbelievably helpful, I want to watch it again and again. I'd like to join a support group like this! Far out, after my journey with my son, I have not found something so helpful. Thank you."

"It helped to know that we are not alone, all of the chapters reinforced our own feelings, communication etc. it made me quite emotional watching this, I cannot thank you enough for allowing us to do so. Absolutely fantastic."

"I wish I had watched this two years ago. I wish I had understood and believed earlier that our son really is on drugs. I wish I had not nearly bankrupted our family paying for his further education (all lies for drugs) I am so enriched by this knowledge despite devastated by the drug use."

"I found it very helpful as I've just found out my son is a drug addict and have been feeling completely helpless in knowing what to do. I'm in fear constantly of where his aggressive behaviour the ice has caused is going to lead him, so this has given me some idea of what to expect. Thank you."

"It gave me much more experienced, sensible, emotionally & rationally supported information with practical techniques to put into practice for one's self, family and addicted one. Left me with a calmness. Thank you."

"What a great series of videos. I have lost a son in 2010 due to suicide due to ice. Our family was/is still devastated and now another son is using ice, stealing, lying, broken trust. I am walking that tightrope every day. I wish we had this group in Toowoomba. I need a place to talk."

"... made me more comfortable to attend a local group... It made me realise that I am not alone."

"... the themes discussed really rang true with me. The messages in the videos are really clear and I feel were more helpful to me than just reading about them. Thanks so much."