

Media Release

12 November 2014

**AP SAD Awards for Excellence winners applauded for vital work
reducing alcohol and other drug harms in Australasia**

Four leading professionals who have each made an outstanding contribution to reducing the harms associated with alcohol and other drug (AOD) use in Australasia have been awarded for their exceptional work by the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (AP SAD).

The AP SAD Awards for Excellence in Science, Research and Practice were presented at a gala dinner in Adelaide on 11 November during the 34th annual AP SAD Scientific Conference, the largest summit of its kind in the southern hemisphere:

- **Senior Scientist Award**, recognising a scientist who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of substance use and misuse:

Professor Maree Teesson, Director, NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use (CREMS) and NHMRC Senior Research Fellow at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of NSW; member of NHMRC Health Care Committee and Professorial Fellow, the Black Dog Institute, UNSW.

- **Clinician Award**, recognising excellence and leadership in clinical practice in the field of substance use in any discipline:

Associate Professor Adrian Dunlop, Area Director and Addiction Medicine Senior Staff Specialist, Hunter New England Local Health District, Drug & Alcohol Clinical Services; Chief Addiction Medicine Specialist Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Office, NSW Department of Health; Conjoint Associate Professor, University of Newcastle.

- **First Peoples Award**, recognising an individual who has made an important contribution to the advancement of the health of Aboriginal, Islander or Māori peoples:

Jimmy Perry, a Ngarrindjerri/Arreente man from the Coorong region and health worker for the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council SA's Makin' Tracks project, which supports communities and Aboriginal AOD health professionals across South Australia, and in the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia.

- **Early Career Award**, recognising excellence in research relative to career opportunities:

Dr Sarah Larney, National Health and Medical Research Council Early Career Fellow at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

AP SAD President Dr Rose Neild said the AP SAD Awards acknowledge significant contributions to AOD science and practice, recognise and support young scientists with exceptional potential, and provide role models for future generations of Australasian AOD scientists and clinicians.

“Applauding the significant contributions of people working in the sector has always been important, but it’s even more vital now as we all face increased funding and resourcing constraints, demands for evidence-based best practice, and a growing need for AOD services in a challenging environment,” Dr Neild said.

“These individuals represent the peak of a field of outstanding and dedicated AOD clinicians and researchers across Australia and New Zealand. APSAD is proud to recognise their talents, which have been eloquently described by their nominators.”

Senior Scientist Award recipient Professor Maree Teesson is one of the leading researchers internationally working on trialling and disseminating treatments for people with co-existing PTSD and drug and alcohol problems. Her approach to the prevention and treatment of co-existing mental health and alcohol problems is visionary.

Associate Professor Adrian Dunlop, winner of the Clinician Award, has been instrumental in Australian drug policy for over two decades, holding leadership roles in both clinical and professional roles. He has provided inspirational leadership to a generation of clinicians, clinical staff and researchers and contributed significantly to the wellbeing of countless individuals affected by substance use.

First Peoples Award winner Jimmy Perry has worked extensively in remote and regional communities and in prevention as well as clinical management. His contribution to the field has been at many levels - but he has contributed significantly at the grass-roots level. He has worked tirelessly visiting, supporting and mentoring health and AOD workers throughout South Australia and the cross-border regions.

Early Career Award winner Dr Sarah Larney works within a strong social justice framework and has contributed important findings to the evidence base on prisoners who inject drugs, which is critical for informing innovative and effective policy development, reducing the risk of prisoners dying in prison and reducing the likelihood of re-incarceration. Her work on opioid substitution and hepatitis C has major implications for contemporary policy development and clinical practice in prisons.

The Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD) is the pre-eminent membership organisation catering to the interests of alcohol and other drug professionals in Australasia, including clinicians, practitioners, educators, policy specialists and academics.

Refer to the APSAD Award Winners fact sheet for more details.

For further information, please contact APSAD Executive Officer Liz Baxter on exec.officer@apsad.org.au or 0402 301 308.