

Ethics in the Australian Alcohol and Other Drugs Field: An Emerging Issue



The Australian AOD Sector

- Multi-disciplinary
- Approx 500 agencies and 10,000 staff (COTSA 2001)
- 70% in clinical roles
- 50% university-trained professions
- National service delivery - 42% government, 50% NGO and 8% private sector



AOD Sector Code of Ethics

- Commissioned by ADCA in 2005
- A platform of core values and principles
- Aim to promote ethics engagement
- Code supported by discussion paper "Making Values & Ethics Explicit"
- Linking conceptual frameworks with everyday realities of practice



An Emerging Ethics Issue: General

- Expansion of workplace testing regimes
- Compulsory urine drug testing is "unjust and unreasonable" (AIRC Aug 08)
- An unreasonable intrusion into the private life of an employee (CFMEU Jul 08)
- Allows the employer the power to reach into the lounge room of every employee like no other workplace policy or practice



An Emerging Ethics Issue: Specific

- Playing a role by default
- Who are we working for?
- Who is my client?
- A role in coercion – to what end?
- Conflicts of interest and other dilemmas



Conclusion

- Urgent need for consultation and negotiation between AOD sector and business/industry
- Urgent need for clarity about the role of the AOD sector
- Practical consideration of the issues from an ethics perspective – workforce development

