



MEDIA RELEASE

Ex-Problem Drinkers Celebrate Sobriety in Open Public Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous

All members of the public are invited to an 'open public meeting' being held on the evening of Saturday 19 January at the Ellerslie Event Centre in Auckland from 7:30pm – 9:00pm. The open public meeting, part of the weekend-long Alcoholics Anonymous convention which runs from Friday through to Sunday, is co-hosted by Al-Anon Family Groups who support friends and family of individuals suffering from drinking problems.

January can be an anxiety-ridden, despairing and lonely place for people with problems caused by drinking. Moving into another new year, many drinkers realise how problematic their drinking has become. However, there is hope. New Year's resolutions can be turned into reality. Ex-problem drinkers across New Zealand invite everyone to join them to celebrate sobriety this January at the **56th Annual National Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous**.

The Ministry of Health's New Zealand Health Surveyⁱ in 2015-16 indicated that about one in five (21%) New Zealand adults, nearly one million people, had a hazardous drinking pattern, and the recently-release report on the **NZ Government's Inquiry Into Mental Health and Addiction**ⁱⁱ recommends putting people with "lived experience" at the centre of the solution, using local community-based support hubs.

There are an estimated 4,000 members of A.A. in New Zealand who have "**lived experience**" of how to recover from denial about addiction to alcohol. Some have 60+ years of sobriety. Nationwide 464 groups of AA members meet every week to share their experience in order to help others to recover from alcoholism. 115,000 AA groupsⁱⁱⁱ span the globe, and AA's simple 12-Step system has spawned countless other addiction recovery programs.

The AA public meeting is an open invitation meeting, where everyone is welcome to attend. From curious members of the public to medical/HR professionals, lawyers and judges. The meeting will shed light on the enigma that is alcoholism, and how millions of AA members worldwide have achieved happy, healthy, fun and fulfilling lives in sobriety.

ENDS

ⁱ <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/annual-update-key-results-2015-16-nzhs-dec16-v2.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/assets/Summary-reports/He-Ara-Oranga.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-48_membershipsurvey.pdf