

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



Donna Bull
Workplace Alcohol and
Other Drugs Consultant

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

