

White Powder for a Blue Lady

The Tragedy
and Triumph of

Famous Users

Lady Day

“You can be up to your boobies in white satin, with gardenias in your hair and no sugar cane for miles, but you can still be working on a plantation.”

When most people think of jazz legend Billie Holiday, they settle on the old stereotype portraying her as a victim with little control over a life filled with pain. What isn't so readily perceived is her strength and courage in the face of adversity.

Certainly she had her share of bad times. Born Eleanora Fagan in Baltimore, she endured rape at the age of ten and was subsequently sent to reform school for “enticing” her attacker.

Later Billie worked at a brothel in New York. This is often related as an aspect of her “victimhood,” but I disagree. In a society dominated by white men, opportunities were few even for white women, whilst for black women they were nearly non-existent. “I fought all my life to keep myself from being somebody's maid,” quotes Billie in her autobiography. What cannot be disputed is that her employment as a sex worker exposed her to opportunities and influences that would shape her life.

Billie and Jazz

While she was working in a New York parlour she first heard recorded and live jazz. She fell in love with the form, learning many songs she would later perform. By 1933, aged 18, she was touring the country as a “song-bird”: an attractive centrepiece to sing the chorus in the middle of a song, seen primarily as a decoration to make the band look good.

At a time when there was no such thing as a mixing desk, she learned to pace her voice with the brass instruments competing with her vocal range, accentuating both her own and the instruments' tones. Making her voice heard amidst loud instruments honed her technique and, in combination with her soul-felt expression, defined her as the leading singer of her era – no mean feat at a time when male jazz instrumentalists' egos ruled.

Of the sixteen songs she is credited with writing or co-writing, Billie wrote one song that addressed issues of economic and social class, “God Bless the Child.” She purportedly wrote the song after being refused a loan by

her mother. In it, she displays her appreciation for financial independence:

*Them that's got shall have
Them that's not shall lose
So the Bible said and it still is news
Mama may have
Papa may have
But God bless the child that's got his own
That's got his own*

Billie died with a few dollars in the bank and a \$750 cheque from her last gig.

Billie and Racial Discrimination

Billie was not afraid to confront racism and, as a black woman, was amongst the first to give an almost completely silenced community a voice.

Her stints with two of the country's most famous big bands were plagued by racist incidents in which white band managers kowtowed to the demands of venues' operators. During her tenure with Count Basie's band, she stated, “They told Basie I was too yellow to sing with all those black men in his band. Somebody might think I was white... so they got special dark grease... I had to be darkened down.”

Touring with Artie Shaw's band, Billie was often required as the only black band member to enter by the back, while the rest of the musicians were treated as honoured guests. According to Billie: “At first we worked together okay, then [Shaw's] managers started belly-aching. Pretty soon it got so I could sing just two numbers a night. When I wasn't singing I had to stay backstage. Artie wouldn't let me sit out front with the band.” Billie's fearless complaints led to her being fired from both bands.

In April 1939, Billie recorded the groundbreaking protest song “Strange Fruit” with a small record company called Commodore Records after her original label refused it. Billie eventually adopted this song, which she was asked to sing at the Café Society, the interracial club in Greenwich Village. The song held so much significance for her that whilst performing it she would sometimes be physically sick.

*Southern trees bear Strange Fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swingin' in the southern breeze
Strange Fruit hangin' from the poplar trees*

Asked to explain what the song means, she said, "It means when the crackers are killing the niggers. It means when they take a little nigger like you and snatch off his nuts and shove them down his goddamn throat. That's what it means."

Billie and heroin

In 1937 Billie's father died of pneumonia that she believed could have been successfully treated. Her father, a guitarist, didn't go to a hospital because he believed that being black meant that he wouldn't be treated. Billie had already developed a fondness for brandy, but after her father's death she increasingly turned to the notorious jazz-scene favourite: heroin.

Fellow jazz singer and heroin user Anita O'Day said of Holiday: "I wasn't only in awe of her singing; I was in awe of her habit. She didn't cook up with a spoon. Man, she used a small tuna fish can and shot 10cc into her feet. Later I understand she ran out of veins all over her body. So she used those on either side of her vagina [*sic*]. One sure thing, no narc was going to bust her for fresh track marks."

Billie put her own case forward in her 1956 autobiography: "People on drugs are sick people. So now we end up with the Government chasing sick people like they were criminals, telling doctors they can't help them, prosecuting them because they had some stuff without paying tax and sending them to jail.

"Imagine if the Government chased sick people with diabetes, put a tax on insulin and drove it into the black market, told doctors they couldn't treat them, and then sent them to jail. If we did that, everyone would know we were crazy. Yet we do practically the same thing every day of the week to sick people hooked on drugs. The jails are full and the problem is getting worse every day."

Anslinger's Men

Henry J. Anslinger is the nominal godfather of the War on Drugs. He started the Federal Bureau of Narcotics under the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover, and continued run-

ning the organisation when it evolved into the Drug Enforcement Agency until his retirement in 1961. A master of "massaging" statistics, he justified his department's existence by claiming both that the drug problem was greater than it was, and that the DEA

caused huge reductions in the number of users. Anslinger launched a campaign against jazz musicians, fulfilling his personal distaste for the music. "We have been running into a lot of traffic among these musicians, and I am not speaking about the good musicians, but the jazz type." Billie Holiday wasn't his only victim; others included Chet Baker and Charlie Parker.

Ironically it was after Billie was arrested that she gained her greatest fame (or infamy), but it came at a cost: she was hounded by Anslinger's men until her death in 1959. After Billie was hospitalised for liver and heart disease, Anslinger's men allegedly planted a small packet of heroin in her room, which they promptly "found" and used to arrest her. Billie Holiday died at the age of forty-five, with police guarding her hospital room.

The Triumph of Lady Day

Billie Holiday was a gutsy lady who never let an oppression trifecta – being an African-American woman who used heroin – defeat her. She provided one of the first alternative voices to the accepted all-white "American Dream" in popular culture. She dared to be authentic and she wasn't afraid of revealing her anger in the face of injustice. Billie's triumph is that she demonstrated with her music and life that those in the vilified minority of the day have so much to give, and to write them off is to impoverish everyone. Despite many obstacles her music and her message endure.

Hats off to you, Lady Day!

*Suzana Vuksanovic is a member
of NUA's Board of Governance*



Keep On Pushin'

• Writing to Politicians

Parliamentarians, be they champs, crooks or clowns, are the representatives of the people, your doors to the parliamentary process. It's up to you to tell them what is important to you and why.

I truly believe most people in Parliament are there because they think they can make the world a better place. Many a slip between cup and lip, I know, but I think the majority start out passionate and authentic. So see what they can do for you. Educate them on your issue and harness them to work for you.

The best way to connect with them is to write a letter. In a letter, you can be clear about what you believe and what you want. No one can misrepresent you or wedge in words you don't mean.

Ringin' up or asking for a meeting doesn't really work. Ministers just don't have time and even if you get to see someone (an advisor, even your local MP) chances are they won't know the issue and you won't achieve anything. Better to write and get a considered response.

Many issues-based websites have e-petitions and/or ready-made draft letters you can customise. You fill in your details and click the letter off to the provided email address of one or more policy makers. This kind of activism is sometimes labelled "slack-tivism"; critics say it's a lazy way of entering the protest process. But I think it's efficient. The advantage with joining an e-based campaign is that you are part of a focussed offensive.

But there are times when you need to go it alone, make a personal mark on the world, tell your own story. So how do you do it?

First take a moment to think about where you are coming from and what you want to achieve. You're angry, but you don't want to swipe blindly; you want your whole weight behind what you do. That means saying what you mean and meaning what you say. It means picking the right person/s to say it to. And it means accessing all the tools of communication – style, tone, structure, argument, audience.

You want to use your letter to bring positive attention to your issue. So be a fine, upstanding representative for your cause. Be rational, keep on the topic and be courteous, following the knightly code of combat. Above all, be constructive. Make suggestions you think will work. And it's a conservative world, so be moderate in approach so you can be feisty in substance.

Above all: DON'T WHINGE!! Whingers change nothing. Lots of people write to Ministers to whine that someone else (usually junkies, refugees and single mothers) is getting their share. This kind of letter is just letting off evil steam. It won't be taken seriously, so don't even bother.

If you want your letter to get a good reading, keep it short and to the point, just one page. It doesn't make a difference if your letter is hand written or typed, posted or emailed.

Think in terms of four points:

- What the issue is.
- Why the issue is important to you and may be important to them, involving a bit of argument with some evidence and experience to make your point.
- A challenge to the status quo – why are they supporting an inefficient policy, what are they doing to fix things?
- What you want them to do about it.
Write it out then make it lean.

Work out the nub of the problem, the main thing that irks you. Read up on it, talk it out with your friends.

So you know what is wrong. Now tease out your case. What evidence do you have for your position? You can quote facts and figures from your research (say where you got them from) or give examples from your personal experience. *My partner died last year of a heroin overdose, a death that needn't have happened if I had naloxone in the house.*

Tell them why the issue might be important to them and to all Australians. It is worth finding out if the person you

are writing to has some special interest in your issue. Labor has a vested interest in “social justice” and Liberal in “fairness”, so you can play to these core values at a pinch.

Then challenge them! Ask them for facts and figures or if they are familiar with how people are coping under the weight of the issue you are raising. You could ask a Minister to justify the government’s decisions in a certain area. You can ask for your representative’s position. You can ask for a progress report on activity or what the impediments are to the government moving forward on something.

Ask for something concrete, but make it achievable. You want a second MSIC in the west? Say so, but as a first stage ask for a report assessing the local situation. You want free methadone? Suggest investigating how the price of methadone delivery could be reduced. You want drugs to be legal? Ask that drug law reform be put on the Australian political agenda. You want more money spent on health and care and less on cops and customs? Ask for an inquiry into spending around drugs policy.

It can be useful to call a related group (like NUAA or AIVL) to get their take and ask about their campaigns. You don’t want to undermine a strategy already in place or suggest something naïve.

Once you know what you want, you can identify who can achieve your goals for you: federal, state or local government, or a mix. Read the newspaper, research the web or ring Parliament House to find the relevant Ministers and spokespersons. Sadly, drugs and alcohol get sidelined to a junior “Mental Health” Minister under the Health Minister both federally and at state level. There’s a letter in itself. Please write and ask why.

On the whole, state government covers services regulation, staffing and funding; federal government deal with overarching policy, international law, medication approval and income support; and councils consider the local impact. With methadone for example, the state regulates doctors, pharmacies and clinics, the Commonwealth pro-

vides the legal infrastructure and the medicine, and the council says where you can actually put a clinic.

Writing to the local, state and/or federal MP for your electorate is a good place to start, especially if you are in a marginal seat and they are sweating on your vote for next time. You can also write to the opposition candidate for the seat you live in. And of course the Minister and Opposition Spokesperson.

I think it is best to personally write to everyone you think is important and related to your concern. Don’t just “cc” them in. Think strategically. Is it more useful to write to everyone at once, the splatter gun approach? Or to snowball, motivating each new correspondent with advice from another area: *Dear Tony, Julia says she will “come out” if you do...* or *Dear Julia, Barry says it’s all your fault...*

Just remember, a Minister and their department are interchangeable. Letters from the Minister aren’t actually written by the Minister or even their personal staff, nor are letters to the department head written by them. Both are drafted by the same public servant who is expert in the letter’s subject matter.

No matter who you write to, be sincere, courteous and balanced. You don’t want to make an enemy; you want respect, to persuade them onto your team. So present professionally, check your spelling and grammar, and get someone you respect to comment.

It may take a few weeks to get a response, as it has to go through a few people’s hands. But when you do get your response back, please share it with us through *User’s News* so we can see if democracy actually works, or if we need to kick start the revolution...

Leah McLeod is a former President of NUAA

EXAMPLES for Writing to Politicians

YOU MIGHT USE CANNABIS FOR PAIN.*

Goal: Say you are writing in support of introducing medicinal cannabis.

Argue: You could talk about how it helps you, and how it could help other Australians in pain. Cite the US example – the number of states, the co-operative doctors, a system that works. Mention the mounting evidence that cannabis has clinical value and cite the last NSW review that acknowledges that.

Challenge: Ask that given there is evidence, and a country like the US can find ways to do it within international law, why medicinal cannabis has not been progressed here? Ask what it would take?

Request: Suggest the issue be reopened for debate with a committee to progress reform. Ask for a public consultation process.

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN DRUG OR ALCOHOL TREATMENT.

Goal: Say you support increased funding.

Argue: Talk about your difficulty or that of a friend or family member in accessing treatment.

Remind them that all Australian families are affected by drug/alcohol problems. Give figures showing a reduction or stasis in funding, or money spent less worthily.

Challenge: Why is funding for drug and alcohol treatment and harm reduction not increasing, despite burning need? What does the government suggest people who cannot access services do?

Request: Ask that funding levels be increased in line with the burning need and a spotlight be thrown on this important area.

YOU MIGHT WANT CHEAPER METHADONE.

Goal: Say you are writing in support of improved funding options for methadone.

Argue: You could talk about your own experience of trying to cope with expensive treatment on a limited budget, money that could go to your kids, your education or other health needs. You could show how much cheaper it is in other states through subsidizing (\$5 a week in SA; \$15 in ACT). You could mention that for each \$1 spent on methadone, \$7 is saved elsewhere in the public ledger.

Challenge: Say it is not a new problem and the government is aware of the issues through numerous reports yet have not acted. Suggest that people are being set up for failure by needing \$180 a month for one medication, often on low incomes, often parents.

Request: Ask for an update on what steps are being taken to address this already identified problem and the timeline for implementation.

If you don't know your electorate, the Electoral Commission can tell you, by web, phone or visit. If you are not registered to vote, just do it; they're unlikely to fine you (if they try, write to your MP). You'll need proof of ID and residence.

*See interview with John Kaye MP on page 26.



HAVE YOU BEEN INFECTED WITH HEP C IN THE LAST 2 YEARS?

The Australian Trial in Acute Hepatitis C (ATAHC II) is a research study in people with recently acquired Hep C and is seeking volunteers to take part

The study is examining individualized treatment for people with recent HCV, however you can also take part and help even if you don't want treatment.

To take part in the study you must be aged 16 years or more AND have acquired Hep C in the last 2 years.

Note: current or recent drug use does not exclude you from taking part in the study.

INTERESTED

Contact Barbara Yeung at The Kirby Institute

Phone: 02- 9385 0879 **Email:** atahc2@kirby.unsw.edu.au



Just Another Number



When my family suffered the loss of their home due to a big fire, they had to make a fresh start. I thought I would move away to make my own fresh start.

I was 16 and, while now officially homeless, I was independent and responsible for my own life.

Since I was big for my 16 years, I had no dramas selling pot to support myself for two years. Living on the street, I had no bills other than to feed and clothe myself. I was bound for success.

When a big craze suddenly erupted for designer drugs, pot proved difficult to move, as it did to obtain in order to sell. Police had discovered a lot of crops up the NSW north coast at the time due to Operation Noah, which relied on the public to call in and report drug activity. At the same time, a lot

of hydroponic set-ups in and around Cabramatta and Fairfield had been discovered. All of a sudden pot was on the nose.

The stress of this led me to realise I was an alcoholic downing bourbon and Coke. I would often start at six am. This became a regular event. The trouble was I didn't like what I had become. I didn't like alcohol. I think I just liked the Coca-Cola kind of Coke.

Avoiding alcohol is a mentally traumatic experience. I had a few seizures trying to treat myself with paracetamol and valium. This is what the doctors gave my older brother when he went to Maitland Jail. I thought that's how it was done in reality. I experimented with a few light beers, pot and pills until I'd gotten over the grog.

In search of my drug of choice, I then began injecting speed, which I also didn't like. I then tried cocaine and then, finally, heroin.

I stuck with heroin for the next 20 years. It has caused me a few stints in jail, a lengthy criminal record, bad health, hep C and



possibly HIV. At the end of the day I feel that neither is of any crucial importance to me. I am fed up with the world and the politics of it. I think the world has gone mad while the drugs have kept me sane.

Who knows?

Drugs, crime, the judicial system and prisons are a big growth industry. The turnstile gates need to keep on turning to keep the prison numbers up and the beds full. The jails are thriving, at least in NSW.

The people involved don't matter (because they are there to be punished and do not vote). The victims of crime supporting this practice (society) couldn't possibly be aware. Do they know the jails are full, that prisoners are released with \$300, that needle exchange services

are under pressure? Do they know about the long waiting lists for residential rehabilitation? The heartbreaking stories of the individuals who are turned away to fend for themselves?

Not an awful lot seems to be done about rampant drug use in society in terms of support services for those trying to sort themselves out. Rehab numbers need to be increased.

I feel the problem is that society is in denial. Society won't accept what is occurring. While our society is in denial, change is not possible, even in the long term.

I am now in prison myself. The difficulty for me to understand this world going mad is the anti-crime crusaders are instead quick to call for tougher penalties for crimes committed. Why not instead adopt better prevention strategies that stop the vicious cycle in the first place?

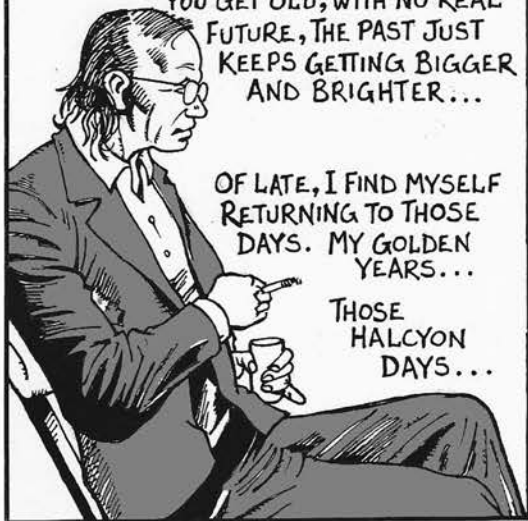
I guess I am just another number in the system.

Mark



Wasted on the Young.

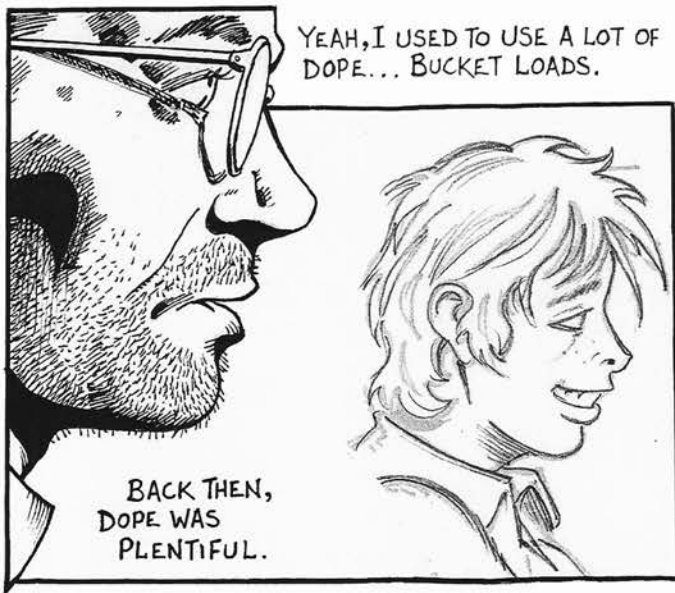
YEAH. I REMEMBER THE OLD DAYS. WHEN YOU GET OLD, WITH NO REAL FUTURE, THE PAST JUST KEEPS GETTING BIGGER AND BRIGHTER...



OF LATE, I FIND MYSELF RETURNING TO THOSE DAYS. MY GOLDEN YEARS...

THOSE HALCYON DAYS...

YEAH, I USED TO USE A LOT OF DOPE... BUCKET LOADS.



BACK THEN, DOPE WAS PLENTIFUL.

1976.



GETTING STONED WAS A SOCIAL THING INVOLVING EVERYONE I KNEW AT THE TIME.

WE HID IT FROM OUR PARENTS. WE ALL GOT GOOD AT THAT..!



1986.



EVENTUALLY I STARTED USING OTHER DRUGS... I KNEW ABOUT ADDICTION... BUT I CAN STOP IT ANYTIME I LIKE!*

I WENT DOWN THE SAME
CURSED STREET THAT
MANY OF YOU DID...

MARIJUANA TO
COCAINE + SPEED...

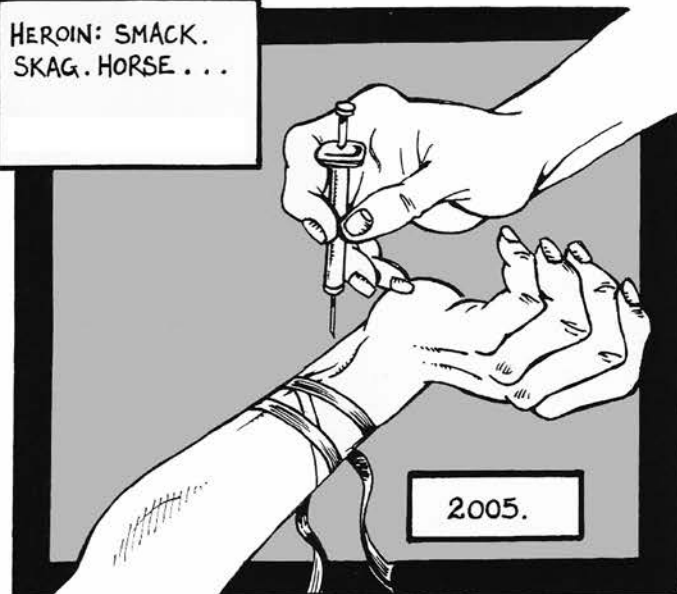
TO
ASSORTED
PILLS...

TO L.S.D.

AND ON TO
HEROIN...

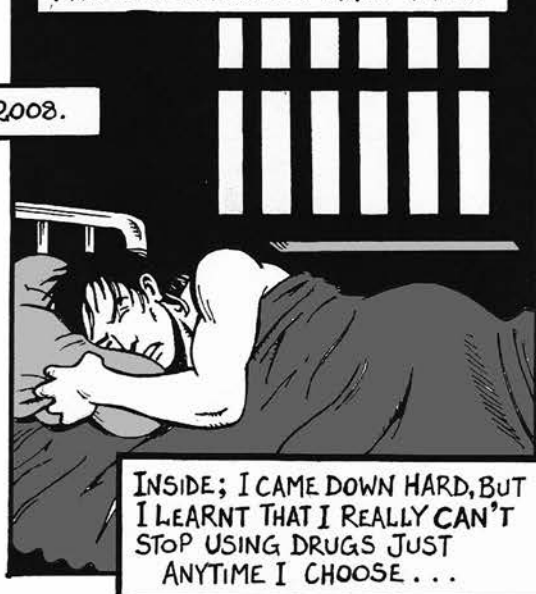


HEROIN: SMACK.
SKAG. HORSE...



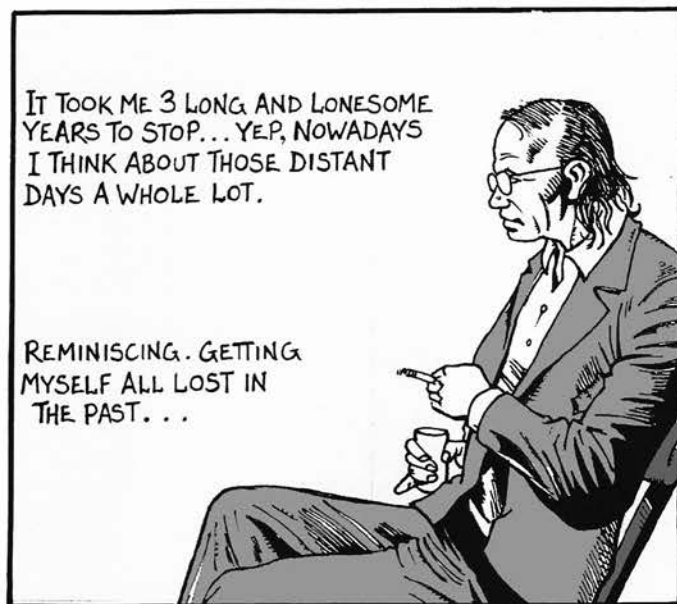
PRISON IS A PLACE OF GREAT TRUTH.

2008.



IT TOOK ME 3 LONG AND LONESOME
YEARS TO STOP... YEP, NOWADAYS
I THINK ABOUT THOSE DISTANT
DAYS A WHOLE LOT.

REMINISCING. GETTING
MYSELF ALL LOST IN
THE PAST...



BUT DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
LITTLE OLD ME.

I'M SURE I CAN QUIT IT ANYTIME I WANT.



Outed

The sound of a V8 motor car assaulted my ears as my dealer tumbled into my driveway. I knew his car by sound, not sight; my venetian blinds were always closed until the eventual taste of amphetamines kick-started my day. I jolted out of bed, grateful for my ritual phone call to him the night before. I'd forgotten to set my alarm.

After a cursory deal, the feeling of chalk on a blackboard hit me as the rush consumed my appetite for fast cash from clients. I opened my venetians, declaring to the universe that my 30 year-old body could handle sex and drugs for, I thought back then, an eternity.

But nothing rolled smoothly this day. By lunchtime, my phone hadn't rung heralding johns and that morning's mix of joy into my arms was growing distant. I made an earlier-than-usual visit to my local café, but communication with the outside world seemed oblique, askew. Trying to take comfort in my speed-propelled thoughts without getting hectic, I bought some ciggies and tried to relax.

Home again, I braced myself for the afternoon. The phone rang: not a client but the local newspaper. Being half-wired, I couldn't get my head around exactly what the matter was.

"You're running a business from home?" A suspiciously open-ended question from the journalist.

"Yes," I replied tersely, "and my business is private. I keep to myself."

What followed in the coming days was an avalanche of phone calls from the media, along with a call from the CIB.



Suspecting the worst, I smartly took myself off my dealer's roster of visits and got some prescribed pseudoephedrine from the doctor to ease myself into making believe all was just a torrid misunderstanding, all was well, nuclear-family normal.

I had suspected the worst, and the worst happened. I was headlines. My 15 minutes of fame as a local hooker devoured the front page.

My cover was blown. I had breached the law: the business was too close to a place of worship. A council sheriff arrived at my steps, asking me to close my books.

With a heavy heart I rang my dealer explaining I would have to keep a low profile for a lengthy amount of time. Taking my prescribed shakers as a substitute became a habit. I knew that eventually I would have to doctor-shop.

Putting myself to bed and saying hello to my pillow one horrible night, I drifted off and didn't hear my front door open. I woke with a fright to find my dealer pointing a rifle at me, a red light shining in my face. "Don't fuckin' bother calling me ever again," he spat. "Open your mouth about me, I'll take your head off." I guess he'd read the paper too.

It was time to leave. I walked out with only a couple of belongings and the wind in my hair.

Violet

Illustration: Ursula Dyson

Giving Back: *Why I Decided to Join NUAAs Board of Governance*

Many years ago, I wrote an article that was published in *User's News* #29 under the title "An Ordinary User." In it I tried to explain how *User's News* (formerly *NUAA News*) had helped me. Sure, there were other needle exchanges, but NUAAs publication explained the method by which I could re-use my friends' syringes (when there was no other choice) with a greatly diminished risk of catching HIV or even hep C (something very new at the time).

The sense of community the users' stories gave me was crucial for my will to go on during the worst and most isolating months and years of my opiate addiction. To quote from the first paragraph of that article: "Just knowing that other people have had to deal with the same thing, let alone the fact that quite a few have survived their adverse circumstances, helped me through some of the heaviest times of my life."

I wrote that article because I wanted to give something back – an attempt to demonstrate my appreciation to *User's News* and all the users who had shared their stories over the years for the effort they had made to contribute when I could not.

In spite of all the things I hate about it, methadone – a legal drug I can obtain reliably in standardised purity and doses – has enabled me to regain some modicum of control over my life since the dark days of my hundreds-of-dollars-a-day habit when there was absolutely no room for anything except making money and scoring to fend off the endless craving and impending sickness.

Last year I could finally think and, just as importantly, act after living in limbo for so long. I decided that besides going back to school, I would finally respond to the announcement of NUAAs Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the call for nominations to the 2011-2012 NUAAs Board of Governance. For many years I have received NUAAs AGM notice in the mail, each time wanting to go, but when the date came I was too sick or the dealer didn't show up on time or whatever.

This time I armed myself with a form that I'd filled out from one of the issues of *User's News* that I'd picked up, complete with the signature of my partner as proxy voter and seconder (so I could vote in his name as well as mine for the nominees standing for Board positions, as well as having him support my self-nomination for the Board), and caught the train into the city. I knew I wouldn't know a soul at the meeting but I was also confident that if *User's News* and my past interactions with NUAAs NSP were anything to go by, the people there would be fine with a new face turning up.

Arriving at the corner of Albion Street and Crown Street there was enough light and activity to confirm that I had the right place and hadn't missed the start of proceedings. After collecting my NUAAs bag of goodies at the front desk (full of interesting magazines and pamphlets including the amazing comic *Smackfreak*, AIVL's *Junkmail* and my much beloved *User's News*), I was handed the meeting's printed agenda and then made my way downstairs to the lecture-like auditorium and thus to the far side from the entrance, away from almost everyone else, where I sat down.

When it came my turn to explain my reasons for putting myself up in an election I stated that I am an injecting drug user who was forced to support an expensive habit by working on the street but since getting onto pharmacotherapy I have at least achieved stability in terms of having time to do things other than being sick or chasing my next hit. I know there are many who use injectables without derailing their lives but my life *was* derailed and I know so many others who will never have the chance to speak for themselves. That was one of the strong compulsions that persuaded me to put myself up for a role on the NUAAs Board of Governance. I knew so many who have died or wasted many years of their lives because the policies that NUAAs promotes, that of harm reduction and equal human rights for drug users, are not yet a reality.

I was voted in as an alternate member and I have learned so much since I joined, both about NUAA's work and the harm reduction and user organisations out there. It's not just the monthly Board meetings, it's the resources and contacts online as well as finding out about the great periodicals and newsletters put out by some really knowledgeable organisations.

Ultimately you get as much as you put into it. But believe me, as injecting drug-users or even someone who sympathises and understands, like friends or relatives, your participation and involvement in an issue that is bound to evolve in the next few years would be invaluable.

Since the Australia21 report, the madness of the War on Drugs has finally been questioned and brought out into open discussion. In this time of change, new blood on the Board would be welcome – those who are in a position in their lives to be able to participate in NUAA's Board are needed to represent and speak for those who

cannot, as well as for themselves and the experiences with drugs that have led them to respect the values for which NUAA stands.

I am here because this organisation values the life and experience of an injecting drug user; because as a drug user my voice is as important as my colleagues, a very rare thing indeed. NUAA is one of the few organisations that actually stand up for drug users' human rights. I'm here because I'm sick of being a second-class citizen. I'm here because I want to make an effort to create a better world for drug users of all types, everywhere. I hope for all these reasons and more that you come to this year's Annual General Meeting instead of letting it pass by one more time like I used to.

Make this the year that you nominate yourself for a position on the NUAA Board of Governance. I'd love to see you at the 2012 AGM!

Suzana Vuksanovic is a member of NUAA's Board of Governance

STAY SHARP

Information - Referrals - Equipment, Outreach

For further information

Ph: 02 9977 2666

MOB: 04122 66226

14 Pittwater Rd, Manly. NSW 2c Herbert Street, St Leonards. NSW

For Manly

Opening Times

For Herbert St

Mon-Tue-Weds-Fri 12pm-5.30pm/ Mon-Tues-Weds-Fri 10am-5pm

Closed Thursdays

Exact Change *Only*

for Missymoo

I am a cunning vending machine, a-lurkin' in the hall
 So you can't kick my delicate parts, I'm bolted to the wall
 Come on! drop in your money, don't let's hang about,
 I'll do my level best to see you don't get nothin' out.
 I see you all approachin', the fagless and the dry,
 All fumblin' in your pockets, expectant in your eye.
 I might be in your place of work, or on a high street wall,
 Trust in me: in theory, I cater to you all.
 Within these windows I provide for every human state:
 Hunger, night starvation and rememb'ring birthdays late.
 Just read the information, pop the money in – that's grand.
 And I'll see absolutely nothing ever drops into your hand.
 I might be at your swimming bath as you come cold and wet,
 With just a shilling in your hand, some hot soup for to get.
 And as you stand in wet anticipation for a sup,
 I will dispense the soup for you, but won't dispense the cup.
 And then it's all-out war because you lost your half-a-nicker,
 Your mighty kicks and blows with bricks will make my neon flicker.
 But if you bash me up so I'm removed, my pipes run dry,
 There's no way you can win: they'll send my brother by and by.
 Once there were friendly ladies, years and years before
 Who stood with giant teapots just to warm your shiv'ring pores.
 They'd hand you all the proper change and pour your cup of tea;
 But they're not economic, so hard luck: you're stuck with me.

CD

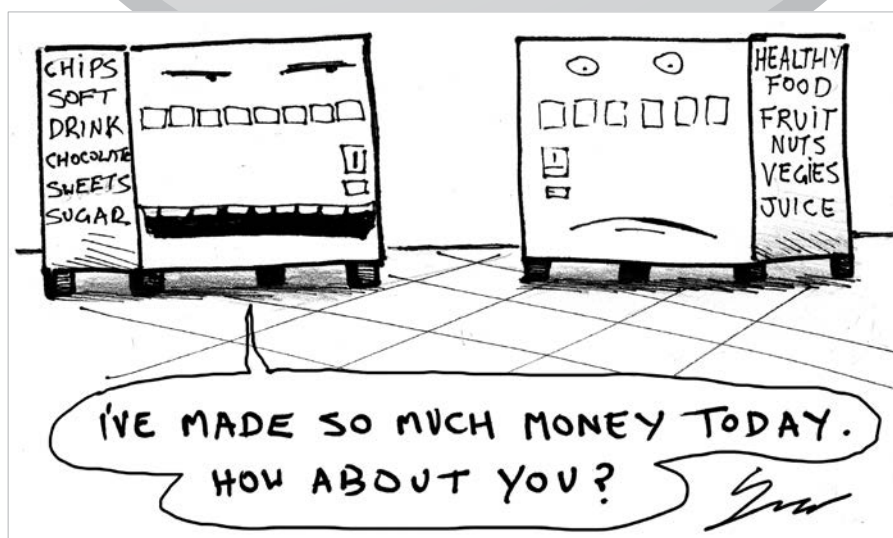
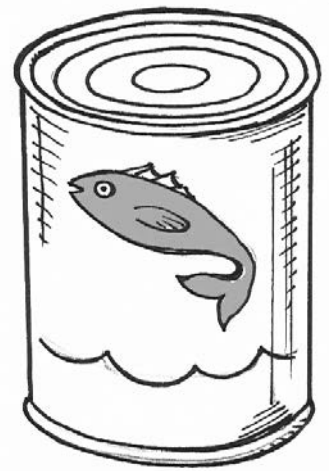


Illustration: Anthony Sawrey

Recipes For (Avoiding) Disaster



Recipes for (avoiding) disaster

Unhealthy situations arise every day. Occasionally we give in to these situations which may damage our health, wellbeing, mental state and relationships. Being realistic that these situations may occur, and being prepared for them, form the key to being in charge of our own health and wellbeing.

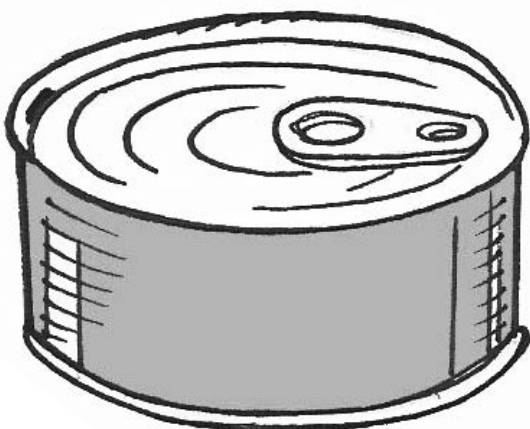
For adequate nutrition during these situations (such as being under the influence), try to make sure that you follow these simple steps:

Always have tinned food available

Tinned food can be a very healthy alternative to fresh foods. Foods like baked beans, four-bean mix (or any beans, really!!) are a great way to keep some high quality protein around the house for a meal which keeps your muscles intact. Having tins of vegetables such as corn, diced tomato, peas and asparagus, is an excellent way to make sure that food which generally has a lifespan of a few days can be on hand whenever you need it.

Tinned fruits like peaches, pineapples and apricots are high in the vitamins and minerals that you find in fresh fruit. Eating tinned fruit is high in sugar as well, so be careful not to indulge in these as a replacement for fresh fruit; but when supplies are low and funds are tight, tinned fruit is a great option!

Here's a simple and super-healthy way to stock up on tinned foods:



Tinned extravaganza

Ingredients:

- 1 tin corn kernels
- 1 tin beetroot
- 1 tin tuna in spring water
- 1 tin red kidney beans

Method:

- Open tins and drain water from the corn, tuna and beetroot.
- Rinse the kidney beans under running water until water runs clear.
- Mix together and enjoy a hearty meal.

Keep some frozen fruit and vegetables in the freezer

There is a myth that frozen fruit and vegetables have fewer nutrients in them, but it's not true. Frozen fruit and veggies are "snap frozen" at the farms when they're picked, so that most of the nutrients are kept intact. Some of the heat-sensitive nutrients are lost (e.g. vitamin C, thiamine and folate), but the majority will remain. There is also very little or no salt added in frozen vegetables, so frozen vegetables tend to be healthier than tinned.

The really important thing is how you prepare them. Frozen vegetables should be stored at -18°C (for no more than six months) and cooked quickly in as little water as possible. This method makes sure that you don't lose a lot of vitamins in the water when you throw it down the sink.

Remember: If the water you cooked in is green, you've probably cooked it for too long and lost some key nutrients!

Try to keep fresh milk on hand

Sometimes there is no desire to eat food at all. There are lots of reasons for experiencing these symptoms, and one good way to overcome it is to drink nourishing fluids instead of eating food. A very healthy, nourishing fluid is cow's milk. It contains important nutrients such as calcium for strong bones, protein for muscle development and vitamin A for good eye health. Keeping fresh milk in the fridge is sometimes difficult because of the quick shelf life, so buying long-life milk which can be stored in the pantry is a good, healthy alternative.

Here's a good way to include frozen fruit and some milk in one recipe. It's easy to make in advance, as it keeps well in the fridge for about 24 hours.

Berry smoothie

You will require a blender for this recipe. Alternatively, you could use a drink shaker to blend all the flavours together.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup frozen raspberries
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1½ cups frozen yoghurt
- 1 cup milk
- Handful of ice

Method:

- Put all ingredients into a blender.
- Blend until smooth, pour into a glass & drink cold!

Cook in bulk and freeze leftovers

Cooking a hot meal is sometimes the last thing you feel like doing when you've used all your energy elsewhere. The best trick is to cook in large batches every time you do have the energy, and freeze a few portions as leftovers. This way you can keep coming back to a hearty, nutritious meal without the fuss of cooking! Remember, if meat has been frozen and defrosted to cook with, it can't be frozen again. Also be careful to leave meat/chicken/fish in the freezer for a maximum of three months.

A suggested meal to cook and freeze:

Simple chicken casserole**Ingredients:**

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 600g chicken breast fillets, diced

Note: You can swap this for chicken thighs, but make sure the skin is removed before cooking!

- 2 carrots, peeled, sliced
- 8 medium mushrooms, sliced
- 1 teaspoon mixed dried herbs
- 2 cups reduced-salt chicken stock
- 400g can no-added-salt chopped tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons no-added-salt tomato paste

Method:

- Heat oil in a large pan and add onions. Cook until softened
- Add chicken and cook until browned
- Add remaining ingredients and wait until mixture comes to the boil
- Reduce heat to low, simmer and cover for 35 minutes
- Season with salt, pepper and herbs if desired

Only keep healthy snacks in the house

It's quite normal that people will choose to snack on certain foods because they're ready, available and tempting. That can be true for any snack foods you see, so why not take away all tempting snacks that are going to harm your health and replace them with healthy, nutritious options?

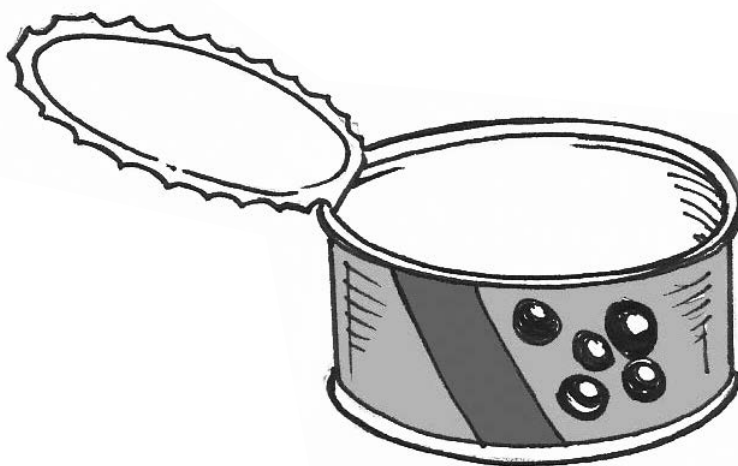
Some suggestions include:

- Swap chips for unsalted and unroasted nuts (e.g. almonds/walnuts)
- Swap ice cream for frozen yoghurt
- Keep a stash of wholegrain muesli bars for a high energy snack
- Swap soft drinks for milk or water
- Make some jelly and keep it in the fridge for a sweet snack

Jessica Lewis

Dietician, Nutrition Development Division

Albion Street Centre



Help Lines

ACON – AIDS Council of NSW

1800 063 060
Sydney callers: 9206 2000
Health promotion. Based in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities with a focus on HIV/AIDS.
Mon–Fri 10 am–6 pm

ADIS – Alcohol & Drug Information Service

1800 422 599
Sydney callers: 9361 8000
General drug & alcohol advice, referrals & info. NSP locations and services etc. 24 hrs

CreditLine

1800 808 488
Financial advice and referral.

NSW Hepatitis Helpline

1800 803 990
www.hep.org.au
Mon–Fri 9am–5pm
Info, support and referral to anyone affected. Call-backs and messages offered outside hours. Email questions answered.

HIV/AIDS Infoline

1800 451 600
Sydney callers: 9332 9700
Mon–Fri 8am–6.30pm

Homeless Persons Info Centre

(02) 9265 9081 or (02) 9265 9087
Phone info & referral service for homeless or at-risk people.
Mon–Fri 9am–5pm

Karitane Careline

1300 227 464
Sydney callers: 9794 2300
Parents info & counseling
Mon–Fri
www.karitane.com.au

Lifeline

13 11 14
Counseling & info on social support options. 24 hrs.

MACS – Methadone Advice & Conciliation Service

1800 642 428
Info, advice & referrals for people with concerns about methadone treatment. List of prescribers.
Mon–Fri 9.30am–5pm

Multicultural HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis C Service

1800 108 098
Sydney callers: 9515 5030
Support & advocacy for people of non English speaking background living with HIV/AIDS, using bilingual/bicultural co-workers.

NSW Prisons HepC Helpline

Free call from inmate phone for info & support. Enter MIN number and PIN, press 2 for Common List Calls, then press 3 to connect.
Mon–Fri 9am–5pm

St. Vincent De Paul Society

Head Office: 9560 8666
Accommodation, financial assistance, family support, food & clothing.
Mon–Fri 9am–5pm

Salvo Care Line

1300 363 622
Sydney callers: 9331 6000
Welfare & counselling. 24hrs

SWOP – Sex Workers Outreach Project

1800 622 902
Sydney callers: 9206 2166
Health, legal, employment, safety, counseling & education for people working in the sex industry.

Self-help & Complaints

NA – Narcotics Anonymous

(02) 9519 6200
Peer support for those seeking a drug-free lifestyle.
24 hr number statewide.

CMA – Crystal Meth Anonymous

0439 714 143
Regular meetings around Sydney. Call for times and locations.
www.crystalmeth.org.au

SMART Recovery – Self-Management & Recovery Therapy

(02) 9361 8020
Self-help group working with cognitive behavioural therapy.

Family Drug Support Hotline

1300 368 186
Support for families of people with dependency. 24 hours

NAR-ANON

(02) 8004 1214
Support group for people affected by another's drug use. 24 hours

Women's Information & Referral Service

1800 817 227
**Anti-Discrimination Board
of NSW**
1800 670 812
Sydney callers: 9268 5555
Mon–Fri 9am–5pm

Health Care Complaints Commission

1800 043 159
Discrimination, privacy & breaches of confidentiality in the health sector.

NSW Ombudsman

1800 451 524
Sydney callers: 9286 1000
Investigates complaints against the decisions and actions of local government and NSW police.

Legal Services

CRC – Court Support Scheme

(02) 9288 8700
Available to assist people through the court process.

Disability Discrimination Legal Centre

(02) 9310 7722
Provides free legal advice, representation and assistance for problems involving discrimination against people with disabilities and their associates.

HIV/AIDS Legal Centre

(02) 9206 2060
Provides free legal advice to people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Legal Aid Youth Hotline

1800 10 18 10
For under 18s. Criminal matters only. Open 9am – midnight on weekdays, 24 hours on weekends

Legal Aid Commission

(02) 9219 5000
May be able to provide free legal advice and representation. The Legal Aid Central office can also put you in contact with local branches.

The Shopfront Youth Legal Centre

(02) 9322 4808
Legal service for homeless and disadvantaged people under 25.

ASK! – Advice Service Knowledge

(02) 8383 6629
A free fortnightly legal service for Youth, run by the Ted Noffs Foundation (Randwick & South Sydney) in Partnership with TNF & Mallesons and Stephen Jaques Lawyers.

The Buttery, Bangalow

Ph: (02) 6687 1111

Medical Services

Aboriginal Medical Service, Redfern
(02) 9319 5823

Albion Street Centre, Surry Hills
1800 451 600 or (02) 9332 9600
Free testing for HIV / hep C & other. Medical care, nutritional info and psychological support for people living with HIV & hep C.

Haymarket Foundation Clinic, Darlinghurst
(02) 9331 1969
Walk-in homeless clinic at 165B Palmer St Darlinghurst. No Medicare card required.

Mission Australia, Surry Hills
(02) 9356 0600
Dentist, optometrist, chiropractor, mental health. Medicare card and income statement required.

KRC – Kirketon Road Centre, Kings Cross
(02) 9360 2766
For 'at risk' youth, sex workers, transgender and injecting drug users. Medical, counseling and social welfare service. Methadone & NSP from K1. No Medicare required.

MSIC – Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, Kings Cross
(02) 9360 1191
A safe supervised place to inject. 66 Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross opposite train station.

South Court, Penrith
1800 354 589
Medical service, sexual health & nurses. Vaccinations, blood screens, safe injecting & general vein care. No Medicare required.

Youthblock, Camperdown
(02) 9114 4100
12 – 24 years. Medical and dental available. No Medicare required.

Detour House, Glebe
Ph: (02) 9660 4137
For women only. AoD service, crisis accommodation.

Dianella College, Katoomba
Ph: (02) 4782 3887
Day program for women who have experienced long-term drug dependence and mental health issues.

Fairfield Drug Health Service, Prairiewood
Ph: (02) 9616 8800

Gorman House Detox, Darlinghurst
Ph: (02) 9361 8080 / (02) 9361 8082

Hadleigh Lodge, Leura
Ph: (02) 4782 7392

Inpatient Treatment Unit, Ward 64, Concord Hospital
Ph: (02) 9767 8600

Jarra House, Maroubra
Residential treatment for women with children
Ph: (02) 9661 6555

Kathleen York House, Glebe
for women with children
Ph: (02) 9660 5818

Kedesh House Rehabilitation Service, Berkeley
Ph: (02) 4271 2606

Kedesh Phoenix Rehabilitation Unit, Manly
Ph: (02) 4222 1800

Lakeview Non-Medical Detox Unit, Belmont
Ph: 4923 2060 or 1800 422 599

Lorna House, Wallsend
Ph: (02) 4921 1825
Appointment required

Langton Centre, Surry Hills
(Outpatient Service via Sydney Hospital selective process only)
Ph: (02) 9332 8777

Lyndon Withdrawal Unit, Orange
Ph: (02) 6362 5444

Miracle Haven Bridge Program, Morrisset
Ph: (02) 4973 1495 / (02) 4973 1644

Nepean Hospital, Penrith
Ph: (02) 4734 1333

O'Connor House, Wagga Wagga
Ph: (02) 6925 4744
Emergencies only: 1800 800 944

Odyssey House, Eagle Vale
Ph: (02) 9820 9999

Odyssey House, Minto
Referral: (02) 9603 2157

Orana Outpatient Withdrawal Management Service, Wollongong
Ph: (02) 4254 2700

Phoebe House, Arncliffe
Ph: (02) 9005 1570
Maintenance for women with children under 5 years

Riverlands Drug & Alcohol Centre, Lismore
Ph: (02) 6620 7608

Royal North Shore Hospital NSP and Clinic St Leonards
Ph: (02) 9462 9040

St George Opioid Treatment Service, Kogarah
Ph: (02) 9113 2055

St. John of God, Burwood
Ph: (02) 9715 9200 or 1300 656 273

St. John of God, North Richmond
Ph.: (02) 4570 6100 or 1800 808 339

The Salvation Army Bridge Program, Nowra
Ph: (02) 4422 4604 or 1300 363 622

South Pacific Private Hospital, Curl Curl
Ph: (02) 9905 3667

The Ted Noffs Foundation, Randwick
Ph: (02) 9305 6600 or 1800 151 045

The Ted Noffs Foundation, ACT
Ph: (02) 6123 2400

WHOS – We Help Ourselves
Ph: (02) 8572 7444

William Booth Institute, Surry Hills
Ph: (02) 9212 2322

Wollongong Crisis Centre, Berkeley
Ph: (02) 4272 3000

Ward 65, Concord Hospital
Ph: (02) 9767 8640

Treatment Centres

This list includes detoxes, rehabs and counselling services.
This is not a comprehensive list. Ring ADIS on (02) 9361 8000 for more.

Where to Get Fits

NSP Location	Daytime No	Alternative No	NSP Location	Daytime No	Alternative No
Albury	02 – 6058 1800		Murwillimbah/Tweed Valley	02 – 6670 9400	0417 062 265
Armidale	0427 851 011		Narellan	02 – 4640 3500	
Auburn Community Health	02 – 8759 4000	0408 4445 753	Narooma	02 – 4476 2344	
Bankstown	02 – 9780 2777		Newcastle/Hunter	02 – 4016 4519	0438 928 719
Ballina	02 – 6686 8977	0428 406 829	New England North Regional Area (referral service)	0427 851 011	
Bathurst	02 – 6330 5850		Nimbin	02 – 6689 1500	
Bega	02 – 6492 9620	02 – 6492 9125	Nowra	02 – 4421 3111	
Blacktown	02 – 9831 4037	1800 255 244	Orange	02 – 6392 8600	
Bowral	02 – 4861 0282		Parramatta	02 – 9687 5326	
Byron Bay	02 – 6639 6635		Penrith / St Marys	02 – 4734 3996	
Camden	02 – 4634 3000		Port Kembla	02 – 4275 1529	0411 408 726
Campbelltown MMU	02 – 4634 3000		Port Macquarie	02 – 6588 2750	
Canterbury (REPIDU)	02 – 9718 2636		Queanbeyan	02 – 6298 9233	
Caringbah	02 – 9522 1039	0411 404 907	Redfern Harm Minimisation Unit	02 – 9395 0400	
Coffs Harbour	02 – 6656 7934	0408 661 723	Rosemeadow	02 – 4633 4100	
Cooma	02 – 6455 3201		St George	02 – 9113 2943	0412 479 201
Dubbo	02 – 6885 8999		St Leonards - Royal Nth Shore	02 – 9462 9040	
Goulburn S.East	02 – 4827 3913	02 4827 3111	Surry Hills - Albion St Centre	02 – 9332 9600	
Grafton	02 – 6640 2229		Surry Hills - ACON	02 – 9206 2052	
Gosford Hospital	02 – 4320 2753		Surry Hills - NUAA	02 – 8354 7300	
Hornsby Hospital	02 – 9477 9530		Sydney CBD	02 – 9382 7440	
Ingleburn	02 – 8788 4200		Tahmoor (Wollondilly)	02 – 4683 6000	
Armidale/Inverell	0427 851 011		Tamworth	0427 851 011	
Katoomba / Blue Mountains	02 – 4782 2133		Taree	02 – 6592 9315	
Kempsey	02 – 6562 6066		Tumut	02 – 6947 0904	
Kings Cross KRC	02 – 9360 2766	02 – 9357 1299	Tweed Heads	07 – 5506 7556	
Lismore	02 – 6622 2222	0417 062 265	Wagga	02 – 6938 6411	
Lismore – Shades	02 – 6620 2980		Windsor	02 – 4560 5714	
Liverpool	02 – 9616 4807		Woy Woy Hospital	02 – 4344 8472	
Long Jetty	02 – 4336 7725		Wyong Hospital	02 – 4394 8472	
Manly / Northern Beaches	02 – 9977 2666	0412 266 226	Wyong Community Centre	02 – 4356 9370	
Merrylands	02 – 9682 9801		Yass	02 – 6226 3833	1800 809 423
Moree	0427 851 011		Young	02 – 6382 8888	
Moruya	02 – 4474 1561				
Mt Druitt	02 – 9881 1334				

This is not a comprehensive list. If you can't contact the number above or don't know the nearest NSP in your area, ring ADIS on 02 – 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599. ADIS also has a state-wide list of chemists that provide fitpacks.



EMILY & SAM'S STORY

Emily and Sam didn't start using together. For both that happened years earlier. But their heroin use was the reason for their paths crossing a few years back when they were involved in the same research study. The support they've given each other ever since, both in treatment and in life, has changed everything.

"I guess it started with Sam helping me," remembers Emily of a time when she was suffering through the after-effects of an unsuccessful treatment. **"I was pretty sick and messed up. We were in regular contact through that, just as friends."**

But over time their relationship blossomed. **"We got married last year,"** Sam says smiling, **"And our first child is due in three months."** In what can be a daunting time for any young couple, Sam and Emily are full of optimism, built around the stability of a strong relationship and their successful treatment programs.

Neither is in any doubt of the other's influence. Deep and unconditional support has made all the difference. **"We've both had less understanding partners in the past,"** says Emily. **"It's good to be around someone who doesn't discriminate against you."** Sam agrees and adds, **"In the past, drugs were a sore point, something you just didn't talk about or deal with. We're open about the way we feel, it's a lot less complicated."**

Clearly, their relationship isn't without its challenges. **"You have to be careful not to be competitive in your treatment,"** Emily warns. **"But for us there's no pressure, to come off or reduce or anything like that. We understand each other... we're in a similar place."**

Everyone's story is different. To know more about opiate dependency treatment options ask your healthcare provider for an Options Pack or visit www.mytreatmentmychoice.com.au



PO Box 1069 Surry Hills NSW 2010 Australia
345 Crown Street Surry Hills NSW 2010
t 02 8354 7300 or 1800 644 413 f 02 8354 7350
e nuaa@nuaa.org.au w www.nuaa.org.au

Monday - Friday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm
except Wednesday 2:00 - 5:30 pm

The New South Wales Users & AIDS Association (NUAA) is an independent, user-driven, community-based organisation funded by NSW Health. NUAA aims to advance the health, rights and dignity of people who use drugs illicitly; provide information, education, and support for drug users; promote the development of legislation and policies to improve drug users' social and economic well-being; and improve the quality and standards of services available to drug users.

NUAA relies on a strong & active membership - people who support the work & aims of the organisation. NUAA membership is free, confidential, and open to anyone interested in the issues affecting people who choose to use drugs illicitly. You can become a member of the association (receive voting rights, stand for election, and receive *User's News*) by sending a completed form (below) to NUAA. You can use the same form to be placed on the *User's News* mailing list. Copies of *User's News* are posted free of charge in a plain envelope.

To join NUAA - or just receive *User's News* - complete this form and post it to NUAA:

I am already a member of NUAA / on the mailing list, but am updating my details.

I want to be a member of NUAA.
I support NUAA's aims and objectives.

I do not want to be a member of NUAA. I want to receive *User's News* only.

Inmates, please give MIN number:.....

Name:

Address:.....

City / Suburb:..... Postcode:.....

Phone:..... Mobile:.....

Email:.....

Mail Preferences:

I want to receive *User's News*.

I want to be emailed NUAA's monthly newsletters.

I want to receive news and information about NUAA events and activities.

I do not want to receive any mail from NUAA.

I am allowing NUAA to hold the above information until I want it changed or deleted.

Signature..... Date:.....

Personal Information Statement:

We collect this information to add you to our database and/or notify you of information and events relating to NUAA. We store this information either in hard copy or electronically or both. Access to your information is strictly limited to staff who need it to act on your behalf. Your information will not be passed on to any other organisation. You can access and correct your personal information by contacting our Privacy Officer on (02) 8354 7300 or freecall 1800 644 413.