



Trainee & Program Details

Training Program

Addiction Medicine 2026

Training Program Phase *

Specialty foundation

Date of Observation *

22/04/26

Learning Capture Details

Type of Learning *

Personal reflections

Title*

Moving from operating the ambulance at the base of the cliff to building safety rails at the top. Reducing harms from alcohol – public health approaches.

Select the primary learning goal *

13. Public health aspects of substance use and behavioural addictions

Learning Capture Details

Description of Activity *

Reading “Alcohol: no ordinary commodity” (3rd Edition) during my inpatient withdrawal unit, I reflected on the impact of alcohol on the Australian community, and the current Australian political and economic environment which determines availability, acceptance and consumption of alcohol. Over a 1 month period I read the book, and some associated papers, to get a better understanding of public health approaches to reducing alcohol related harms.

What did you learn? *

I learned that consumption can be reduced by restricting supply (opening hours of licensed premises, take-away retail outlet density) resulting in less harm. Demand can be reduced by restricting advertising, working with sporting clubs to reduce their reliance on sponsorship from industry, and through well designed social marketing programs. Harms could be further reduced by increasing zero-tolerance driving age limits to 25 years (rather than the current Provisional licence conditions), improved enforcement of licensing regulations, even better public transport at night-entertainment localities.

How will you apply this learning in the future? *

Even within my peer group, I have a role in advocating for more evidence based approaches to reduce alcohol related harms. I have joined the Public Health Association of Australia Alcohol Tobacco and other drugs SIG, and will look at opportunities to advocate for more restrictive supply, as well as other harm reduction measures.

Assessor Feedback (optional)

Feedback From *

Dr Alita O'Day

Assessor Role *

Supervisor

Personal Message

Dear Dr O'Day, please review my reflection on this book, and how I might approach alcohol public policy in my work.

Feedback Requested Date

22/04/26

Feedback *

Congrats on finishing this “essential reading”. As a clinician you will inevitably be asked your views on the public health aspects of substance use, so being well informed is crucial. Use the same principles when analyzing the public health aspects of any substance. You will find that the demand/supply/harm reduction approach is useful for all of them, not to mention gambling. You are showing the kind of awareness and professionalism we expect in the Foundation Phase of specialty training.