



Addiction Leadership Day Ōtautahi Christchurch

Evaluation report for November 2025 event

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank and acknowledge all attendees who participated in the event and completed the survey.

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Te Pou is a national centre of evidence-based workforce development for the mental health and addiction sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Summary of key findings

Addiction Leadership Day - Ōtautahi | Christchurch

Theme of the day: Huihui tātou ka tū, wehewehe tātou ka hinga - United we stand, divided we fall

 91 attendees |  43 percent post-event survey response rate

Participants profile

Most respondents were managers (68 percent), followed by team leaders and planners/funders (8 percent each). In terms of ethnicity, the majority identified as New Zealand European/Pākehā (92 percent), while 16 percent identified as Māori. Most participants were based in the South Island (64 percent), with some working nationally (44 percent).

Key outcomes

- Awareness of significant sector changes rose from 55 percent to 90 percent, a 1.6-times improvement
- Most respondents (80 percent) reported good or very good expansion of professional networks
- Seventy-two percent found the day relevant to their addiction work
- Seventy-six percent of respondents rated the overall value of the event good or very good.

Applying the learning

Eighty-seven percent plan to use insights from the event in their work, across three main themes:

- Sharing knowledge: updating teams, following up with presenters, informing decisions
- Strategic planning: workforce development and service collaboration
- Improving outcomes: enhancing support for tāngata whai ora and whānau.

Conclusion

The leadership day achieved its goal by fostering meaningful networking opportunities. Key areas for improvement include:

- Increase diversity and representation through targeted outreach and inclusion of innovative content (e-health, harm reduction, programme design).
- Address emerging issues such as youth trends, gambling harm, and behavioural addictions.
- Strengthen networking structures and promote interagency collaboration.

Background

The Addiction Leadership Days are held annually in three locations: Te Whanganui-a-Tara | Wellington (March), Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland (July), and Ōtautahi | Christchurch (November). These events are organised by the National Committee of Addiction Treatment (NCAT) and supported by Te Pou. They serve as an important platform for leaders and decision-makers within the addiction sector to deepen professional networks, share sector updates and research, and strengthen and develop leadership. This report, prepared by Te Pou, summarises feedback from the Ōtautahi | Christchurch Addiction Leadership Day held on 20 November 2025 with the theme “Huihui tātou ka tū, wehewehe tātou ka hinga - United we stand, divided we fall” at Ngaio Marsh Theatre (see Appendix A for the event agenda).

Purpose of this report

The evaluation is based on responses collected through a post-event survey to assess the impact of the event. It highlights how the event supported the addiction sector and provides insights to inform the planning and ongoing improvement of future Addiction Leadership Days. The report is intended for organisers and facilitators, offering guidance for internal planning, impact assessment, and future event design and delivery. It is also relevant to addiction sector leaders and practitioners, as it sheds light on sector engagement, helps identify emerging needs, and supports strategic alignment with sector priorities.

Attendees were invited to complete an online survey administered through SurveyMonkey (See Appendix B for survey questions). The survey included a combination of closed and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative insights. Quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel, while qualitative responses were thematically analysed using MAXQDA, a software tool designed for in-depth analysis of textual data.

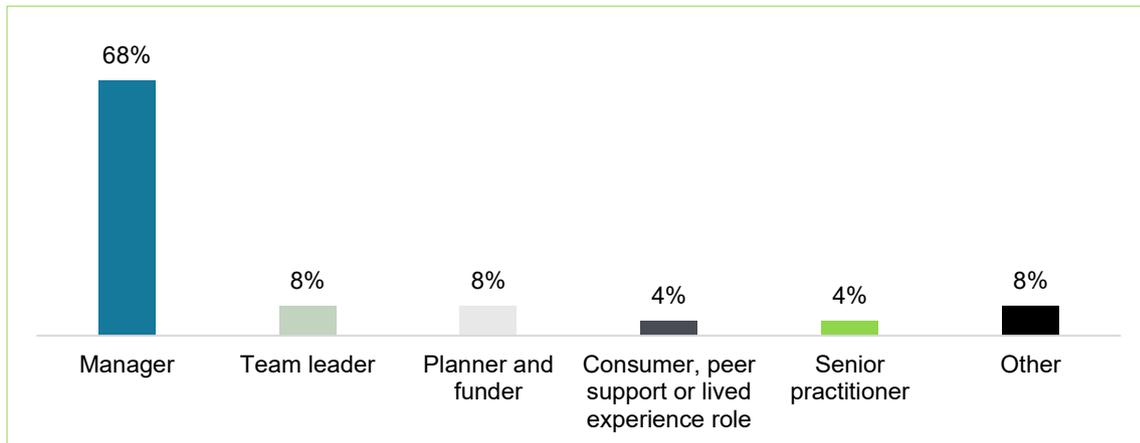
Key outcomes

The Ōtautahi | Christchurch Addiction Leadership Day was attended by 91 participants, of whom 39 completed the post-event survey resulting in a 43 percent response rate. While this level of engagement provides valuable insights that are reasonably representative of the overall participant experience, it is lower than the previous response rate of 69 percent. To improve future response rates, it is recommended that sufficient time be allocated for evaluation and that participants are prompted to complete the survey during the event. The feedback received demonstrates strong interest in shaping future events and provides confidence in the reliability of the findings.

Participant profiles

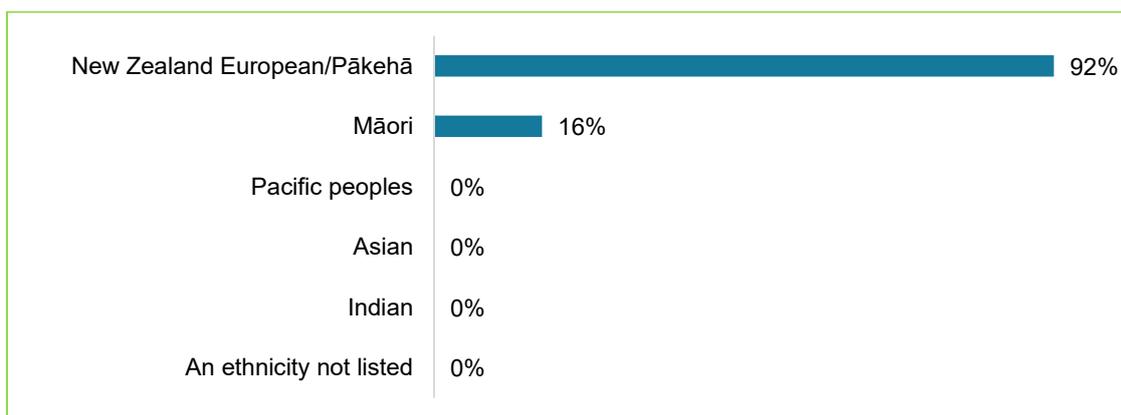
The majority of respondents (68 percent) identified as managers. Eight percent were team leaders, another eight percent were planners or funders, while four percent worked in consumer, peer support, or lived experience roles. An additional four percent were senior practitioners, and the remaining eight percent fell into the 'other' category, which included workforce development professionals (see Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Respondents' roles (25 respondents)



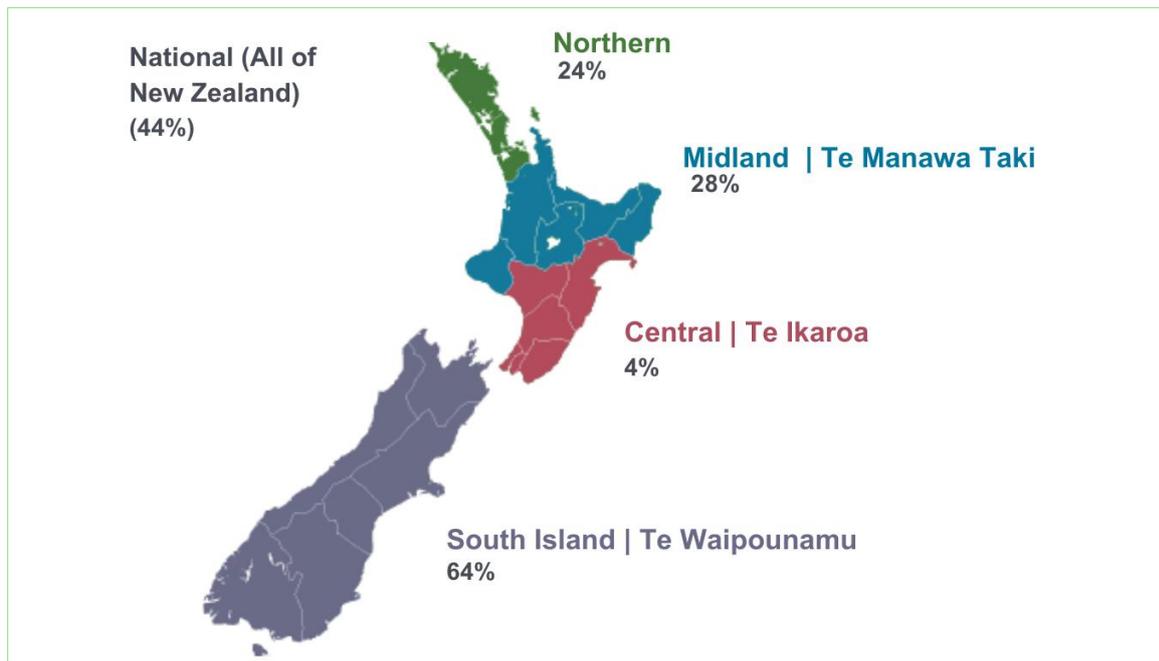
Survey responses reveal a notable imbalance in ethnic representation among attendees. The majority identified as New Zealand European/Pākehā (92 percent), with Māori representation at 16 percent, and no respondents from other ethnic groups. While these figures reflect survey respondents rather than all participants, the lack of diversity signals an equity gap that warrants attention. Broadening participation and fostering inclusive representation will be a key priority for future events.

Figure 2. Respondents' ethnicities (25 respondents, multiple answers allowed)



The majority (64 percent) were from the South Island | Te Waipounamu, while 44 percent worked nationally, 28 percent were from Midland | Te Manawa Taki, and 24 percent from Northern. Respondents could select multiple regions. (see figure 3)

Figure 3. Respondents' location of work by Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora region (25 respondents)



Knowledge on latest significant sector changes

Attendees' knowledge of the latest significant sector changes increased, rising from 55 percent before the event to 90 percent after, an increase of approximately 1.6 times. See Figure 4.

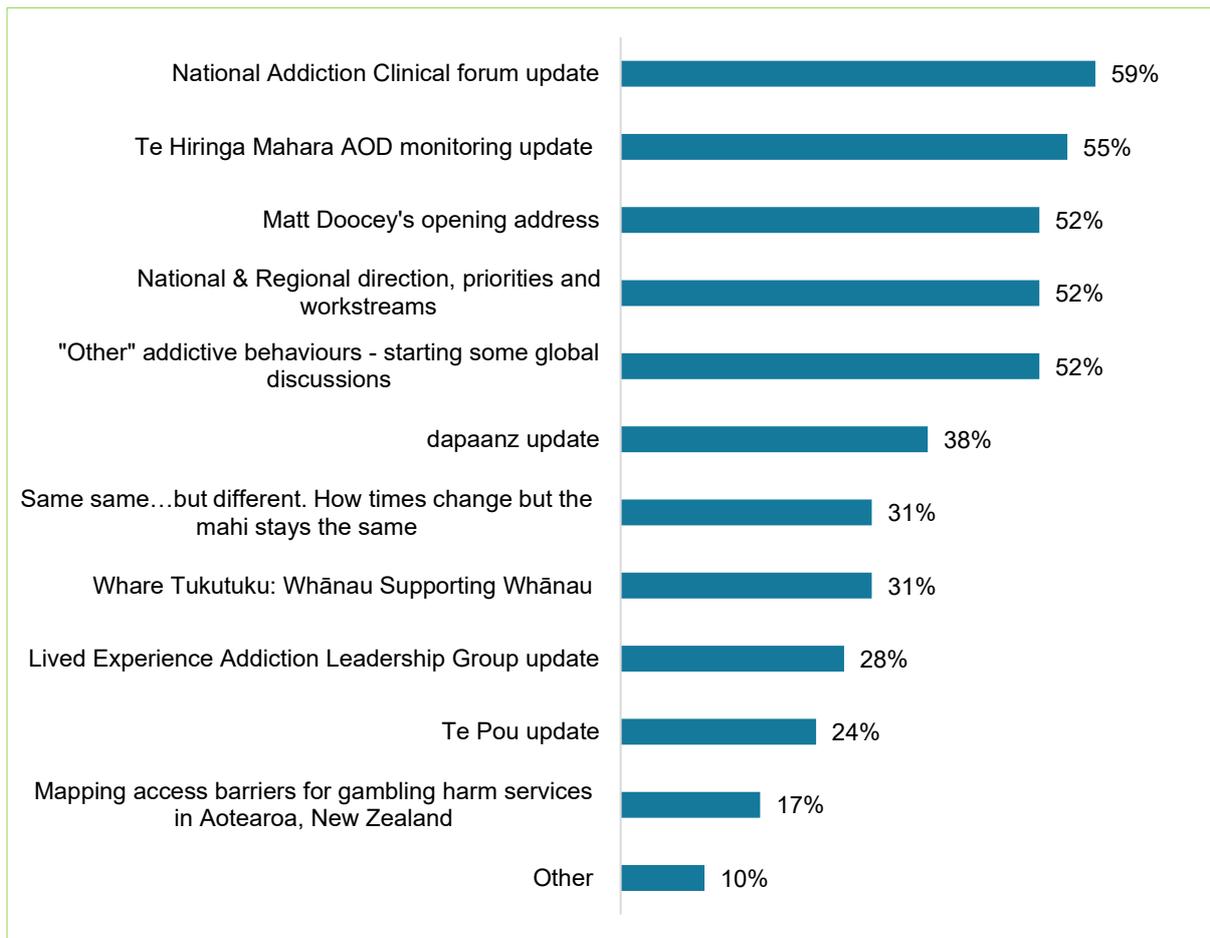
Figure 4. Knowledge about the latest significant sector changes (39 respondents)



Most useful part of the event and take-home messages

Respondents rated the most useful parts of the day, with the National Addiction Clinical Forum update selected by more than half (59 percent). This was followed by the Te Hiringa Mahara AOD monitoring update (55 percent), and the Honourable Minister for Mental Health, Matt Doocey's opening address, national and regional directions, priorities and workstreams, and other addictive behaviours (52 percent) (see Figure 5 for a detailed breakdown).

Figure 5. Most useful part of the day (29 respondents, multiple answers allowed)



People shared three key takeaways from the event. Twenty-nine respondents contributed feedback, which has been summarised into three broad themes, See figure 6.

Figure 6. Key take home messages (29 respondents)



Workforce development and sector collaboration

Respondents reported gaining a deeper understanding of workforce development, including “workforce plans,” “training resources,” and “scholarship opportunities for training,” all seen as essential for strengthening the sector. They emphasised the value of new connections and collaboration fostered by the event, noting the “importance of connecting and networking at these events.” Many appreciated being able to “join the dots between pieces of mahi” and highlighted the need to “collaborate more rather than compete.”

Funding and prioritisation challenges

Participants shared a clearer understanding of funding and prioritisation, particularly around “funding distribution and reasons behind this and how this links with our service.” Concerns were raised that addiction services remain underfunded and “not prioritised within health compared to mental health,” with one comment stating that “\$30M investment is nowhere close to the true cost of addiction.” Respondents also expressed ongoing worries about “the decrease in percentage of funding for addiction treatment” and stressed the need for “more accountability measuring outcomes” to ensure resources are used effectively.

Emerging trends and cultural approaches

Respondents highlighted the importance of addressing “all substances/behaviours,” including gambling and other behavioural addictions. The respondents strongly valued “cultural approaches,” “whānau service,” and the “importance of having lived experience within hospitals” as key elements of effective service delivery. The event encouraged participants to “expand our thinking beyond substance use and gambling harm” and shift toward “emotional and social well-being rather than reducing symptomology and throwing numbers at things.”

Plans to use insights from the event

Most respondents (87 percent) indicated they plan to apply insights from the event in their work.

Figure 7. Intention to use the insights from the event (39 respondents)



Respondents described several ways they intend to use the information from the day in their work. Three key themes emerged: sharing knowledge, strategic planning and collaboration and improving outcomes.

Sharing knowledge and improving work

Respondents plan to share insights from the event with colleagues, teams, and use information to strengthen their work. Examples include:

“Update my team on the new initiatives happening within our New Zealand community”

“Follow up with presenters on information they shared”

“Really enjoyed the range of speakers and will use the intel from across the sector to enhance my work at the system level.”

“This year’s leadership day focused more on updates – this is useful information which I can use to inform my day-to-day decisions.”

Strategic planning and collaboration

Many respondents intend to apply the information to strengthen planning, service delivery, and foster sector-wide collaboration. Examples include:

“To inform strategic workforce development initiatives, to develop kaimahi, to equip social sector colleagues to initially respond and refer, to use research to innovate and advocate”

"Be informative to the team and service re national directions, and engage in National service planning opportunities"

“I have made positive and new contacts as well as meeting previous ones again. Thank you so much.”

“Connecting with other attendees re service collaboration

Improving outcomes for tāngata whai ora and community

Respondents shared their intention to apply the knowledge gained from the event to enhance support for tāngata whai ora and whānau. Examples include.

“Deepened my understanding of different aspects of the addiction sector, so helps with planning my work”

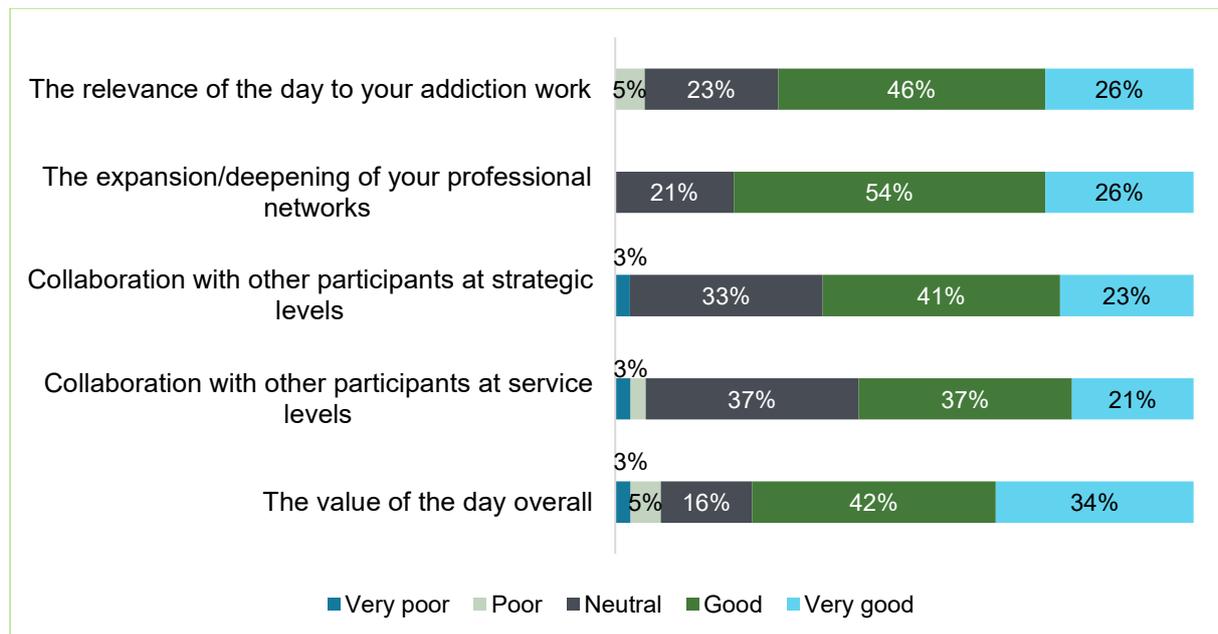
“More consideration of wider influences and hopefully more effective support for clients”

“Figures are useful to highlight to people the acceleration of use/supply/ capture. New trends are also useful as well as connections to enable us to better serve our people”

Overall feedback

Overall, the event was regarded as valuable and inspiring, with 76 percent of respondents rating its overall value as good or very good. Collaboration was positive, with 58 percent rating service-level collaboration and 64 percent rating strategic-level collaboration positively. Networking was one of the most valued aspects, with 80 percent reporting good or very good expansion of professional networks, and 72 percent finding the day relevant to their addiction work (see figure 8 for further breakdown). While sector updates was appreciated, respondents recommended including more innovative ideas, greater involvement from specialist NGOs, and showcasing successful programme design and development within the sector.

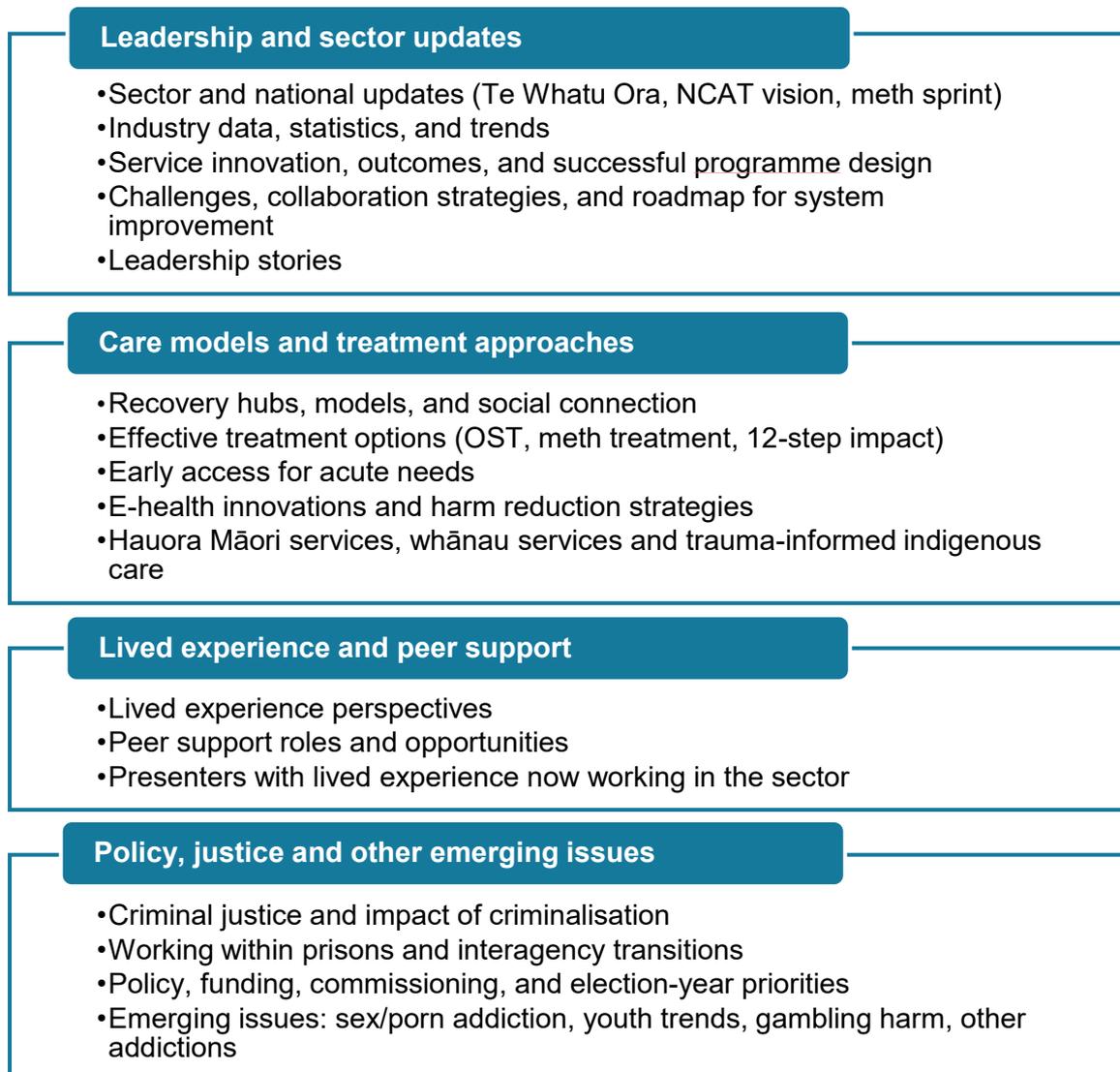
Figure 8. Respondents' rating of the most useful part of the day (39 respondents)



Suggestions for future events

Respondents were invited to suggest three topics for the next event. A total of 27 participants provided ideas, which have been grouped into four broad categories: leadership and sector updates; care models and treatment approaches; lived experience and peer support; and policy, justice, and other issues (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Suggested topics for future events (27 respondents)



Conclusion and future directions

Feedback suggests that the Ōtautahi Addiction Leadership Day 2025 successfully achieved its purpose of strengthening leadership, fostering collaboration, and sharing critical sector updates. The event hosted 91 attendees with a 43 percent survey response rate, delivering insights on workforce development, funding challenges, and emerging trends. Awareness of sector changes rose from 55 percent to 90 percent (a 1.6-times increase). Networking was highly valued, with 80 percent reporting expanded connections and 72 percent finding the event relevant. Suggestions for future events included showcasing successful programmes, leadership stories, care and treatment approaches, policy updates, and other emerging issues.

Survey responses highlighted an equity gap in ethnic representation, underscoring the importance of sector leadership reflecting the diversity of the communities it serves. Key considerations for future events include:

- Broaden representation and diversity by engaging service leaders from organisations that support Māori, Pasifika, Asian, and other communities.
- Embed cultural leadership in the agenda, giving prominence to voices that reflect diverse perspectives.
- Include more innovative content by showcasing service design success stories, e-health solutions, and harm reduction strategies.
- Strengthen lived experience involvement by allocating dedicated sessions for presenters with lived experience and developing guidelines for inclusion.
- Focus on emerging issues including youth trends, gambling harm, and other behavioural addictions.
- Enhance collaboration opportunities by introducing structured networking activities such as speed networking and breakout groups, and facilitating interagency planning discussions to foster joint initiatives.
- Provide practical tools and resources for workforce development, strategic planning, and outcome measurement.

Appendix A: Agenda for the event



National Committee
for Addiction Treatment

Addiction Leadership Day

Thursday 20 November 2025, 9am to 3pm
Ngalo Marsh Theatre, Haere-Roa, 90 Ilam Road,
Ilam, Christchurch

Huihui tātou ka tū, wehewehe tātou ka hinga - United we stand, divided we fall

8.00am	Registration on arrival	
9.00am	Mihi whakatau welcome	
9.20am	Welcome and housekeeping	Deb Fraser-Komene, NCAT Co-Chair
9.30am	Opening address	Matt Doocey, Minister of Mental Health
9.50am	National & Regional direction, priorities and workstreams	Vicki Dent, Regional Lead Mental Health and Addiction, Te Waipounamu Steve Rossell, System Design Manager (Addiction), Planning Funding & Outcomes, Te Waipounamu
10.20am	Lived Experience Addiction Leadership Group Update	Lived Experience Addiction Leadership Group
10.35am	Morning tea	

Agenda continued on back ►

11.00am	Same same...but different. How times change but the mahi stays the same	Bernie Thijssen, Clinical Team Manager, Specialist Addiction Service – Tohunga Puawaitanga Ratonga MHAID Service – Health NZ Te Whatu Ora Southern
11.30am	Mapping access barriers for gambling harm services in Aotearoa, New Zealand	Jeff Foote, Associate Professor, and Dr Andrea Clarke, Teaching and Research Fellow, University of Otago Business School
12:00pm	Lunch (60 minutes)	
1.00pm	Te Hiringa Mahara AOD monitoring update	Sonya Russell, Director Mental Health and Addiction Sector Leadership and Wendy Allison, Senior Analyst, Te Hiringa Mahara Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission
1.30pm	"Other" addictive behaviours - starting some global discussions	Jenny Wolf, GLE Addictions and Lived Experience Council Lead, and Lyndsay Fortune, GLE collaborative coordinator, General Manager, Organisational Development and Support, Odyssey
1.50pm	National Addiction Clinical Forum Update	Dr Emma Schwarcz, Clinical Director, CADS Auckland and Dr Mike Ngawati, Clinical Director, Whitiki Maurea
2.10pm	dapaanz Update	Sam White, Executive Director, dapaanz
2.20pm	Whare Tukutuku: Whānau Supporting Whānau	Sam Moncur, Project Advisor, Whare Tukutuku
2.30pm	Te Pou Update	Selina Elkington, Programme Manager Addiction, Te Pou
2.40pm	Question time for Update Panel	Bridgitte Thornley
2.55pm	Closing remarks and evaluation	
3.00pm	Whakakape/Closure and farewell	

Appendix B: Survey questions



National Committee for Addiction Treatment

Addiction Leadership Day: Ōtautahi Christchurch 2025

We value your feedback

Your feedback will help us improve future events and ensure they are meaningful and relevant. The feedback form should take around 5 minutes to complete.

Your responses will remain anonymous and will be included in a summary report published on the Te Pou webpage. This report supports programme promotion, ongoing improvement, and periodic monitoring for Te Whatu Ora. No one will be identified in the report or in completion statistics.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Emily at Emily.Scerri-Davis@tepou.co.nz

Addiction Leadership Day: Ōtautahi Christchurch 2025

* 1. Please rate your level of knowledge about the **latest significant sector changes**:

	Not knowledgeable	A little knowledgeable	Somewhat knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable
<u>Before</u> today	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<u>After</u> today	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 2. Please rate the following with 1=very poor and 5=very good:

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
The relevance of the day to your addiction work	<input type="radio"/>				
The expansion/deepening of your professional networks	<input type="radio"/>				
Collaboration with other participants at strategic levels	<input type="radio"/>				
Collaboration with other participants at service levels	<input type="radio"/>				
The value of the day overall	<input type="radio"/>				

* 3. I plan to use the information from today in my work.

Yes No



Addiction Leadership Day: Ōtautahi Christchurch 2025

4. Please share how you intend to use the information presented today when you are back at work?

* 5. What parts of today were most useful for you? Choose as many as apply.

- Matt Doocey's opening address
- National & Regional direction, priorities and workstreams - Steve Rossell & Vicki Dent
- Lived Experience Addiction Leadership Group Update
- Same same...but different. How times change but the mahi stays the same - Bernie Thijssen
- Mapping access barriers for gambling harm services in Aotearoa, New Zealand - Jeff Foote & Andrea Clarke
- Te Hiringa Mahara AOD monitoring update - Sonya Russell & Wendy Allison
- "Other" addictive behaviours - starting some global discussions - Jenny Wolf & Lyndsay Fortune
- National Addiction Clinical forum Update - Emma Schwarcz
- dapaanz Update- Sam White
- Whare Tukutuku: Whānau Supporting Whānau - Sam Moncur
- Te Pou Update- Selina Elkington
- Other (please specify)

* 6. What were your top three take-home messages from today?

1.
2.
3.



Addiction Leadership Day: Ōtautahi Christchurch 2025

* 7. Please add any topics you would like covered at the next Addiction Leadership Day.

1. [text box]
2. [text box]
3. [text box]

8. Please add any other comments you have about Addiction Leadership Day.

[text box]

* 9. What is your current role?

- Manager, Team leader, Senior practitioner, Other (please specify), Planner and funder, Addiction nurse, Consumer, peer support or lived experience role

[text box]

* 10. With which ethnic group(s) do you identify? (please tick all that apply)

- Māori, Pacific peoples, New Zealand European/Pākehā, An ethnicity not listed (please specify), Asian, Indian

[text box]

* 11. Which Health New Zealand- Te Whatu Ora district do you work in? (Please tick as many as apply)

- Te Tai Tokerau, Waitematā, Te Toka Tumai Auckland, Counties Manukau, Waikato, Lakes, A Toi Bay of Plenty, Tairāwhiti, Taranaki, Te Pae Hauora o Ruahine o Taranua MidCentral, Whanganui, Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley, Te Matau a Māui Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, Waitaha Canterbury, Te Tai o Poutini West Coast, Nelson Marlborough, Southern, South Canterbury, Nationally

[text box]