

Media Release

AER FOUNDATION CEO RESIGNS

12 January 2009: The Chief Executive Officer of the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AER), Mr Daryl Smeaton, today announced his resignation from the role he has held for more than seven years.

Mr Smeaton said: "I have decided it is time to move on. I am very proud of my achievements and the achievements of the AER over the last seven years. We started with no organisation and a big responsibility. When I look at where the AER is now, and the level of public and political engagement in the issue of alcohol misuse, I think Australia has moved a long way since 2001.

"I would like to acknowledge all the organisations and individuals who have supported me in my role, especially those thousands of organisations who have used AER resources to make a real difference in their communities.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the AER Foundation, but I am also looking forward to new challenges in my life," said Mr Smeaton.

The Chair of the AER Foundation, Prof Ian Webster AO, expressed his appreciation for the work of Mr Smeaton in transforming an idea into a reality.

"We started with no staff, no constitution, no offices and many people from across the community already requesting funding from us. Daryl put together an organisation that achieved remarkable benchmarks in the provision of funding to address alcohol problems at all levels of Australian society. I think everyone involved in the struggle to reduce the ongoing tragedy of alcohol related harm would support my appreciation of the invaluable contribution Daryl has made," said Prof Webster.

The AER will recruit a new CEO over the coming months. Ms Tracey Purdam will be acting CEO in the interim.

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About the Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation (AER): AER is a not-for-profit company established in 2001 with a mandate to 'change the way we drink'. AER was initially established with funding from a federal government grant and is now a perpetual trust. AER has built up a comprehensive understanding of the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector and is a leading grant giving body for community groups and programs within the alcohol sector. Through donations, grants and utilisation of the perpetual trust: AER seeks to prevent alcohol and licit substance abuse especially amongst disadvantaged, indigenous and young people; to support evidence-based treatment, research and prevention programs in the AOD sector; and to highlight the dangers of licit substance abuse and promote the responsible consumption of alcohol within the community. AER has funded more than 850 programs throughout Australia (30% of which are within the Indigenous community) including numerous programs which contribute to shifting community attitudes towards a responsible approach to alcohol consumption. For further information: <http://www.aerf.com.au>