



**Turning Point**  
**Alcohol & Drug Centre**

# LEADERSHIP IN THE AUSTRALIAN AOD SECTOR: IDENTIFYING, DEVELOPING AND RETAINING TALENT

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# The Leadership Project

- To conduct a preliminary investigation into leadership in the Australian AOD sector
- Objectives:
  - Define leadership
  - Explore the role of leaders
  - Examine leadership development practices
  - Identify areas for improvement in leadership development



# Methodology

- Comprehensive literature review
- Semi-structured key informant (KI) interviews with AOD sector leaders (N=17)
- Thematic analysis via NVIVO 8



# Defining leadership

*Leaders have been defined as those who are visionary; who see beyond the constraints of the status quo, and can communicate the value of the vision and its plausibility to others, through working together (Bennis, 1989; Peter and Waterman, 1982).*



# Leadership vs management

- Inherent differences between leadership and management roles
- Are the roles mutually exclusive?



# Attributes of AOD leaders

- Leaders are:
  - Emotionally intelligent
  - Committed
  - Motivated
  - Enthusiastic
  - Visionary individuals
  - Generate new ideas



# Attributes of AOD leaders cont...

- Leaders:
  - Work as change agents
  - Operate with integrity
  - Network and communicate widely (Goleman, 1995; KI)





# Emerging AOD leaders

- Bright and enquiring individuals
- Seek to understand by 'unpacking' issues
- Challenge current paradigms
- Pursue change
- Inspire others with their creative and innovative thinking (KI)



# Retention of emerging leaders

- Critical to retain talent
- Leaders and managers, sector-wide, should:
  - Acknowledge the importance of leaders and leadership development
  - Provide a supportive environment and opportunities for emerging leaders to grow





## Retention of emerging leaders cont...

- In practice, this means:
  - More mentoring
  - Facilitating professional development
  - Providing opportunities for innovation

*Let [emerging leaders] contribute ideas and try things out, and allow them to take risks without fear of punishment (KI).*



## Retention of emerging leaders cont...

- It also means:
  - Providing greater reward and acknowledgement of emerging leaders
  - Facilitating emerging leader involvement on boards, advisory committees etc (Moodie, 2002; KI)



# Wrap up

- What have we learned?
  - Attributes of leaders
  - Identify emerging leaders
  - How to nurture them and enhance their retention (local level responses)
- The next step:
  - Systemic, strategic response to leadership development



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# One last thought...

*You have to let the bright sparks test boundaries. If you stifle them, they'll leave (KI).*



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