

**ReturnToWorkSA announce a community awareness campaign to raise the awareness of the dangers of prescription opioid misuse.**

**18 July 2019:**

ReturnToWorkSA has brought together like minded organisations in South Australia to develop and support a community awareness campaign to raise the awareness of the risks of prescription opioid misuse.

Opioid related deaths and poisoning hospitalisations have increased in the last ten years – Every day in Australia, nearly 150 hospitalisations and 14 Emergency Department presentations involve opioid misuse, and 3 people die from drug-induced deaths involving opioid use.

From a prescribing perspective, according to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare 2018, South Australia has the second highest opioid dispensing rate of any statistical area in Australia, with Playford, Onkaparinga and Salisbury regions particular focal points. Clearly, there is an imperative for South Australia to take action and be at the forefront of dealing with this national problem.

The REACHFORTHEFACTS campaign will run for 12 months across television, radio, press, outdoor and digital media, including in regional areas of South Australia.

“Our message to South Australians if they or their family or friends are taking opioids is to go to our website [REACHFORTHEFACTS.com.au](https://REACHFORTHEFACTS.com.au) to get the facts about prescription opioids and where to get help. This issue is so important that more than a dozen organisations have collaborated to develop and support this campaign to inform the South Australian community” said Julia Oakley, Executive General Manager, ReturnToWorkSA.

Key supporting organisations:

- Australian Medical Association (AMA)
- ScriptWise
- Royal Australian College of Physicians
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- Compulsory Third Party Insurance Regulator
- Pain Australia
- Faculty of Pain Medicine (Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists)
- COTA Australia

- Australian and New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine (ANZSOM)
- Adelaide Primary Health Network
- Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA)
- Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM)
- Return Unwanted Medicines (The RUM Project)
- Australian Dental Association SA

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References:

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Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2018) '*Opioid Medicines Dispensing 2016-2017*' in Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation. Accessed from <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/atlas/the-third-australian-atlas-of-healthcare-variation-2018/5-repeat-analyses-2/>