



MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN MINERS SEEK ALCOHOL REHABILITATION OFFSHORE

Leading addiction treatment in Thailand helps mining industry avoid injuries and fatalities in the workplace

Alcohol is an on-going growing problem in the Australian mining industry, where it has been identified that miners have the highest reported level of hangovers (4.9 per cent) – twice the industry average.ⁱ

A study of workforce alcohol consumption in mining-related worksites found that alcohol consumption was greater than the national average, drinking in the top risk category was on a par with the national average and that binge drinking was more prevalent.ⁱⁱ

Over one-third of the patients treated at The Cabin Chiang Mai, a leading drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility in Thailand, are Australian. Eleven per cent of those clients work in the Australian mining or construction industry, with the majority being treated for an alcohol addiction.

Psychologist Cameron Brown, Australian-based aftercare provider for returned clients of The Cabin said, ‘We see a large number of our clients who work in the mines struggling with an alcohol addiction, and because of factors unique to the industry, it appears this trend is slowly on the increase.

‘Last year, The Cabin saw a dramatic 30% increase from 2011, in miners seeking help for a substance abuse addiction,’ said Brown.

Brown said that alcohol consumption can be common amongst the mining workforce as a result of several influencing factors such as shift work and isolation from family.

‘Alcohol is often used as a coping mechanism, particularly for miners who struggle with the stress of the predominantly ‘fly in, fly out’ lifestyle,’ said Brown.

“It can be their way to combat loneliness and even boredom, especially once they’re off duty in a remote area, away from their family and responsibilities.” concluded Brown.

More than one in 20 Australian workers admit to having worked under the influence of alcohol, and almost one in 50 report attending work under the influence of psychoactive drugs.ⁱⁱⁱ As a result, the Australian workforce loses around \$4.5 billion per annum in lost production.^{iv}



Substance abuse in the workplace not only causes lost productivity and absenteeism, but can also result in large health costs for organisations through work related injuries and even fatalities.

An estimated five to 10 per cent of workplace deaths and 25 per cent of workplace injuries are related to drugs and alcohol.^v

‘The heavy health costs that substance abuse can have in the mining industry can be avoided through exploring effective rehabilitation and intervention programs,’ said Brown.

Brown added that while alcohol and drug policies are extremely important, he also stressed the importance of effectively screening for early warning signs of alcohol and drug misuse within the workforce. He said employees can be sent to rehab even prior to identifying as an addict as a way to minimise risk to person and employer.

“There are several medical diagnostic tests that can recognise ‘early warning signs’ of addiction. In industries like mining, where the risk posed are so much greater, many companies are introducing these requirements to eliminate the problem addiction causes before it occurs.

“The mines have several options for enabling employee rehabilitation. For example, within similar industries The Cabin has facilitated numerous Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). This involves education, treatment and ongoing monitoring of ‘at-risk’ employees to ensure a safe and quick return to the work place.

The Cabin has also treated miners on site in Chiang Mai, which allows clients to recover discreetly, away from their social connections.

“The advantage of undertaking treatment in Thailand is that it’s close to Australia, but far enough away to remove our clients from their usual setting, routine and addiction triggers, which can dramatically improve their chances of recovery,’ concluded Brown.

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About the Cabin

The Cabin Chiang Mai is Asia's most respected Drug and Alcohol treatment centre, with two facilities and a secondary treatment Sober House located in Chiang Mai. Since 2009 the Cabin has treated over 300 men and women from around the world with a programme completion rate of 96% and a recovery rate amongst the highest in the world.

The unique programme at The Cabin combines CBT, the 12 Steps, mind mapping, mindfulness therapy and physical exercise therapy. A fully inclusive 28 day programme at The Cabin Chiang Mai costs \$12,000, about a third of the cost of private rehabs in Australia.

Cameron Brown is the aftercare provider and evidence based researcher of The Cabin Chiang Mai. He is a registered Psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia and an Associate Member of the Australian Psychological Society. Having served on site as The Cabin's psychologist, he is now based on the Gold Coast Australia, where he offers ongoing psychological support to reformed addicts returning from The Cabin.
www.thecabinchiangmai.com

ⁱ <http://www.miningtechnologyaustralia.com.au/drug-and-alcohol-policies-save-lives> retrieved 17 January 2013

ⁱⁱ <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/mgt/research/working-papers/2003/wp51-03.pdf> retrieved 17 January 2013

ⁱⁱⁱ Intoxicated workers: findings from a national Australian survey, Ken Pidd, Ann M. Roche, Femke Buisman-Pijlman, retrieved 17 January 2013, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2011.03462.x/abstract>

^{iv} Drug Test Australia, retrieved 29 November 2012 <http://drugtestaustralia.com.au/>

^v <http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/mgt/research/working-papers/2003/wp51-03.pdf>, retrieved 17 January 2013