



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Year's Resolutions Life Saving for Drug and Alcohol Addicts *Addicts' resolve tested during the silly season*

Australians who use or abuse alcohol and other drugs face greater temptation during the Christmas and New Year party season, at a time when addiction can be more difficult to detect.

At the beginning of each year [The Cabin Chiang Mai](#), a leading drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre based in Thailand, experiences an influx of clients with a dramatic 52% increase in enquiries in January 2012, compared with December 2011. At the start of 2012, 50% of The Cabin's clientele were Australian, and the proportion striving to overcome their addictions included alcohol (60%), methamphetamine (20%), cannabis (10%) and prescription drugs (10%).

Australian psychologist and aftercare provider for The Cabin, Cameron Brown, says that the silly season is complicated for people struggling with addiction as a result of Australia's festive culture, which makes drinking and partying to excess the norm.

"Christmas and the New Year not only make alcohol and party drugs more accessible, but friends and family are less likely to rebuke antisocial behaviour brought on by intoxication. For those who would condemn it, it can be much more difficult for them to recognise when a loved one is abusing drugs or alcohol," said Mr Brown.

"Families can be a great support to borderline or recovering addicts, but they can also be a hindrance. This time of year is traditionally a time to get together with family, but for some people this can put them in a very stressful environment. For other people, who may not have many family or friends, they can become very lonely.

"Evidence from clinical experience shows there is an annual spike in depression, domestic violence and car accidents at this time each year, which can all be fuelled by drugs and alcohol."

The New Year can be ideal for people with a drug or alcohol addiction to commit to a fresh start. Cameron Brown provides the following tips for people attempting to come clean in 2013:

- Be realistic about your resolution. If you are an addict or an alcoholic it is unlikely that you will be able to kick the habit overnight. Create a plan, rather than expecting to be able to stop abruptly.
- If spending so much time with family is starting to feel a bit overwhelming, take yourself for a break, or discuss your concern with them.
- Ask a friend or family member to help keep you accountable at parties.
- Be specific with your goals- a big rule that is often broken is making goals that are too vague and open ended, like 'lose weight'. Ask yourself: What areas would I like to reduce in my alcohol/drug consumption? When do I want to achieve this by? What resources do I have available to help me? Having an endpoint in mind makes it easier to break the habits, and will give you a greater sense of accomplishment!



- Remember that there are slips and lapses in judgement, and you may drink or use when you don't want to. Do not be discouraged. If you have cut down or quit and have a lapse, reassess your goals and the help you need- don't give up!
- Have a routine to stick to during the more difficult days. For example, decide when you will arrive and leave gatherings, rather than letting stress and anxiety build which can lead to relieving these feelings by drinking.
- Keep a daily self-care routine. Recovery and quitting is as much about life change as it is about stopping using. Make sure that you have relaxation, physical exercise and healthy eating as part of your routine. Without these things it is easy to fall into the traps that lead back to addiction.
- If you think it is right for you, seek professional help from [The Cabin](#) or a similar drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.
- Remember that the New Year is not the only time that you can resolve to stop drug taking.

ENDS

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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 addicts in recovery returning from The Cabin.

www.thecabinchiangmai.com