



MEDIA RELEASE

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**REHABILITATE RATHER THAN REHIRE TO ADDRESS WORKPLACE
DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION**

Australian workers look beyond local shores to save their health & careers

Substance abuse is a growing problem in Australian workplaces and businesses are impacted by absenteeism, loss in productivity and healthcare costs¹, but costly employee turnover can be avoided through effective rehabilitation and intervention programs.

Over one-third of the patients treated at The Cabin Chiang Mai, a leading drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility in Thailand, are Australian. They are patients who have searched farther afield for affordable solutions to keep their health and careers on track, with many from high socio-economic backgrounds, including accountants, dentists, property developers, models, and lawyers.

Psychologist Cameron Brown is an Australian-based aftercare provider for returned clients of The Cabin Chiang Mai. He has assisted many recovering drug and alcohol addicts to return to the Australian workforce, and believes the cost of treatment far outweighs the cost to a business losing an employee and training new hires to the same level.

“Despite their addictions many employees are still high-functioning and valuable contributors to a workplace, hence the added layer of complexity in identifying issues early and determining the appropriate course of action.

“In addition, because their staff have previously been good performers, Australian workplaces are finding it more cost effective and socially responsible to help rehabilitate an employee, rather than dismiss and rehire,” said Brown.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the average cost of hiring an employee is \$42,578, which includes earnings, superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation and fringe benefits tax².

Brown says this could be a very modest figure when considering the salaries of employees working for some of the major global accounting, law and financial firms - whereas a 28-day stay at The Cabin, costs approximately \$12,000.

“Employers have several options for enabling employee rehabilitation. For example, The Cabin Chiang Mai has facilitated numerous Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) in Australian workplaces, as well as treating clients on site in Chiang Mai.

“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.

¹ *National Drug Strategy Household Survey Report* Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW), 2010.

² *Labour Costs, Australia, 2002-03*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, June 2004



“Importantly for many of our clients, it provides total anonymity during their recovery process,” Brown concluded.

Each year an estimated 7.4 million working days are lost due to substance abuse³, costing Australian business \$A5.2 billion annually⁴.

The problem shows no sign of going away, as Australians are the biggest recreational drug users in the world⁵, and research has shown that people of higher socio economic status are more likely to consume alcohol at risky levels⁶ and to have recently used marijuana, cannabis, or amphetamine type substances⁷.

“The important thing for employers to realise is that these addictions can be overcome, and with their support, valuable employees can be restored to their full health and potential in the workplace,” said Brown.

ENDS

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

For more information, or to speak with Cameron Brown please contact **Edelman Healthcare**

Kerin Heatley, Account Director

+614 04 831 253, kerin.heatley@edelman.com

Amy Sanders, Assistant Account Executive

+61 (02) 9291 3364, amy.sanders@edelman.com

³ “The costs of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug abuse to Australian society in 2004/05,” Collins & Lapsley, *National Drug Strategy*, Department of Health and Ageing, Federal Government of Australia, Canberra, updated 2008.

⁴ *National Drug Strategy Household Survey Report* Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW), 2010.

⁵ *World Drug Report 2012*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012.

⁶ *AIHW statistics in drug use in Australia, 2004*, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW) 2004.

⁷ *AIHW statistics in drug use in Australia, 2004*, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW) 2004.