**PRO FORMA MEDIA RELEASE FOR 2021 EVENT PARTNERS**

**Time to remember loved ones and end overdose**

Local communities in **[PLACE]** and around the world are coming together on **[DATE]** to remember those who have died or suffered permanent injury due to drug overdose.

Observed on the 31st of August every year, International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) seeks to create better understanding of overdose, reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, and create change that reduces the harms associated with drug use.

**[Details of what is planned in your community – the how, what, when, and where of the event]**

By holding an event this year, the people of **[PLACE]** are joining themselves to a global movement for understanding, compassion, and change.

In 2019, there were a record 874 IOAD events of all kinds, held in 39 countries. Last year, despite the disruption caused by COVID-19, the world united again to hold 602 events – a phenomenal result.

People and communities come together annually to raise awareness of one of the world’s most urgent public health crises – one that, unfortunately, is only getting worse.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime’s most recent World Annual Drug Report, 585,000 people around the world died as a result of drug use in 2017.

Statistics for the 2020 calendar year show that the situation has become even more critical since the current pandemic began, decreasing tolerance of people who use drugs and disrupting both services and the drug supply chain.

A full list of the IOAD 2021 events currently planned around the world will be displayed at: <https://www.overdoseday.com/activities-2021/>

International Overdose Awareness Day is convened by Penington Institute, an Australian not-for-profit.

**Quotes attributable to event organiser or spokesperson (example below):**

“We are putting on this event to honour our loved ones who have died or been injured because of an overdose,” said **[NAME]**.

“By coming together to remember them, we stand together to say that more needs to be done to end overdose in our community.”

“Overdose can affect anybody and one of the messages of this day is that the people who overdose are our sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters – they are loved and they are missed.”

“No family should ever have to go through the pain of losing a loved one because of overdose.”

“We encourage members of the community with lived experience to come to our event and to stand in solidarity with the men and women who have been personally affected by overdose.”