

THE SOBER TOOLBOX

An easy-to-use workbook to help you build your own set of *tools* to cope with life's challenges as you cut back or cut out booze.



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About the Sober in the Country Sober Toolbox

Who is this Toolbox for?

This Sober Toolbox is for anyone who is:

- cutting back on the booze
- wanting to quit
- newly sober or well into their sobriety journey.

What's inside?

This workbook is full of suggestions and activities to help you build your own personalised set of 'sober tools' that you can use in challenging times to check in with yourself, navigate stress or distressing emotions, socialise, and take good care of yourself ... all without alcohol as a go-to crutch.

Why is this Toolbox tailored to just remote and rural Aussies?

We know that learning how to cut back on booze – or choosing to be 100% sober in the country – can be extra challenging because not only do we have less-than-adequate access to primary healthcare and other clinical support, but because alcohol is the 'social glue' that binds so much of what our close-knit communities do.

Why will this Toolbox help me?

We know there is no one-size-fits-all solution and no singular, linear, uniform approach to cutting back or cutting out booze. But your chances are *greatly* improved when you choose to get out in front of this stuff and do what you can to:

- identify your triggers (to unhealthy coping using alcohol) and
- have an action plan ready to go with a variety of 'tools' to reach for.

Are you ready to be your own best mate?

So, if you're ready to make your health and mental health a non-negotiable priority in your life, keep on reading ... and get going on creating your own set of tools for your Sober Toolbox.



We've been conditioned to think life without alcohol is somehow 'less than' or a loss, but at Sober in the Country we know the opposite to be true: life without booze is actually amazing.

We are daily witnesses to endless stories of bush lives being saved and changed, families restored, and health and relationships repaired.

**Shanna Whan,
CEO of Sober in the Country**

A letter from Shanna Whan, CEO of Sober in the Country

Hello friends,

If you're new here, I want to assure you that you're not alone.

I'd also love to remind you that Sober in the Country has been built entirely on a lifelong, firsthand understanding of the complexities of life in geographic and social isolation with a lack of service and support. Not to mention the challenges of cutting back or quitting booze while living in communities built upon a pervasive drinking culture as old as time.

We also know that even the best intentions for changing our lives can quickly become unstuck in the hard times and that some of us might stumble or fall off the sobriety horse. This is why you will hear us talking a lot at Sober in the Country (and in our [Bush Tribe](#) peer support group) about how vital it is that you get a plan in place. You can do so much immediately to start making positive changes ... and this Toolbox is a great start!

Choosing sobriety is a journey for you if you're willing and prepared to make physical and mental health a non-negotiable priority in your life: one that will require you to be your best advocate, researcher, and champion. **I'm so glad you're here choosing to build your own Sober Toolbox because what you put into your sobriety is what you will get out, and the rewards are health, happiness, and so much more.**

To help get you started, we've put together some of the most helpful suggestions we've learned over the years, along with some hands-on steps and activities to help you navigate your next rodeo, backyard BBQ, BNS, footy grand final win, footy grand final loss, picnic, silly season, 'crop tour', Happy Hour and beyond. You will find even more tips and resources at our website: soberinthecountry.org

I truly believe that all of us can choose change and that there is always, always hope.

Much love,



Shanna

Your questions about the Sober Toolbox answered

What is a Sober Toolbox?

It's simply your personalised collection of healthy strategies: your 'tools' you can rely on to help you navigate challenging times. These strategies are healthy alternatives that can help relieve pain and move out of a stressful state of mind instead of relying on alcohol to achieve that relief.

What's in this document?

We've put together a bunch of evidence-based tips, techniques and strategies (thanks to our friends at [Hello Sunday Morning](#), building on their *Healthy Sober Living Toolkit*) to help you create 'tools' just for you. Please remember our golden rule at Sober in the Country is that there is no one size, shape, or formula 'for all', so the very best thing you can do is fill this Toolbox with what works best for you.

Who can benefit from using this Toolbox?

Whether you're someone choosing to cut back a bit (or a lot) or you've worked out that moderation simply isn't working for you and you've got to choose abstinence, you can benefit from having a personalised Sober Toolbox.

Why does your Toolbox work?

No matter where you're at in terms of your drinking, having your Sober Toolbox on hand is an easy way to put a strong selfcare framework in place you can draw on, at any time or place. Think

of this Toolbox as 'an investment in self' while you're learning new ways to check in with yourself, manage difficult emotions, tolerate distress and stay calm without the use of alcohol. Having tools at the ready is like being forewarned and forearmed for the coming challenges and stressors in your life.

When/how should I build my Sober Toolbox?

Choose a day to sit down when you're feeling clear-minded and calm. Give yourself the time to think about your needs, goals and boundaries, and get ready to meet them. This Toolbox is a rock-solid asset for tackling the tricky bits that can and will come as you embark on being sober in the country. You'll also find your needs and challenges will change as you progress on your journey, so it's a great idea to come back from time to time and fill in this workbook again to build yourself a new and updated 'Toolbox'.

When/how should you use your Sober Toolbox?

In the same way you'd never head down the back paddock without your actual toolbox or spare tyre on hand, we strongly recommend you keep this Sober Toolbox handy. Whether it's after the footy grand final, after five, or in the thick of silly season, use your Toolbox liberally as required. And ensure it's always packed, checked, and refreshed. Your Toolbox should also change and evolve along with your sobriety as you gain strength and find new areas to prioritise your self-support.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Now you've read a little bit about what's in store in this workbook, it's time to get going building the first tool in your own custom Sober Toolbox. This tool will help you set some goals for yourself as you get going on (or continue) your journey to cut back or cut out the booze.



TOOL 1

Embrace a holistic approach to my health and wellbeing

Believe it or not,
the word ‘holistic’ is
your mate.

We’ve been conditioned in the bush to scoff at terms like ‘holistic health’, right? We have been raised with the ‘work hard, play harder’ mentality and the refrain ‘go hard or go home.’

Well, if you’re here, chances are you’re one of the lucky ones who has worked out that these attitudes are doing nothing good for your physical or mental health ... and you’re ready to buck the trend. Good for you! Embarking on a choice not to follow the mob in our bush culture – where deadly drinking is revered, encouraged, and applauded – is a truly courageous choice. And, thanks to a decade of hard slog and advocacy with Sober in the Country, the great news is that you aren’t alone: there’s a quiet army of like-minded rural people gathering and choosing to say ‘no thanks’ or ‘not today’ because they’ve worked out alcohol is not working in their lives. (Check out our online support group, the [Bush Tribe](#), on our website.)

To thrive, you need to take a truly holistic approach to health and well-being. In simple terms, ‘holistic’ just means we look at all the bits and pieces not just one or two of them.

For this tool, we ask you to look at all aspects of your health, including:

Physical Health

Psychological Health

Social Health

Community and Culture

Relationships

Occupational Health, and

Emotional Wellbeing.

Going one step at a time and deep diving into each of these core aspects of your health can help you to find purpose, hope and a way forward.

TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT ON THIS CONCEPT:

In order to find a happier, healthier physical, mental and emotional balance in your life, you need to take a good look at ALL the aspects that make up you and your life.

What are SMART goals?

In this task we're asking you to set 'SMART goals' for yourself. SMART is an acronym that stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. Goals that are SMART have a significantly greater chance of being accomplished.

This means each goal you come up with needs to be:

SPECIFIC: well defined and clear

can be measured so that you can see your progress and know when you've reached

MEASURABLE: your goal

something that is relevant to your aims and that you can do (making sure it isn't too huge a step to take at this time, which would make it impossible to achieve)

ACHIEVABLE:

can be achieved with the resources and time you have available to you and that you feel you can commit to, and

REALISTIC:

it must have a start date and an end or 'target' date so that you have a clear timeline for the goal, and as a bonus this will create time urgency as motivation to get going on it.

TIMELY:

When you are ready to apply this process, you can begin the activity on the next page to set a SMART goal for each domain as you want it to be in your life.

ACTIVITY

People who set holistic, SMART goals have a much greater chance of achieving change in their lives

What SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) goal can you set yourself for each domain of your life right now?

1. PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

For example, maintain a balanced state of mind through weekly mindfulness, meditation, or swapping 'wine o'clock' with a simple walk around the paddock with the dogs to clear your mind.

2. SOCIAL HEALTH

For example, ensure you connect with at least one friend every week, face-to-face (if you can), via a phone call, Skype or FaceTime, or (at the very least) via a Zoom recovery or support meeting online.

3. COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

For example, get involved at a community level as a volunteer or in service work as this gets you out of 'self' and into doing something self/less, which is a powerful tool in many sobriety stories.

4. RELATIONSHIPS

For example, try and understand a loved one's point of view on life in general, or, more specifically, consider how your drinking might have impacted their lives.

5. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

For example, find a new meaningful and enjoyable activity or hobby, learn a new skill or how to cook your favourite dish.

6. EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

For example, learn to face something you fear or find stressful without the use of alcohol.

7. PHYSICAL HEALTH

For example, book and attend an appointment with your GP to find out where your health is at. Look into finding a personal trainer or ways to do home-based workouts (e.g. via YouTube classes).

WHAT'S NEXT?



Well done. Now you have identified a specific goal that you want to achieve in each important aspect of your life, it's time to take a look at building a support network to back you up while you're starting the work to achieve those goals and make changes in your life.



TOOL 2

Build my support network

People with a supportive network usually feel better equipped to cope with their day-to-day life stresses and problems.

A like-minded, sober-supportive community is crucial when we're choosing to drink less or quit alcohol because we heal best in community and not in isolation. A cheer squad around you allows you to feel part of a tribe and to have a sense of belonging while learning from others sharing their experiences and challenges.

Given the massive distances and social isolation remote and rural Aussies experience, face-to-face support is difficult (if not impossible) to access. This is precisely why, at Sober in the Country, we created the [Bush Tribe](#): our lovingly curated online community which has now connected over 2,000 rural and remote people across Australia who share the wish to change where they're at in terms of alcohol use. The Bush Tribe ensures you have an online space and place to call home (where you can be anonymous if necessary).

While doing this activity around support networks, you may find, after some reflection, that there are others nearby in your town or bush community who are good supporters ... and we encourage you to keep an open mind about who that might be.

ACTIVITY

Who can provide me with support?

Anyone you trust and feel comfortable approaching can be a supporter. You can also list online communities like the [Bush Tribe](#) here.

There are six kinds of support that may be beneficial for you to focus on. Let's go through them one by one in this activity.

It's okay if you can't identify a support person for all six kinds of support. Just keep an open mind when thinking about your friends, family and community, and fill in what's relevant to you.

1. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Who is a true mate or person you can yarn about your feelings with?

2. MORAL SUPPORT

Who is a person that can just be there to encourage you?

3. INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

Who can help you with practical tasks such as feeding the chooks if you've got to go away or picking up the kids at the farm gate on days that you're out in the paddock?

4. MENTOR SUPPORT

Is there someone trusted in your life who can provide you with guidance and instruction or advice?

5. RECREATIONAL SUPPORT

Who is your knockabout mate you trust to go sober fishing, camping or hiking with, for example?

6. SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

Spirituality is a key aspect of recovery, but the word 'spirituality' has many meanings (not all religious). It's important you find the definition that works for you.

While 'spirituality' often refers to a connection with a higher power outside of the self, many people also define it as a connection to nature, the universe or all living creatures. For others, it may mean their personal faith (e.g. Christianity). When seeking to define a source of spiritual support, ask yourself if there is somewhere, someone or something in your life that allows you to connect with a higher power?

WHAT'S NEXT?



Okay. You now have goals for each domain of your life and you have identified your support community. Great stuff! Now, it's time to plan your responses to some challenges that may emerge when socialising.



TOOL 3

Have a plan of action

Having your action plan ready ahead of time is like being forewarned and forearmed for the coming challenges and stresses in your life.

We know how much booze is woven into the culture of relaxing and celebrating in the bush, from knock off time drinks to BBQs, just hanging with mates (or hanging at home) to a work do or sports event. And when it comes to the triggers and temptations in all those events and more, we say 'being forewarned is being forearmed'.

This activity will help you think ahead and prepare for what's to come rather than having to react in the moment. It will help you have some strategies and verbal responses ready to go to help you protect the decisions you've made for your health. This tool will also help reduce or remove some of the triggers that can make sticking to your goals more difficult.

ACTIVITY

A. Always have a plan and ensure you **BYO** alcohol-free alternatives to backyard BBQs or events and never assume someone else has this covered.

JUST BE CAREFUL



Please be aware that 'zero' or 'low-alcohol' beer, wine, and spirits often contain some alcohol and also perfectly replicate the smell, taste, and feel of alcohol. These drinks can, therefore, be a slippery slope or danger zone for some. If in doubt, avoid these altogether.

Similarly, if you are in doubt and you don't feel safe or ready to go to an event in early sobriety, then don't go. Or perhaps make a plan to leave early at a set time and drive yourself.

WRITE DOWN YOUR PLAN TO BRING YOUR OWN ALCOHOL-FREE DRINKS TO DIFFERENT KINDS OF EVENTS

What do you like to drink (soda water with lemon, lemonade, ETCH Sparkling, alcohol-free beer etc.)? How do you plan to keep your favourite alcohol-free drinks stocked and ready to grab at home and to take to events (if possible) so they're available at short notice?

B. Be prepared to say ‘no thanks’ or ‘not today’ to drinking. Have some ready-to-go responses ready for when someone asks what you want to drink or (inevitably) asks why you aren’t drinking.

For example:

‘Nah I’m all good, thanks, mate - I’m driving tonight.’

‘No thanks, I’m taking a break from booze right now.’

‘I’m on a health challenge right now, but thanks anyway.’

‘I actually don’t drink anymore, have you got a soda water on hand?’

WE SUGGEST YOU WRITE DOWN SOME RESPONSES THAT FEEL RIGHT FOR YOU AND EVEN PRACTISE THEM.

Even though our mates might not have ill intentions when demanding to know more or encouraging us to drink, it can still be really difficult in the early stages of sobriety. So preparation is key.

C. Have an exit plan.

ALWAYS have yourself an exit plan ready to go. Exit plans can help you overcome any obstacles. Have your exit plan ready for those uncomfortable or triggering situations you might find yourself in.

FOUR EXAMPLE EXIT PLANS:

1. Step away as needed

Let your host or a trusted confidant know you might need to leave early. That way, you can slip away without too much attention placed on you.

2. Have your own transport/vehicle and be independent, always!

As we know, in the rural space, we often attend events in car loads. But this can leave us literally stuck in a social scenario. So, if in doubt, ensure you are fully independent and can leave when necessary for your own wellbeing.

3. Call someone

If you are in a social situation and don't have a vehicle or escape plan, please reach out to somebody from your support network and use them as your 'outside insight': aka someone who understands and supports the journey you are on.

4. Go somewhere safe

Ensure you are safe and stay connected with appropriate support. (See the last page for a list of helplines.)

WHEN YOU HAVE AN EVENT COMING UP, STOP AND HAVE A THINK ABOUT YOUR EXIT PLAN FOR THAT EVENT WELL BEFOREHAND

Write down your specific plan for that event, or use this time to brainstorm your exit plans for a few different upcoming events.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Okay. So, you now have a set of plans ready to BYO alcohol-free drinks, say 'no' to offers of booze (and help you in the face of social pressure to drink), and make your exit when you need to ... it's now time to prepare for some of the big emotions that are likely to come up now that you're cutting back or cutting out alcohol.

 **TOOL 4**

Prepare for big emotions

Buckle in for a potentially bumpy road ahead ... but the journey is smoother when shared.

Initially, you might feel raw and vulnerable when it sinks in that escaping or numbing emotional pain with alcohol is no longer an option, and you'll be feeling all the feels you've avoided for a long time.

This can be quite overwhelming. But take courage in knowing that experiencing and working through your feelings with someone you trust is a really important part of the process.

Remind yourself: you will grow through what you go through.

ACTIVITY

Simply being aware that emotional ‘bumps’ are a normal part of the process can help you prepare yourself to face what comes up as you progress in your journey.

At Sober in the Country, we’ve learned that changing your relationship with alcohol is easier with:

- a tribe of like-minded people around you,
- some structured support and/or programs, and/or
- clinical support (if necessary).

That’s why we believe that joining an online support group, seeking individual counselling or coaching support, and listening to a sobriety podcast can all be part of your ‘big-emotions prepping’, too. Hearing about what came up for others along the way and what helped them can not only give you a realistic picture of what’s to come and strategies to cope, but it can also help you feel like you’re not alone in this journey.

Some ideas for people, services and resources you can turn to to help you deal with your big emotions:

- a loved one or mate
- a sober friend
- [support lines](#)
- [sober coaches](#)
- [counselling support](#)
- [our Bush Tribe](#) and other online support communities
- [sobriety books and podcasts](#).

WRITE DOWN SOME PEOPLE, PLACES AND RESOURCES YOU CAN REACH FOR WHEN BIG EMOTIONS COME UP FOR YOU. ADD IN ANYTHING FROM THE SUGGESTED LIST ABOVE YOU ARE INTERESTED TO TRY FOR YOURSELF.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Now you’re forewarned that some big emotions are on their way and you’ve had a think about how to learn some tips from others’ experiences and/or access support, the next activity is designed to help you with another tricky old thing we all have to deal with in our lives: stress.

 **TOOL 5**

Manage my stress

We can't cut stress out of our lives completely, but by flexing our stress-management 'muscles', we can become stronger and more resilient to stress over time.

Stress can interfere with your life and tends to be heightened during holidays, weekends, boozy events, and the silly season. The good news is that there are strategies to mitigate stress before it starts as well as strategies for when you're already in the thick of it.

The checklist on the next page helps you identify or remind yourself of strategies that have worked for you that you'd perhaps like to start using again to help you cope with stress and urges. As you complete this activity, you'll likely also identify some new strategies you'll want to give a whirl.



ACTIVITY

When stress interferes with your life, it can be challenging to remember that you have some excellent options for minimising its effect on you.

Tick the appropriate box to remind you which strategies you are already using or would like to try to help you cope more effectively with the stresses in your life. You'll be pleasantly surprised at how many of these tools are already in your mental toolbox!

STRATEGY	I already use this strategy	I'll try this strategy
Embrace a holistic approach to my health and wellbeing. (Tool 1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopt healthy eating habits and always start the day with a nutritious breakfast - a healthy diet can boost my mood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get enough sleep and put a good wind-down and sleep routine in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage in daily exercise and keep moving (if formal exercise isn't for you, try and add in any kind of movement that's fun or feels good for you).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop my community of support network. (Tool 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learn what my triggers are and develop a plan of action. (Tool 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manage stress with calm breathing and taking deep breaths before responding when stressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check in with myself and journal my reflections daily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reach out and talk it out. Share how I'm feeling openly. (Tool 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be my own cheerleader and acknowledge my achievements every step of the way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice self-compassion: go easy on myself by being self-kind not self-critical and recognising I am only human. (Tool 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques (try YouTube).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connect with others online or in person. (Tool 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Express my emotions through art, music, poetry or movement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carry a supply of herbal teabags, essential oils, and other self-soothing items that can comfort me and help me feel grounded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create and celebrate new traditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spend soothing time in nature, with a pet, or even watching the sunrise or sunset.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WHAT'S NEXT?



Now you've had a good look at how you've dealt with stress in your life before today and have identified some practical ways you want to help manage stress from now on too, we're moving on to something that doesn't always come naturally to us remote and rural Aussies: being kind and compassionate to ourselves.

 **TOOL 6**

Treat myself with compassion

While it's a far cry from the usual 'you'll be right, mate!' or 'harden up!' approach we've been raised with on the land, we want you to try to learn to treat yourself with love and embrace the concept of self-compassion.

When we opt to cut back or quit alcohol, it can be tough. So please make yourself a priority in your own life and treat yourself with compassion.

The demands of life and its many stressors often make it challenging to step back and give yourself the understanding and compassion you need and deserve. This can keep you in a vicious cycle that can hold you back.

So be warm and empathic towards yourself, especially if you encounter emotional pain, grief and loneliness. If you can learn to be kind and caring to yourself in hard times, the way you would be to a mate or loved one, you can become a source of support, love and compassion for yourself, too.

ACTIVITY

Eight steps on the path to self-compassion.

1. Be aware of your inner critic

Is your inner voice a harsh taskmaster? Are you hard on yourself for what you perceive as failing in some way? Perhaps you feel sensitive and vulnerable right now. So, now is a great time to practice being gentle with yourself.

WRITE DOWN SOME WORDS OR PHRASES YOU CAN USE TO OFFER YOURSELF SOME PRAISE OR ENCOURAGEMENT TO BALANCE ANY ONGOING, SELF-DOUBTING INNER DIALOGUE.

2. Don't be afraid to say 'yes' or to say 'no'

Permit yourself to say 'yes' to what you would like to do and say 'no' to doing things that make you unhappy.

WRITE DOWN SOME THINGS YOU WANT TO SAY 'YES' OR 'NO' TO, ALONG WITH ANY IDEAS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT HOW TO PRIORITISE YOUR OWN WANTS AND NEEDS.

3. Act on what you *need* and not what you *want*

Clarify what you need and stay focused. This will help you to remain strong and centred. In turn, you will be more able to turn away from automatic behaviours that have kept you stuck in the past, and you will be able to start moving forward.

WRITE DOWN SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT ‘WANTS’ THAT AREN’T SERVING YOU AND/OR ‘NEEDS’ YOU PLAN TO PRIORITISE FROM NOW ON.

4. Be mindfully present with what is in front of you

Tune out from the distractions in your head and be fully present with what is happening right before you. Stay focused and transparent about how you want to show up in that moment. Mindfulness is all about being aware of what’s going on in the moment without judgement.

WHEN FEELING TEMPTED, TRIGGERED OR STRESSED ... TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO SIT QUIETLY AND PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND HOW YOU FEEL IN YOUR BODY.

Afterwards, write down some of your body’s physical cues (e.g. are you feeling tense or agitated?) and any familiar negative thoughts to help you recognise these in future as your early-warning signs that you need some urgent support or self-care.

5. Learn to forgive yourself and others

Are you harsh on yourself and perhaps on others? We might not be able to change the past. However, from this moment, you can choose to unhook from the past so that it frees you up to begin to create new meaning in your life.

WRITE DOWN SOME NOTES ABOUT HOW TO SNIP THE THREADS THAT ARE KEEPING PAST MISTAKES, HURTS OR SLIGHTS ALIVE FOR YOU.

You can also write down some more positive or interesting things about yourself and your life you'd rather be spending your time and energy thinking about.

6. Accept compliments graciously

When someone says something complimentary to you or about you, take it at face value and don't question it. Graciously thank the person for their kindness.

WRITE DOWN SOME COMPLIMENTS YOU'VE RECEIVED AND PRACTICE THE FEELING OF ACCEPTING THE COMPLIMENT (RATHER THAN DISAGREEING WITH OR CONTRADICTING IT INTERNALLY OR VERBALLY).

7. If you need help, ask for it

Asking for help can be tricky. But it's important that you know that you are not alone, whatever you're going through. Although everyone's experiences differ, be assured that many others, just like you, have been through difficult experiences before and navigated those same challenges with support.

REMEMBER TO LEAN ON THE BUSH TRIBE PEER COMMUNITY

The shared experience of other country people 'just like you' who are choosing to cut back or quit booze is a powerful thing and can give you such tremendous strength to lean into. The cornerstone of any peer-led community (in our case, the [Bush Tribe](#)) is the simple but powerful truth of shared lived experience around challenges and obstacles we've had in common. Engaging regularly with peers and giving back can provide motivation and hope that progress and recovery are possible and sustainable.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, INVESTIGATE A SOBRIETY PROGRAM

Almost all of the success stories we've seen play out at Sober in the Country have come down to a combination of the strategies above and those who've followed a 'program' of their choosing and/or a combination of structured support options that include but aren't limited to [SMART Recovery](#), [This Naked Mind](#), [Alcoholics Anonymous](#), and others. Programs can add further structure and guidelines for those feeling lost.

WRITE DOWN SOME OPTIONS FOR WHO/WHERE YOU CAN ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT.

Think about the supporters that are already in your daily life and any support people and programs or services you might benefit from adding to your life.

8. And finally ... Be YOU!

As you navigate the road ahead, be humble and kind and real ... and just be the best version of yourself that you can be.

Be proud that you've invested time and effort in yourself by filling in and using this Toolbox. Recognise that you deserve a better life with less or no booze in it, and recognise that you deserve support and encouragement, too. Committing to changing your life and choosing not to follow the mob takes tremendous courage, and you deserve congratulations!

Finally, remember that this whole sobriety thing gets easier with time. Every single person we've seen come and go through our Bush Tribe group who made a plan, followed a plan, and achieved long-term sobriety, health, and happiness will tell you that exact same thing.

REMINDE YOURSELF:



One day, one hour, one minute at a time.

Things are going to get better.

A life with less or no alcohol can be amazing!

ARE YOU IN CRISIS OR NEED URGENT SUPPORT?

If there's a risk of immediate harm to yourself or others, call:

Emergency Services

000

If you need to talk to a crisis counsellor or are feeling suicidal, call:

Lifeline

13 11 14

Suicide Call Back

1300 659 467

OTHER 24/7 SUPPORT LINES

Call anytime - they are there to help you

Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

MensLine

1300 789 978

Family Drug Support

1300 368 186

National Alcohol & Other Drug Hotline

1800 250 015

Family Member Help

1300 660 068

CREDIT: This Toolbox and its activities are closely adapted from Hello Sunday Morning's *Healthy Sober Living Toolkit - your guide to a healthy and sober holiday season*.

We have reworked their toolkit into a Toolbox that can be applicable to everyday rural life (and not just the silly season). You can find the original Hello Sunday Morning Toolkit (along with other helpful resources) at their website: hellosundaymorning.org

For more support, resources, ideas and positive inspiration to help you on your journey to cut back or cut out booze, head to:

soberinthecountry.org



SOBER
IN THE COUNTRY

Helping mates say no to booze