



IMPROVED SERVICES INITIATIVE

BACKGROUND

The Improved Services for People with Drug and Alcohol Problems and Mental Illness Initiative (Improved Service Initiatives) forms part of the Australian Government's \$1.9 billion mental health reform package.

The 2006-2007 federal budget provided \$73.9 million over five years for the Improved Services Initiative, forming part of the Australian Government's contribution to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Mental Health package. Of this \$65.7 million was allocated for the building of capacity in Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Non-Government (NGO) treatment services to better identify and respond to people with drug and alcohol and mental illness (often referred to as comorbidity or dual diagnosis).

CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS

In 2007, the Department of Health and Ageing sought applications from AOD NGO treatment services for grants of up to \$500,000 over a three-year period to undertake a range of service improvement activities to build organisational capacity to respond to people experiencing co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse.

NATIONAL COMORBIDITY PROJECT IMPROVED SERVICES INITIATIVE

The Improved Services Initiative aims to build the organisational capacity of AOD NGO treatment services to better respond to people who experience comorbid drug and alcohol and mental illness issues.

NATIONAL SUPPORT

Peak bodies have been funded under the Cross Sectoral Support and Strategic Partnerships Project (CSSSP) to support and coordinate a statewide approach. This component is part of the Council of Australian Government's National Action Plan on Mental Health 2006 – 2011, the National Comorbidity Project.

OTHER NATIONAL COMORBIDITY INITIATIVES

\$8.2million of the federal budget was allocated to continue the work of the National Comorbidity Initiative to improve coordination across psychiatric mental health services and drug treatment services.

Relevant initiatives in this project include

- ▶ The trial dissemination of PsyCheck a mental health screening tool
- ▶ The development of National Comorbidity Clinical Treatment Guidelines
- ▶ The development and roll out of *Can Do: Managing Mental Health and Substance Use in General Practice*
- ▶ Comorbidity Professional Development Scholarship Program
- ▶ Comorbidity Service Model Evaluation Project
- ▶ Supporting clinical supervision of post graduate psychology and social worker placements

VAADA

VAADA will support the twenty-seven Victorian funded services as they undertake their capacity building projects. VAADA's key focus areas are to:

- ▶ Build linkages and strategic partnerships between AOD sector and other health and community support services
- ▶ Assist AOD NGO's to undertake organisational change
- ▶ Identify and facilitate training opportunities
- ▶ Disseminate targeted information and resources

LINKAGES & PARTNERSHIPS

VAADA is working with key stakeholders in the area of comorbidity. VicServ (Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Services peak body), Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Branch Department of Human Services, the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative, General Practice Victoria, and Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre have agreed to participate in a Reference Group as part of the Improved Services Initiative.

WEBSITE

The VAADA website will provide targeted information and resources relevant to the identification and management of comorbidity, as well as a calendar of training, developments in comorbidity, research outcomes and information on screening tools together with updates on national complementary activities.

'BRINGING IT TOGETHER' NEWSLETTER

The 'Bringing It Together' newsletter developed by VAADA for the Improved Services Initiative in Victoria, will be widely distributed and provide information to those interested in the comorbidity.

It will profile funded projects funded, provide information on related capacity building projects, updates from other states and territories, and information about related issues will be included in subsequent Bringing It Together will invite key informants to contribute to the newsletter.

FIRST TRANCHE IMPROVED SERVICE GRANTS FUNDED IN VICTORIA

In September 2007, it was announced that the following services would receive \$5.54 million funding to commence their Improved Service Initiative projects in January 2008.

Banyule Community Health	Peninsula Drug and Alcohol Program (PenDAP)
Bendigo Community Health Service	Taskforce
Jesuit Social Services	The Buoyancy Foundation of Victoria
Knox Community Health Service Inc	UnitingCare Moreland Hall
MonashLink Community Health Service	Upper Hume Community Health Service
Odyssey House Victoria	YSAS (Youth Substance Abuse Service)
Ovens and King Community Health Service	

THE SECOND TRANCHE IMPROVED SERVICE GRANTS FUNDED IN VICTORIA

The Australian Government approved funding of \$15.4 million to a further 36 NGO AOD treatment services throughout Australia. 123 Australian organisations will receive funding totalling \$45.3 million to build their organisational capacity to respond to the needs of people experiencing co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse.

The Australian Government approved capacity building grants to a further 14 Victorian AOD services to commence capacity building projects in July 2008.

AnglicareVic	Bass Coast Community Health Centre
Bentleigh Bayside Community Health (SEADS)	Inner East Community Health Centre
ISIS Primary Care	Open Family
Plenty Valley Community Health Centre	Reconnexion
SHARC APSU	Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre
Youth Projects	Windana Society
Western Region Alcohol & Drug Services	Western Region Health Centre (Health Works)

27 Victorian Services will benefit from \$11.18 million of funding as part of the Australian Governments \$45.3 million Capacity Building Initiative.

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