

Budget highlights a change in tone

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) notes that the 2015-16 Victorian Budget broadly sets the parameters to provide for the needs of vulnerable Victorians.

The budget reiterates the allocations determined by the Ice Action Plan which includes \$25 million over four years for AOD treatment and other related items. Despite this, the Alcohol and other Drug treatment sector remains the lowest funded health sector in Victoria (see graph below).



We note that the budget provided for services, particularly in health and education but also for the glutted prison system, which is receiving an additional \$333 million.

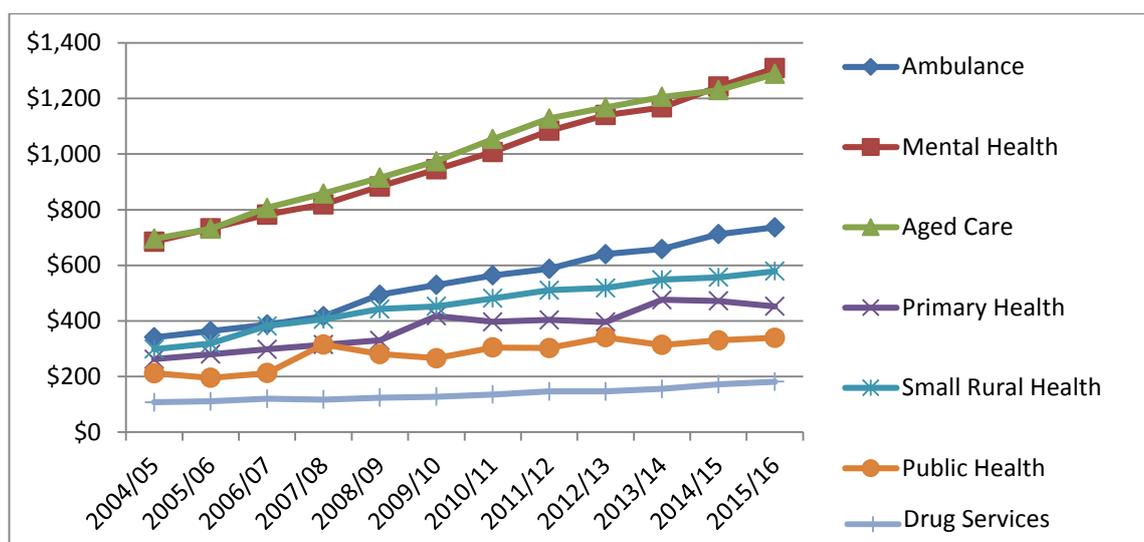
Mr Sam Biondo, Executive Officer of VAADA says, 'this weighty expense on the public purse will provide little benefit for Victorians. The focus should be on means that deter and rehabilitate offenders, such as the Drug Court, which has been proven to provide a robust return on investment and improved outcomes on recidivism.'

Mr Biondo continues, 'furthermore, we need an enhanced alcohol and other drug treatment system which has the stability and capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable clients experiencing a range of complexities'.

VAADA is involved in an encouraging dialogue with government on a range of measures which will be required to rectify various deficits which have emerged in the alcohol and other drug treatment sector following last year's recommissioning.

Mr Biondo says, 'we are looking forward to working with service users, government, departments and other agencies who are all seeking to improve the circumstances service users currently face.'

Budget allocations – Victorian Health Sectors



VAADA is the peak body that represents over 100 Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. On a daily basis these services are dealing with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Sam Biondo on 0414 974 121 for comment or if unavailable, David Taylor on 0413 914 206.

Table 2.11: Output summary

(\$ million)

	2014-15 budget	2014-15 revised	2015-16 budget	Variation ^(a) %
Acute Health Services ^(b)	10275.3	10304.0	10967.1	6.7
Ambulance Services ^(c)	696.5	711.8	736.6	5.8
Mental Health ^(d)	1260.6	1242.7	1309.0	3.8
Ageing Aged and Home Care ^(e)	1203.7	1230.2	1288.6	7.1
Primary, Community and Dental Health ^(f)	462.3	472.0	452.3	-2.2
Small Rural Services ^(g)	560.2	556.8	578.7	3.3
Public Health ^(h)	328.8	329.9	339.3	3.2
Drugs Services ⁽ⁱ⁾	165.1	172.0	181.3	9.8
Disability Services ^(j)	1677.3	1671.0	1780.0	6.1
Child Protection and Family Services ^(k)	847.1	866.0	990.8	17.0
Youth Services and Youth Justice ^(l)	141.1	142.7	155.7	10.3
Concessions to Pensioners and Beneficiaries ^{(m)(n)}	718.1	665.0	711.2	-1.0
Housing Assistance ^(o)	398.9	428.5	420.8	5.5
Empowering Individuals and Communities ^{(p)(q)}	147.7	148.8	137.5	-6.9
Total	18 882.6	18 941.3	20 048.9	6.2

Source: Department of Health and Human Services

Notes:

- (a) Variation between 2014-15 budget and 2015-16 budget.
- (b) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects funding for the implementation of policy initiatives announced in current and previous budgets as well as indexation.
- (c) The higher 2015-16 budget primarily reflects funding provided for government policy commitments.
- (d) The higher 2015-16 budget primarily reflects funding provided for government policy commitments.
- (e) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects additional funding provided in the 2015-16 Budget for the Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Order and the ongoing impact of Commonwealth contributions, which had not been agreed at the time of publication of the 2014-15 Budget and indexation.
- (f) The lower 2015-16 budget primarily reflects the cessation of the National Partnership Agreement on Treating More Public Dental Patients.
- (g) The higher 2015-16 budget primarily reflects funding provided for government policy commitments and indexation.
- (h) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects the transfer of funding for Biomedical Research as a result of the machinery of government changes. This is partially offset by the cessation of the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health.
- (i) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects funding provided for the Ice Action Plan, the Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Order and indexation.
- (j) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects additional funding provided in the 2015-16 Budget and the impact of the Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Order.
- (k) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects additional funding provided in 2015-16 Budget and the impact of the Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Order.
- (l) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects the operation of an additional 45 bed facility at the Youth Justice Centre in Malmesbury to address capacity concerns and improve client safety.
- (m) The lower 2015-16 budget reflects efficiency improvements identified during compliance audits of concession providers and the improved administration of energy concessions.
- (n) The output summary includes funding for transport concessions transferred to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. This funding is reflected in the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources' Integrated Transport Services output.
- (o) The higher 2015-16 budget reflects additional funding provided in 2015-16 Budget and the Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Order.
- (p) The 2015-16 budget reflects the full year impact of the machinery of government transfer of Sport and Recreation (excluding Major Events) from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.
- (q) The 2014-15 budget differs to the amount reported in the 2014-15 Budget papers due to machinery of government changes.

Drug Services

Drug Services outputs include programs and services aimed at promoting and protecting health by reducing death, disease and social harm caused by the use and misuse of licit and illicit drugs.

Major outputs/deliverables Performance measures	Unit of measure	2015-16 estimate	2014-15		2013-14 actual
			expected outcome	2014-15 estimate	

Drug Prevention and Control

Encourages all Victorians to minimise the harmful effects of illicit and licit drugs, including alcohol, by providing a comprehensive range of strategies, which focus on enhanced community and professional education, targeted prevention and early intervention, and the use of effective regulation.

<i>Quantity</i>					
Contacts through Family Drug Help	number	5 000	5 500	5 000	5 514
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is higher than the 2014-15 target due to heightened public awareness and media coverage (including the 'What are you doing on Ice' campaign) of drug issues and available services.</i>					
Licences and permits issued to health services or businesses for the manufacture, use or supply of drugs and poisons	number	1 425	1 460	1 425	1 433
Needles and syringes provided through the Needle and Syringe Program	number (000)	8 800	8 800	8 800	8 903
Number of telephone, email, website contacts and in person responses to queries and requests for information on alcohol and drug issues (through the Australian Drug Foundation)	number	950 000	1 210 500	450 000	1 031 696
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is higher than the 2014-15 target due to heightened public awareness and media coverage (including the 'What are you doing on Ice' campaign) of drug issues and available services.</i>					
<i>The lower 2015-16 target reflects the effect of anticipated growth in activity.</i>					
Treatment permits issued to medical practitioners or nurse practitioners to prescribe Schedule 8 drugs, including pharmacotherapy	number	48 000	45 000	54 000	43 445
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is lower than the 2014-15 target due to changes made to the processing of permits (including issuing permits with extended expiry dates) resulting in fewer renewals and a decrease in the total number of permit applications.</i>					
<i>The lower 2015-16 target reflects these changes occurring during 2014-15.</i>					

Major outputs/deliverables Performance measures	Unit of measure	2015-16 estimate	2014-15 expected outcome	2014-15 estimate	2013-14 actual
Quality					
Pharmacotherapy permits processed within designated timeframe	per cent	100	98	100	97
Cost					
Total output cost	\$ million	33.8	28.8	28.6	26.4
<i>The higher 2015-16 target reflects additional funding for the Ice Action Plan and escalation.</i>					

Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation

Assists the community and individuals to control and reduce the harmful effects of illicit and licit drugs, including alcohol, in Victoria through the provision of community based non-residential and residential treatment services, education and training, and support services.

Quantity					
Clients on the pharmacotherapy program	number	14 000	14 000	14 000	13 961
Commenced courses of treatment: community-based drug treatment services	number	6 755	20 429	6 455	41 674
<i>The higher 2015-16 target reflects the effect of additional funding provided in the 2015-16 budget. The 2014-15 expected outcome is higher than the 2014-15 target due to the introduction of new reporting requirements and data definitions. The data quality has been improving and it is anticipated that targets will be adjusted when the data collection stabilises.</i>					
Commenced courses of treatment: residential-based drug treatment services	number	6 062	6 062	6 062	6 803
Number of Drug Treatment Activity Units (DTAUs)	number	67 394	53 900	67 394	nm
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is lower than the 2014-15 target due to delays in recommissioning adult non-residential treatment services.</i>					
Number of new residential withdrawal clients	number	2 200	2 000	2 200	2 310
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is lower than the 2014-15 target due to new arrangements for intake, assessment and referral introduced in 2014.</i>					
Residential bed days	number	107 310	130 100	107 310	145 660
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is higher than the 2014-15 target due to over-reporting by drug agencies, where discharged cases are not being closed out. The data quality has been improving and it is anticipated that targets will be adjusted when compliance with the data standards stabilises.</i>					
Quality					
Percentage of new clients to existing clients	per cent	50	45	50	45.26
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is lower than the 2014-15 target due to increased client acuity and the transition to the new drug treatment system.</i>					

Major outputs/deliverables <i>Performance measures</i>	<i>Unit of measure</i>	<i>2015-16 estimate</i>	<i>2014-15 expected outcome</i>	<i>2014-15 estimate</i>	<i>2013-14 actual</i>
Percentage of residential rehabilitation courses of treatment greater than 65 days	per cent	50	50	50	36.92
Successful courses of treatment (episodes of care): community-based drug treatment services	number	5 868	8 295	5 868	42 557
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is higher than the 2014-15 target due to delays in recommissioning adult non-residential treatment services.</i>					
Successful courses of treatment (episodes of care): residential-based drug treatment services	number	5 636	5 636	5 636	5 541
Trained alcohol and drug workers	per cent	85	85	85	67
Timeliness					
Average working days between screening of client and commencement of community-based drug treatment	days	3	1	3	1
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is lower than the 2014-15 target due to improved management of the Bed Vacancy Register, this is a positive result.</i>					
Average working days between screening of client and commencement of residential-based drug treatment	days	6	3	6	5
<i>The 2014-15 expected outcome is lower than the 2014-15 target due to improved management of the Bed Vacancy Register, this is a positive result.</i>					
Cost					
Total output cost	\$ million	147.5	143.1	136.5	127.7
<i>The higher 2015-16 target is primarily due to funding provided for the Ice Action Plan, the Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Order and indexation.</i>					

Source: Department of Health and Human Services

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT – ICE ACTION PLAN

Victoria’s Ice Action Plan is a package of new initiatives to reduce the supply, demand and harm caused by ice.

The plan has been developed on the advice of the Premier’s Ice Action Taskforce and builds on the Victorian Parliament’s 2014 inquiry into the supply and use of methamphetamines.

This package is for the things that cannot wait. The Government will continue to work with the Taskforce and the community to continue efforts to reduce the supply, demand and harm of this drug.

Output initiatives

Table 1.4: Output initiatives – Ice Action Plan

	(\$ million)				
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Community ice action groups	..	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Cracking down on clandestine drug labs	..	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Expand drug treatment services with a focus on rural rehabilitation	..	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7
Expand investment in clinical supervision	..	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
Expand investment in needle and syringe programs	..	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
Support for families and communities	..	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.1
Training and supervision for workers ^(a)	..	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0
Total output initiatives ^(b)	..	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.6

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance

Notes:

(a) Funding is represented as \$0.0 in 2017-18 and 2018-19 due to rounding. \$40 000 is allocated to Training and supervision for workers across 2017-18 and 2018-19.

(b) Tables may not add due to rounding.

Community ice action groups

Grants will be provided to communities across regional Victoria to help conduct forums, promote education and evaluate effective local strategies to address the increasing harm of ice.

This initiative delivers on the Government’s election commitment as published in Labor’s Financial Statement 2014.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Health and Human Services’ Drug Prevention and Control output.

Cracking down on clandestine drug labs

Victoria Police's Forensic Drug Branch will be expanded to increase its drug profiling and intelligence capability, and improve the ability to track down and close clandestine drug laboratories.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Justice and Regulation's Policing output.

Expand drug treatment services with a focus on rural rehabilitation

Drug rehabilitation services will be expanded, particularly in rural and regional Victoria, and innovative models of non-residential rehabilitation will be established to enable more people to get help sooner.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Health and Human Services' Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation output.

Expand investment in clinical supervision

Alcohol and other drug treatment and mental health workers will be better supported through strengthened and extended clinical supervision training.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Health and Human Services' Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation output.

Expand investment in needle and syringe programs

The needle and syringe program will be expanded to reduce harm to injecting ice users and the broader community.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Health and Human Services' Drug Prevention and Control output.

Support for families and communities

Families and communities will be better equipped to identify and support people affected by ice through training and family support services in the drug treatment system across 16 catchments.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Health and Human Services' Drug Prevention and Control output.

Training and supervision for workers

A standard best practice training curriculum will be developed for frontline workers to better equip them to respond to people affected by ice.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Health and Human Services' Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation output.

Asset initiatives

Table 1.5: Asset initiatives – Ice Action Plan

	(\$ million)					
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	TEI
New booze and drug buses	..	2.9	6.8	5.3	..	15.0
Total asset initiatives	..	2.9	6.8	5.3	..	15.0

Source: Department of Treasury and Finance

New booze and drug buses

Funding will provide Victoria Police with new booze and drug buses to improve road safety.

This initiative delivers on the Government's election commitment as published in Labor's Financial Statement 2014.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Justice and Regulation's Policing Services output.



MEDIA RELEASE

5 May 2015

VCOSS welcomes budget boost to support vulnerable families

VCOSS welcomes those commitments in today's state budget that will help tackle poverty and disadvantage in the Victorian community.

Today's state budget contains a number of positive measures aimed at improving education, child protection, employment, public transport and reducing family violence.

"This budget is a good first step by the Andrews Government to create a solid foundation for vulnerable Victorian families and communities, and opens the way to further investment to build a Victoria without poverty over future budgets," said Emma King, CEO of VCOSS.

Education

"The budget contains important initiatives to keep young people engaged in education and training. VCOSS is pleased to see new initiatives which will help families meet spiralling school costs and help ensure children and young people do not miss out on educational opportunities," Emma King said.

These include:

- \$148.3 million for the Camps, Sport and Excursion Fund
- An additional \$15.7 million for the State School Relief Fund for affordable school uniforms
- \$13.7 million for Breakfast Clubs in the 500 most disadvantaged government primary schools, to help children get a good start to each school day.

- \$1.6 million for a mentoring program for disadvantaged students

“The budget has reconfirmed its commitment to the Gonski School funding agreement until the end of 2017, helping provide some certainty to students, principals and parents.”

The \$50 million in capital funding announced today for early learning centres, including 3 and 4 year old kinder programs, child and maternal health services and occasional care is welcome.

Tackling unemployment

“The government has emphasised the importance of tackling unemployment in this budget and the broad public transport and infrastructure packages outlined today by the Treasurer will be a stimulus for job creation, with many of the jobs located in regional and outer-suburban Victoria.”

“Increased funding for measures outlined in the government’s *Back to Work* package will assist people at risk of unemployment.”

Welcome initiatives include:

- A significant infrastructure and transport program, investing billions of dollars into job-boosting projects
- \$10.6 million for Melbourne’s North Innovation and Investment fund, to help create employment opportunities in communities affected by manufacturing closures
- \$500 million for Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, helping to improve job prospects for regional communities
- \$200 million for the TAFE Rescue Fund, which will help TAFEs focus their efforts on building skills required for local jobs, and improve access to TAFE campuses previously closed
- \$32 million for Local Learning and Employment Networks to work with young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging from education, and put them on a pathway to work.

“The funding boost to TAFEs announced today, along with the review of Vocational Education and Training currently underway, will help

pathways to employment for Victorians facing disadvantage. It will also provide a boost to local regional economies.”

“The renewed \$32 million commitment to Local Learning and Employment Networks will boost job prospects for young people in regional Victoria. This is an important platform for expanding future support for young people to stay engaged in jobs and training.”

Community sector

VCOSS welcomes the certainty for funding for community sector organisations in this year’s Budget. The government has contributed \$935 million towards the mandated Equal Remuneration Order (ERO).

The Government has agreed to work with VCOSS on future years’ indexation as part of ongoing service agreement discussions, and has also agreed to work with VCOSS to monitor ERO implementation.

We also note that there will be further cost pressures on the community sector particularly as a result of the National Minimum wage order, which is on top of the ERO. We note that indexation has been provided on the same basis as the previous 3-year funding and service agreement.

Preventing family violence

The State Budget has allocated funding of \$81.3 million to services preventing and responding to family violence, and we look forward to seeing further commitments coming out of the Royal Commission process. Key initiatives include:

- \$36 million allocated to the Royal Commission on Family Violence
- \$16 million in the Family Violence Fund for urgent responses to victims of family violence arising from the Royal Commission
- Expanded legal assistance for victim of family violence
- \$2.5 million for men’s behaviour change programs

“Victoria’s historic Royal Commission into Family Violence will also give the government future opportunities to expand support for

services and programs that address the underlying causes of violence against women and children.”

“Family violence services already face growing demand and it is likely that publicity around the Royal Commission will encourage more people experiencing violence to seek help. These funds will help services respond to those growing requests for assistance.”

Public Transport

This Budget represents a huge investment in public transport, which will help Victorians, including people experience disadvantage, connect to jobs, education, health and community services and participate in their communities. We particularly welcome:

- Funding the bus package, which provides \$100 million in new bus services over 4 years
- Allocating funds to major public transport projects, including the Metro Rail Tunnel, level crossings and the Caulfield-Dandenong project, and planning funds for Mernda Rail
- Over \$2 billion in new trains and trams, which will be built in Victoria
- \$50 million towards a trial of 24-hour public transport on weekends, helping people get home safely after an evening out.

We look forward to working with the Government to secure further improvements to the accessibility of public transport for people experiencing transport disadvantage in the future.

Homelessness and housing

The Budget has included some initiatives to reduce homelessness, including the allocation of \$40.3 million to continue to fund homelessness innovation action projects.

This initiative can be built upon in future with a more expansive affordable housing strategy that aligns policies, maximises the supply of affordable housing and ensures those who require affordable housing can access it. We are aware the State Government

Victoria, and look forward to working with them on this issue in the future.”

A good start to build upon in the future

“Today’s budget is a good start and a positive first step for the Victorian Government in delivering on key election promises aimed at supporting vulnerable Victorian families. We look forward to continuing to work with the government so that future budgets build further on this, supporting people to overcome disadvantage and become part of strong, cohesive, self-reliant communities, and working to build a Victoria without poverty.”

**For more information, or to arrange an interview
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Follow the conversation at www.twitter.com/vcoss

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