

MEDIA RELEASE - Monday 27th May 2018

VICTORIAN STATE BUDGET 2018-2019

AOD BUDGET INITIATIVES CONTINUE TO BUILD ON RECENT INVESTMENTS

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) has greeted favourably aspects of today's post-election Budget announcements from the Victorian Government. VAADA acknowledges that additional investment builds on the investment that has occurred in Victoria over the past three years in the endeavour to build system capacity and essential programs that are still in short supply.

The announcements provides much needed increases to new and existing activities. Drug services focused allocations include:

- The provision of existing and new forms of the drug naloxone with essential training to be rolled out across the state reaching 25,000 people each year.
- Additional needle and syringe products to be provided to help address drug harms across Victoria.
- Increased hours of access to the Medically Supervised Injecting Room to save more lives.
- \$10.2M has been allocated to a new 30-bed residential rehabilitation facility in Gippsland.
- \$8.1M for the Family Drug Treatment Court in Broadmeadows to support parents address addiction and promote family reunification
- \$6.1M to extend the Court Integrated Service Program to the County Court via an 18 month pilot program to help reduce re-offending and improve community safety.

Noted spending from this year's budget also includes:

- A \$20M investment to reduce incarceration of women, including for programs targeted at women in prisons with a mental illness, intellectual disability or cognitive impairment
- A further \$22.7 million will also be spent on diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration programs that help ex-prisoners with accommodation, employment and drug and alcohol treatment.
- More than \$1.8 Billion for 1,600 new beds and new prison infrastructure, including expansion to the Barwon Prison and Margoneet Correctional Centre by 548 beds.

Mr Sam Biondo, EO, VAADA, says, *"the budget allocations for the alcohol and drug sector this year are not as extensive as previous years as it is a post-election budget. From an alcohol and drug point of view there is still much to do and we would like to see future budgets continuing to build on the solid foundation of previous years to meet Treatment service demand."*

Further "it is hoped that in the near future serious consideration can be given to the burgeoning correctional system, given the large numbers of numbers of prisoners with mental health and drug and alcohol issues."

We look forward to further details relating to these announcements and working with government in progressing these endeavours.

VAADA is the peak body that represents over 80 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