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PRESS RELEASE

[starts]

Victorian Budget will not reduce wait times for alcohol and other drug treatment

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) notes that the 2025/26 State Budget will not address the growing wait times for alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment that Victorians face.

The budget allocation of \$380.8M for 2025/26, amounts to a 1.2% increase in grant funding from a budget figure of \$376.3M in 2024/25. With actual expenditure for this financial year reaching \$391.3M, the budgeted amount for the next financial year represents a cut of \$10.5M at this stage.

Investment in AOD treatment services is based on a government target of 10 days to be assessed from intake with the actual figure being 16 days. From assessment to treatment, the government target is set at a median of 20 days, with the actual figure being more than double, amounting to a median of 44 days.

According to VAADA CEO Chris Christoforou, 'it is impossible to see how AOD services will be able to reduce growing wait times in the absence of an increase to service capacity. It's not tolerable that Victorians need to wait up to 2 months to get treatment from the point when they are ready.'

Within the Budget there is approximately \$14M of new announcements, including:

- \$4M in 2025/26 to support gaps in Victoria's opioid pharmacotherapy system;
- \$4.9M over the next two years for outreach services in North Richmond;
- \$2.6M over the next two years to support residential rehabilitation services;
- \$1.6M in 2025/26 for the Aboriginal Ice Partnership Program;
- \$150,000 in 2025/26 for First Step to support local capacity issues; and
- \$2.2M to support AOD workforce capacity.

'While the lack of immediate investment to fix the foundations of Victorians alcohol and other drug system is concerning, we look forward to the pending release of the Victorian AOD Strategy, which we hope will contain a roadmap and commit resources to rectify entrenched issues of service access and sustainability'.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact David Taylor on 0413 914 206.

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Media stories on alcohol and other drugs may be traumatic for some people. Support is available and we ask that media agencies consider publishing the details below:

If this story has raised issues about your own or others drug and alcohol use, please contact the national hotline for confidential counselling and referral on 1800 250 015

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.

