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MEDIA RELEASE

Federal support for cohealth welcome but certainty for clients remains a priority

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) welcomes the Australian Government's announcement of additional funding for cohealth. This funding will allow general practice services in Collingwood, Fitzroy and Kensington to continue operating until 31 July 2026, providing continuity of care to the many people who rely on cohealth's essential medical services.

VAADA notes the Federal Government's commitment to undertake a review of cohealth's general practice operations, and while acknowledging the value of a transparent process that can strengthen the long-term sustainability of general practice in community health services, it is essential that the review captures the uniqueness and the specific health needs and challenges of clients that organisations like cohealth serve.

For thousands of Victorians experiencing alcohol and other drug (AOD) related harms, cohealth provides trusted, accessible, and often life-saving support – both general health and AOD related care. Any closure or disruption to these services would have had consequences for individuals, families, and communities, leading to cascading harms and increased demand on acute and more expensive support.

"People experiencing AOD harms, including dependence, need stability, continuity, and safe access to care," VAADA CEO Chris Christoforou said. "The prospect of the closure of the GP services at three cohealth sites created significant concern across the community. We are relieved that additional funding has been secured in the short term, but the challenge of meeting the true cost of supporting clients with complex health needs, often compounded by socio-economic disadvantage remains unresolved."

VAADA supports cohealth in its continuing engagement with the Australian Government to ensure that people experiencing disadvantage are able to access high-quality health services, including AOD services, in their communities.

For more information or to arrange an interview, 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 or others' drug and alcohol use, contact the national hotline for confidential counselling and referral on 1800 250 015

VAADA is the peak body that represents Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. Daily, these services deal with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption