THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP
Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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FURTHER COMBATING ILLICIT DRUG USE

As announced by the Prime Minister on 22 April, an additional $111.6 million in new funding will be provided through the health portfolio to continue and expand the Australian Government’s fight against drug and alcohol abuse.

The Minister for Ageing, Christopher Pyne, who also has responsibility for illicit drugs policy, said the extra funding would go towards treatment and education.

Mr Pyne said a special target of the new funding was use of the highly addictive and dangerous drug “ice”.

“Young Australians need to be informed about the real dangers of illicit drugs such as ice, and people who have made the mistake of using them need access to good treatment,” Mr Pyne said.

“The new funding announced in this Budget will address both these angles to reduce the pain and suffering caused by illicit drugs to users, and to those around them.

“There is also new funding of $14.6 million to help Indigenous communities to reduce drug and alcohol abuse through local solutions.”

• Combating illicit drugs – more effective treatment for methamphetamine abuse

Ice, or crystal methamphetamine, is a highly addictive drug that can make users aggressive, paranoid and psychotic.

This can make it very difficult for drug rehabilitation centres and health professionals to cope with users during their treatment and management.

The Australian Government is committing $22.9 million over two years to help services improve the treatment and rehabilitation of ice users, and other amphetamine-type stimulant users, through a new Combating Illicit Drugs – more effective treatment for methamphetamine abuse.

Treatment centres will be able to apply for funding through this program to improve or expand their facilities and equipment to deal with these drug users, for example training or engaging staff with existing expertise in how to deal with these patients.

Combating illicit drugs – strengthening the Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program

The Budget commits $79.5 million of new funding over four years to drug rehabilitation and detoxification centres through the Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program.

Non-government organisations (NGOs) operate many drug and alcohol services throughout Australia, providing vital treatment and support services to drug addicts, drug users and alcoholics.

The Government currently funds 169 NGOs to operate alcohol and drug treatment services throughout Australia.

“This additional funding recognises the demand for access to these centres and the rising costs of treatment and care,” Mr Pyne said.

“It will also help support families. For example, there will be more flexible family therapies and detoxification arrangements. Importantly, this will allow parents with drug addiction and their children to receive services in one setting.

“The particular needs of young people in drug and alcohol treatment will also be met by providing additional treatment and residential places for them.”

Combating illicit drugs – strengthening drug prevention education

The Australian Government’s National Drugs Campaign (NDC) plays a major role in educating families about the harms of illicit drugs and thereby preventing young people from taking up a drug habit.

The Government is investing $9.2 million over two years in new funding to expand the next stage of the NDC to include a focus on ice, because of its particularly addictive and dangerous qualities. The campaign will continue to target other amphetamines, as well as ecstasy and cannabis.

“I’m pleased that these funds will also enable us to update the highly successful parents’ booklet Talking with your kids about drugs and to distribute it to every household in Australia,” Mr Pyne said.


While recent inroads have been made in improving the health and welfare of Indigenous Australians, drug and alcohol abuse still have significant and detrimental impacts upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and their families.
Although the proportion of drinkers among the Indigenous population is lower than in non-Indigenous Australians, those Indigenous people who do drink are more likely to imbibe at harmful levels.

Drug and alcohol abuse in Indigenous communities is often associated with domestic and community violence and so require more of a community solution.

The Australian Government has therefore committed a further $14.6 million over four years to continue the National Illicit Drug Strategy – Indigenous Communities Initiative to help develop and implement the necessary local community solutions.

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