



THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing

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CONTINUING THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The 2006-07 Budget provides \$214.1 million in new funding for programmes to combat illicit drug use, tackle alcohol misuse and support drug and alcohol treatment services around the nation.

- ***Illicit drug use – combating emerging trends***

While the Government's Tough on Drugs Strategy has reduced the use of illicit drugs, use of psychostimulants (including ecstasy and amphetamines) is increasing and the high level of cannabis use among young people remains a concern.

Hospitals report a rising number of recorded admissions for stimulant-related psychosis since 1999.

To combat these emerging trends, the Government will provide \$23.7 million for a third phase of the National Illicit Drugs Campaign. This campaign will target illicit drug use among young people and increase community awareness of the harm caused by cannabis and psychostimulants such as ecstasy and amphetamines.

The drug education campaign will be complemented by \$10.7 million for education and training measures to strengthen the capacity of drug and alcohol counsellors, psychologists and clinicians to deal more effectively with psychostimulants. New treatment options for people using psychostimulants will also be developed.

- ***Targeting at-risk groups***

As part of its contribution to the COAG Mental Health package, as announced on 5 April 2006, the Government is investing:

- \$21.6 million over four years in community awareness activities to inform people about the connections between drug abuse and the development of mental illness, as well as the need to seek help early for addiction or mental health problems;
- \$73.9 million to develop specialist training and resources for drug and alcohol workers to recognise the complex interaction between drug use and mental illness and to provide effective treatment; and
- \$20.8 million to fund resources and training for frontline workers in Indigenous communities, helping them to detect and respond to mental illness particularly where an individual also has a substance use disorder.

The Government also announced \$19.8 million to develop a network of counsellors for university campuses, to assist students with early onset of psychosis, substance abuse and

family support needs. The funding will also support provision of information to students about mental illness and substance abuse, drawing on resources developed for the Government's drug and mental health programmes.

- ***National Cannabis Control and Prevention Centre – establishment***

\$14.0 million over four years will establish a dedicated National Cannabis Control and Prevention Centre to ensure preventing cannabis use receives appropriate priority. Recent studies suggest that as many as one in four people in the population may be at risk of psychosis should they use cannabis.

The centre will implement Government objectives under the National Cannabis Strategy. This strategy establishes national priorities for improving community understanding of the dangers of cannabis use and for preventing and responding to the use of cannabis and associated problems.

- ***National Safe Use of Alcohol Strategy – media campaign***

\$25.2 million will be provided for a national campaign to discourage abuse of alcohol. The campaign will aim to:

- Increase awareness of the significant costs to individuals, families, communities and the economy of alcohol abuse;
- Increase awareness of the Australian Alcohol Guidelines and what constitutes low-risk drinking; and
- Build effective partnerships between the health sector, police and industry to reduce alcohol-related harm.

- ***DrinkWise Australia***

\$5 million will be provided in 2005-06 to DrinkWise Australia for alcohol education programmes.

DrinkWise Australia was established in 2005, the culmination of 18 months work by leaders of the beer, wine and spirits industries and by hotels and liquor stores. DrinkWise is an independent organisation focused on promoting a more responsible drinking culture.

- ***Drug and alcohol treatment services – infrastructure grants for non-government organisations***

\$0.85 million in 2005-06 will fund infrastructure grants to non-government drug and alcohol treatment services to enable them to improve the settings for services. This will provide an environment that is more conducive to effective treatment for clients and a more pleasant space for both clients and drug and alcohol workers.

Seventeen organisations delivering drug and alcohol treatment services across all states and territories will each receive \$50,000.

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