



Preventive health – Addressing the impact of alcohol and other drugs

The Australian Government will invest \$372.4 million to help build safe and healthy communities by reducing the impact of drug and alcohol use.

Our Government is supporting certainty of funding for alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment services through:

- \$343.6 million in ongoing support for the National Ice Action Strategy (NIAS) and delivery of critical drug and alcohol treatment services, prevention programs and research activities
- \$19.6 million for the expansion of the national Take Home Naloxone (THN) program, which will see the opioid overdose-reversing medication available at no cost and without a prescription in all Australian states and territories, and
- the continued funding of four critical drug and alcohol prevention and support programs, and renewed funding to SMART Recovery, which directly support the aims of the *National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030* and *National Drug Strategy 2017–26*, at a cost of \$9.2 million:
 - Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) - Good Sports program
 - ADF – Reducing harm from illicit drugs through support for families
 - Hello Sunday Morning (HSM) – Daybreak program, and
 - SMART Recovery – online platform.

Over the past decade, significant developments in preventing drug and alcohol harms include the *National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategic Action Plan 2018–2028*, which has improved the prevention, diagnosis, support and management of FASD; the NIAS, which has enabled more than 600 additional drug and alcohol treatment projects across Australia since 2016–17; and the national Good Sports Program, which has grown into one of Australia’s largest preventive health initiatives.

Why is this important?

The Australian Government is committed to building safe and healthy communities by reducing the impact of drug and alcohol misuse.

Alcohol is a major cause of preventable harm in Australia. In 2015, alcohol was the fifth leading risk factor contributing to about 4.5% of the disease burden across the country.

The use of methamphetamine or ice and other illicit drugs is a contributor to poor health outcomes, social dysfunction and criminality around Australia.

The Australian Government has provided approximately \$450 million to the NIAS since 2016–17. Budget 2022–23 brings total investment in the NIAS to around \$765 million. The recent NIAS Evaluation Final Report concluded that the Government's investment has made a significant contribution in reducing the demand, supply and harms from methamphetamines, along with alcohol and other drugs more broadly.

Australian Government funding will ensure the programs can continue to achieve goals under the National Drug, National Alcohol and National Ice Action Strategies and build on gains from previous investment and outcomes.

Initial evaluation of the THN program has found access to naloxone has helped, on average, to reverse the effects of opioid overdose at least three times a day since it was introduced, saving up to 1,650 Australian lives. The expansion of this program on a national level will mean that people at risk of, or likely to witness an opioid overdose, are more likely to have this life-saving drug on hand when they need it.

Who will benefit?

Australians who are affected by drug and alcohol misuse will benefit from these measures. This investment will particularly support vulnerable Australians to have access to treatment for the most severe substance abuse disorders, including services for mental health and substance abuse disorders that have been exacerbated by COVID-19.

All Australians seeking help will benefit from the provision of support and information to the community and access to specialist drug and alcohol programs. Known high-risk population groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, individuals with a disability and people in rural and regional areas who are disproportionately affected by alcohol and other drugs.

A national THN program will benefit individuals and people in contact with individuals at risk of opioid overdose, providers of AOD services, pharmacies, emergency departments and state and territory governments.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government is investing \$372.4 million over four years, from 2022–23 to 2025–26.