Reducing the alcohol and drug toll
Victoria’s plan 2013–2017

Why we need to act now

More than one person dies directly as a result of alcohol and drug use each day in Victoria. The Victorian Government has created this plan to help save lives and reduce the health, social and economic costs of alcohol misuse and drug use on individuals, families and communities.

The vision

That all Victorians lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives free from the harm associated with alcohol and drug misuse.

How the plan will help Victorians

Reducing the alcohol and drug toll Victoria’s plan 2013–17 sets out how the Victorian Government will work with the community to bring down the alcohol and drug toll and deliver better health outcomes to thousands of Victorians who want to recover from the harm associated with alcohol misuse and drug use. The plan identifies actions for building resilience among Victorians, particularly young people by fostering a healthy culture of individual responsibility.

Implementation of the plan will ensure Victorian streets and communities are safer and that more action is taken to prevent and respond to violence, especially against women and children.

Victoria’s 15-point plan

Everyone has a role to play in tackling alcohol and drug harm - government cannot act alone. By working together, we can help solve the complex problems of alcohol and drugs, promote a healthier drinking culture and improve the care, treatment and recovery of people with alcohol and drug problems.

This 15-point plan builds on Victorian Government action to tackle alcohol misuse and drug use over the past two years, and has been shaped by extensive consultation with those best placed to help navigate the road ahead.

Leadership

Leadership to reduce the toll

1. Strong laws against drugs
2. Better referral to treatment
3. Targeted harm reduction

Pharmaceuticals

Better regulatory controls
1. Improved health practices

Illegal drugs

Treatment services reform
1. Person centred care in social services
2. Community based action on social factors
3. Promote recovery & reduce stigma

Care, treatment and recovery

1. Reduce violence & anti-social behaviour
2. Effective liquor regulation
3. Drinking culture change
4. Better health promotion in education
5. Better, earlier health care

Alcohol

To reduce excessive drinking and alcohol-related hospitalisations as well as promoting a healthy and safe drinking culture, the plan outlines ways to:

1. Reduce violence, antisocial behaviour and drink-driving with strong laws and programs that prevent and respond to violence, antisocial behaviour and drink-driving.
2. Effectively regulate alcohol supply with strengthened reforms to liquor licensing laws.
3. Change drinking culture through a long-term campaign to promote healthier attitudes to drinking.
4. Better promote awareness of drug and alcohol issues in schools through comprehensive, evidence-based alcohol and drug education and health promotion programs that will strengthen wellbeing and resilience among young people.
5. Provide better, earlier healthcare for alcohol problems by implementing proven, clinically effective and cost effective healthcare for people with alcohol problems.

Pharmaceutical drugs

The plan will reduce the misuse of pharmaceutical drugs by ensuring:


The Victorian Government will work with the Commonwealth Government to strengthen Australia’s national drug and medicines regulation framework, as well as improve the quality of evidence on pharmaceutical drug misuse.

7. Improved clinical, prescribing and dispensing practices to minimise the health risks related to commonly misused prescription drugs.

Illegal drugs

The plan will reduce illegal drug supply, use and associated harms by:

8. Maintaining and strengthening strong laws to protect the community from drugs and drug trafficking and the harms caused by illegal drugs and new psychoactive substances.
9. Building stronger pathways to education and treatment services for individual drug users.
10. Improving harm reduction and targeted prevention services for illegal drug use that adapt to changing patterns of drug use and implement clinically effective, cost-effective prevention measures that will save lives.

Care, treatment and recovery

To help more Victorians who have a drinking or drug problem reduce or stop their use and support people as they recover from misuse, the plan will:

11. Set new directions in alcohol and drug treatment services so they are more cost-effective, person-centred and supportive of recovery by individuals and families.
12. Provide more person-centred care, especially for vulnerable families by progressively delivering more connected care across social services to reduce the impact of substance misuse on families and communities.
13. Support community-based action to address social factors driving substance misuse to deliver targeted, culturally appropriate services to communities.
14. Promote recovery and reduce stigma in the community to support people as they recover from addictions. This work will be modelled on the success of beyondblue’s work with depression.

Leadership

The government will establish effective oversight and advisory arrangements to:

15. Provide leadership and guide collaboration on innovative, cost-effective and high-impact programs that will deliver measurable reductions in the alcohol and drug toll.

Measures of Success

The long-term success of this plan will be measured by seeing a reduction in:

- death, disease, injury and the social costs of alcohol misuse and drug use
- rates of risky single-occasion drinking and excessive daily drinking across all age groups
- alcohol-related hospitalisations
- rates of illicit drug use, including misused pharmaceuticals
- the number of drinkers and drug users who seek to reduce or stop their use and recover successfully from misuse.


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