

# Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier



Tuesday, 7 March 2023

## STRENGTHENING MSIR TO KEEP SAVING LIVES

Victoria's Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) in North Richmond will become an ongoing service, with critical support services expanded, after an independent review found the trial has saved 63 lives – successfully managing almost 6,000 overdoses, taking pressure off local hospitals and reducing ambulance call outs.

The Victorian Government will today introduce legislation to establish the health service as an ongoing service – with immediate measures to be taken to further boost safety and amenity in the North Richmond precinct and increase wrap-around supports for MSIR clients.

Chaired by Mr John Ryan, the independent review panel made 10 recommendations – including continuing the MSIR as an ongoing service, expanding support for clients, and addressing safety and amenity through stronger collaboration between agencies.

Many people who use the MSIR have experienced considerable trauma, and the review recommended that more should be done to provide access to integrated treatment, care and support for vulnerable groups.

To deliver this increased wrap-around support for clients, a permanent committee will be established – formally bringing together the Department of Health, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing including Homes Victoria.

The committee will work to ensure health, housing, homelessness, alcohol and other drug and mental health supports are easily accessible for clients – guaranteeing the MSIR continues to not just save lives, but also change them in the long term.

The review also recognised the profound outcomes delivered by dedicated staff at North Richmond Community Health during the trial, and recommended a recommissioning process be undertaken to identify a provider with capacity to deliver the expanded care model at the existing North Richmond site into the future.

By ensuring the MSIR can deliver more integrated health and social services, the service will align closely with recommendations from the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* to better meet the long-term needs of both clients and the broader North Richmond community.

The Victorian Government will consider each recommendation of Mr Ryan's review, working closely with local residents, businesses, emergency services and health and social services to support the local community, MSIR clients and drug users.

However, the Government has ruled out adopting Recommendation 2 - which proposes expanding MSIR access to include peer/partner injecting and consideration of removal of other eligibility barriers, including barriers for people on court orders.

Ken Lay AO, APM is continuing his independent consultation into a proposed second supervised injecting service in the City of Melbourne and will deliver his final report in mid-2023.

The MSIR was established as part the Government's broader plan to tackle alcohol and drug abuse – and builds on an investment of more than \$2 billion to more than double the number of residential rehabilitation beds, increase withdrawal beds to 148 and implement the Ice Action Plan and Drug Rehabilitation Plan.

**Media contact:** Lily King 0499 791 387 | [lily.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:lily.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

**Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews**

*“This independent report has shown that the Medically Supervised Injecting Room has succeeded, with 63 Victorians alive today because of their work.”*

*“We will now strengthen the service to give clients better access to social, housing and mental health supports so the service continues to do what it is designed to do – save lives and change lives.”*

**Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Gabrielle Williams**

*“We’ll continue to do all we can to reduce drug harm and support those that are struggling with addiction to get the support they need to live a better life.”*