

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP

Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Equality
Minister for Creative Industries



Friday, 31 August, 2018

MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING ROOM SAVING LIVES

Construction work is set to begin on the new purpose-built medically supervised injecting room (MSIR) in Richmond in the next few weeks, as early results show the existing facility is already saving lives.

Marking International Overdose Awareness Day this morning, Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley said each and every overdose death was a tragedy, which the Andrews Labor Government was working hard to prevent.

Just two months into the trial, the MSIR is seeing up to 200 client visits a day and is expected to reach 8,000 total visits today – more than six times the activity seen by the Sydney MSIR in its first two months.

Staff at the Richmond MSIR have safely responded to 140 overdoses, many of which would have otherwise been fatal.

Feedback also shows clients are engaging with staff, seeking treatment for a range of health issues and asking for referrals for drug dependence treatment.

The early results further demonstrate the need for a purpose-built facility for the MSIR, which will start construction on the existing North Richmond Community Health site in September.

The new building will provide more counselling and treatment rooms, and more capacity for treatment and support services to help people kick their drug dependency.

Coordinated by Penington Institute, International Overdose Awareness Day aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma of a drug-related death.

Today, organisations and individuals across Victoria are running life-saving naloxone training sessions – supported by the Naloxone Subsidy Initiative – and spreading the message that overdose deaths are preventable.

The Labor Government has increased funding for alcohol and other drug services by 57 per cent over the last four Victorian Budgets, providing a record \$259.9 million in this year's alone.

The Labor Government has more than doubled the number of residential rehabilitation beds, increased access and training to naloxone which can reverse overdoses, and funded Ice Action Grants within local communities.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing Martin Foley

"We know that drug addiction is a health issue that we can't police our way out of – which is why we've taken action and made record investments in preventing and treating drug addiction and overdose across Victoria."

"Already, we can see the medically supervised injecting room trial is saving lives. Our staff have safely responded to 140 overdoses in just two months, many of which would have otherwise been fatal."

Quote attributable to Member for Richmond, Richard Wynne

"This facility is not just saving lives, but connecting individuals to health and community services which take them in positive new directions."

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