

The Victorian Government's response to the *Parliamentary Inquiry into the supply and use of methamphetamines, particularly ice, in Victoria.*

17 March 2015

The use of crystal methamphetamine (ice) is a serious concern for the Victorian community. The Parliamentary Law Reform, Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee's *Inquiry into the supply and use of methamphetamines, particularly ice, in Victoria* painted a stark picture of the harms associated with the drug, and the impact it is having on individuals, families and communities across the State.

The Victorian Government thanks the Committee for their work. The Committee's investigation was wide-ranging, involving extensive consultation and research. The Committee's final report was tabled in Parliament on 3 September 2014 and included 54 recommendations.

Consistent with the Committee's recommendations, the Victorian Government recognises that the complex issues associated with ice require a special focus. That is why, on 27 August 2014, we announced our commitment to deliver an Ice Action Plan within the first 100 days of Government.

The plan has been informed by the advice of the Ice Action Taskforce, chaired by the Premier, and comprising ministers and expert stakeholders, including representatives from alcohol and other drug services, mental health services, youth services, police, the courts, community legal services, Aboriginal service providers and research bodies. A Specialist Workforce Advisory Group, chaired by the Special Minister of State, has supported the Taskforce by providing specific advice on workforce issues.

In developing the plan, the Taskforce has drawn heavily on the findings and recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry. The Inquiry has provided a comprehensive evidence base to support the Taskforce's deliberations.

The Victorian Government was pleased to release the Ice Action Plan on 5 March 2015. The plan provides a clear and comprehensive framework to help government, service providers and the community, work together to deliver a coordinated and effective response to ice. The plan has six objectives, which closely align with the themes of the Inquiry:

1. *Focus on prevention and early intervention*, through support for programs, initiatives and resources that promote resilience and reduce risk for young people, innovative peer and community-based programs targeting young people outside the formal school system and other groups most at risk, and targeted education and information about ice for Victorian families and communities.
2. *Reduce the supply, manufacture and distribution of ice*, by enhancing Victoria's drug laws, ongoing collaboration with other jurisdictions, ensuring effective controls of the supply of precursor chemicals, responding to organised crime, and enhancing capacity for forensic analysis of clandestine laboratories.
3. *Reduce the impact of ice on individuals, families and communities*, through support for early intervention and drug treatment services, information and support for families, effective justice responses to ice-related crime, and initiatives to protect the community from drug-driving and ice-related violence.
4. *Build workforce capacity*, by addressing occupational violence and providing tailored training and supports for frontline workers.

5. *Work together for better outcomes*, by facilitating local community action and supporting tailored responses that meet the needs of Victoria's diverse communities.
6. *Strengthen the evidence base*, by supporting the effective use of data, identifying and progressing research priorities, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs.

The delivery of the plan is supported by \$45.5 million in new funding. This includes:

- \$4.7 million in additional support for families
- \$18 million to expand drug treatment services
- \$1.8 million to enhance the capacity of Needle and Syringe Programs
- \$1 million for training and supervision for workers
- \$4.5 million to increase forensic analysis capacity for clandestine laboratory investigations
- \$15 million for new drug and booze buses
- \$500,000 to establish Community Ice Action Groups.

The delivery of the Ice Action Plan is an important step in addressing the challenges associated with ice, but it is only the first step. The Committee's guidance presented in the Inquiry provides a strong basis for action and will continue to inform the Victorian Government's response to address the impact of ice in Victoria. The Government looks forward to continuing to work with the community, service providers and the Taskforce to implement coordinated and effective responses to ice in Victoria.