

13 March 2023

New Drug and Alcohol Support Service for Hawkesbury

The Hawkesbury will soon be home to a new community-based alcohol and other drugs support service due to open in mid-2023. The WHOS Hawkesbury Hub will provide a range of day treatment services for those living with alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues.

The service is being funded by Wentworth Healthcare, the provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, through the Federal Government's Community Health and Hospitals Program. The Centre will support people with AOD issues within their own community where their friends, family and primary healthcare providers can all be part of their integrated recovery and care journey.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said "anyone can have issues with substance dependence, it doesn't discriminate. In the Hawkesbury, there is a lack of permanent and accessible services offering community-based support and we are delighted that this service will soon be available."

In Australia, the total number of drug-related hospitalisations has increased by 12% over the past five years, with alcohol being the most common drug of concern nationally. In the Nepean Blue Mountains region, alcohol accounts for 34.1% of those who received AOD support in 2020-21 (as referenced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

"When it comes to supporting people with AOD issues, residential rehabilitation services are important but aren't always suitable in every situation. Some people have responsibilities that prevent them from being able to commit to a residential program and this can act as a barrier to seeking help. That is why community-based support is so important. People need to be able to seek support and get well within their own community," said Ms Reay.

Services provided at the Hawkesbury Centre will include comprehensive AOD assessment and referral, structured group work, counselling, case management, GP liaison, aftercare, relapse prevention, and access to psychosocial services including housing and welfare. The service will run an outreach program to improve access for isolated areas and work closely with a local Aboriginal community organisation to ensure services are culturally appropriate and accessible.

"Stakeholders in our region have been advocating for community-based models of care, where multiple services are available to provide wrap around support for people with multiple, and often complex, issues."

"We look forward to working with the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District and other community organisations to provide an integrated service that will provide additional access to support and help reduce unnecessary hospital presentations," she said.



WHOS Executive Director, Garth Popple, said the organisation is excited to be partnering with the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network to establish and operate the WHOS Hawkesbury Hub.

“The WHOS Hawkesbury Hub will be a place where people of the Hawkesbury area experiencing issues associated with their substance use, can access our range of best practice community-based support services.”

WHOS range of services will ensure people are provided with a tailored and flexible approach that will meet their individual needs.

“At WHOS we are looking forward to developing relationships with a variety of service partners, such as Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District and the local Aboriginal community, as we collectively work towards the common goal of reducing substance use related harm in the Hawkesbury”, Mr Popple said.

Hawkesbury District Health Service Counselling Manager, Stephen Lillie, said the new centre will provide hope not only for people struggling with dependence, but for their families who also feel the struggle.

“Treatment offered within your own community and with a strong support network, can often improve the outcome for people with AOD issues by reducing the probability of relapse,” said Mr Lillie.

If you're in need of support, visit our website to find out what other services are available in your area www.nbmphn.com.au/aodsupport

For interviews or further information contact:

Bess Bosman
Communications Manager - Media & Marketing
T 0438 261 015
E Bess.Bosman@nbmphn.com.au

Or

Krystle Goulding
Communications & Media Officer
T 02 4708 8199
E Krystle.Goulding@nbmphn.com.au