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# What we’re doing

From 7 November 2023, it will no longer be a criminal offence in Victorian to be intoxicated in public.

In December 2022, a health-led model was confirmed to support the Victorian Government’s commitment to decriminalisation.

The 2023-24 budget allocated $88.3 million over three years for the statewide rollout of the health-based response to public intoxication, including dedicated services for Aboriginal Victorians.

This will help to save lives and reduce the intergenerational impacts of criminalisation.

# About the health-led response

To support the new health-led response, a number of services will be established to support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians.

## Sobering facilities and places of safety

The new public intoxication response (PIR) will see 24/7 Aboriginal outreach services running across Melbourne, Frankston and Wyndham to support people who are intoxicated in public, and if needed, providing them with transport to a safe place or the dedicated sobering centre in St Kilda.

There will also be 24/7 outreach services available for the general public across Melbourne and a sobering centre has been established in Collingwood for the wider population to access.

Once the public intoxication response is fully operational, Aboriginal communities in eight regional locations will have access to Aboriginal specific outreach services and places of safety, and additional culturally safe social support services.

## Outreach services

Outreach services will be provided in two ways:

* Generally, and in most locations, on-demand outreach teams will respond to referrals. These teams can provide immediate assistance, arrange private transport or, if appropriate, transport people to a place where they can safely recover from the effects of intoxication.
* At peak times in high-demand areas of metropolitan Melbourne, assertive outreach teams will be present to identify and respond to instances of public intoxication. These teams can provide immediate assistance, arrange private transport or, if appropriate, transport a person to a place of safety (including sobering centre).

## Centralised services

These will support the primary response, and consist of:

* an intake, referral and dispatch service, which will receive incoming referrals relating to a person who needs support for being intoxicated in public, determine the most appropriate service for the individual, and dispatch an appropriate service response.
* central advice and support, which will provide specific information about alcohol and other drugs to staff providing the outreach and sobering services.

## Follow ups and referrals

If people consent, outreach and sobering centre staff will follow up after supporting a client and refer people into further supportive services if required or requested.

# What this means for Victorians

Following decriminalisation, no person will be placed in a police cell or arrested solely on the basis of intoxication.

In line with the health-led model, Victoria Police’s primary role in responding to people intoxicated in public will be limited to where community safety risks or criminality are present. The police response will be informed by the behaviour of the person, rather than the intoxication itself.

Ambulance services will continue to respond to people who require emergency care and, if necessary transport them to emergency departments.

People who encounter somebody who is intoxicated in public should continue to contact Triple 000 if they are concerned about the person’s health or safety, or the safety of others. Emergency services will ensure that the person receives the most appropriate support.

# Find out more

Visit our website for further information about the health-led response and services available throughout Victoria: <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/public-intoxication-reform-0>>

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| To receive this document in another format, email the public intoxication response team at <publicintoxication@health.vic.gov.au>.Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Health, October 2023.In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.**ISBN** 978-1-76131-435-3 **(pdf/online/MS word** |