



Hundreds of new alcohol and other drug residential rehab and withdrawal detox beds needed in NSW to meet demand

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The Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA) – NSW’s peak body for non government providers of services to people with alcohol and drug issues – says the state needs hundreds of new residential rehabilitation and withdrawal/detoxification beds to meet demand.

NADA’s call is based on analysis by the Drug Policy Modelling Program at University of NSW which has estimated the total number of new beds required is:

- 746 residential rehabilitation beds
- 159 withdrawal management (detoxification) beds

Larry Pierce, NADA’s CEO, said the analysis was conducted in response to the NSW Legislative Council’s report into alcohol and other drug rehabilitation services in regional, rural and remote NSW and which highlighted a dramatic shortage throughout the state.

“For the first time, this analysis gives us a clear indication of how many residential rehabilitation and withdrawal detoxification beds are needed throughout NSW,” said Mr Pierce.

“Successive NSW Governments haven’t kept up to speed with funding these important health services to meet demand and now we’re in a very serious situation, particularly in rural and regional parts of the state – something which the Legislative Council’s report exposed very clearly.”

“For example, if you’re in a major regional centre like Dubbo in central western NSW, and you need help with a methamphetamine problem, [such is the shortage of local services](#), you’re likely going to need to come all the way to Sydney to try and get help. We shouldn’t stand for that.”

NADA acknowledges the need for a long-term and planned approach to increasing that number of new beds to the sector and have proposed a two-staged approach.

Stage one

Immediate tender for residential rehabilitation and withdrawal management beds

- The NSW Ministry of Health tender for an additional 200 residential rehabilitation beds and 15 withdrawal management beds in the next 12 months. This will include beds available to women and children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and young people.
- The tender should also explore opportunities to increase resources to existing residential services and to establish programs to support the large number of people currently on waiting lists for residential treatment in NSW.

A state-wide planning process

- A planning process for providing the remainder of the residential rehabilitation and withdrawal management beds be established by the NSW Ministry of Health. The process would identify the geographical locations and priority populations for service delivery. Planning should also include the

establishment of a workforce development strategy to increase and retain the number of qualified alcohol and other drugs workers required to support the increase in the number of available beds.

- NADA also recommends the NSW Government apply the Drug Policy Modelling Program's methodology across all types of treatment for people with alcohol and other drug issues, to ensure there are a range of options available to NSW communities. This acknowledges that not all people require residential treatment and could be treated in the community.

Stage two

Longer-term arrangements to establish new residential rehabilitation and withdrawal management facilities

- The NSW Government consider the establishment of a new capital works funding stream for the establishment of new NGO-managed services in line with the above-mentioned service planning process.
- The remainder of the new residential rehabilitation and withdrawal management beds be funded through new service infrastructures over the next 10 years.

"Currently, too many people in our state can't get the help they need from our alcohol and other drug treatment services: there simply just aren't the services, or enough beds, to meet demand."

"Long delays mean greater harms, increased health care costs, and potentially less successful treatment."

"We've provided our analysis to the NSW Health Minister and the NSW Ministry of Health and look forward to discussing our submission further and being part of its implementation strategy," said Mr Pierce.

The details submission and report from the Drug Policy Modelling Program, University of NSW is available on the NADA website at www.nada.org.au.

For more information

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About NADA

The Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) is the peak organisation for the non government alcohol and other drugs sector in NSW. Our vision is for a connected and sustainable non government alcohol and other drug services providing quality evidence based programs to reduce alcohol and drug related harms to NSW communities.