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Hawkesbury Now Home to New Community Drug and Alcohol Support Service

The Hawkesbury is now home to a community-based alcohol and other drugs support service. WHOS Hawkesbury provides a range of day treatment services for those living with alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues.

The free service is 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 supports 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.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, drug-related hospitalisations continue to increase nationally. In the Nepean Blue Mountains region, over 2,000 people received treatment at an AOD treatment service funded by Wentworth Healthcare. The 2023 Wentworth Healthcare Needs Assessment notes that the most common drug of concern in the region is alcohol, accounting for over a quarter of those treated.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said, "Anyone can have issues with substance dependence, it doesn't discriminate. In the Hawkesbury, there has been a lack of permanent and accessible services offering affordable community-based support."

"When it comes to supporting people with AOD concerns, 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 WHOS Hawkesbury are free and include comprehensive AOD support, structured group work, counselling, case management, GP liaison, relapse prevention, access to services including housing and welfare, and provides free breakfast and lunch daily for clients. An outreach program will also operate out of the centre, to improve access for, 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," said Ms Reay.



“We look forward to continuing to work with WHOS, the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District and other community organisations to provide an integrated service that allows for additional access to support and helps to reduce unnecessary hospital presentations,” she added.

Federal Member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman, welcomed the opening of the service.

“I’m proud that the Federal Government is supporting this service which has been long-needed in the Hawkesbury. I congratulate Wentworth Healthcare for finding a model designed to suit local needs and give people the ability to continue living in their community as they tackle their addiction,” she said.

WHOS Executive Director, Garth Pople, said the organisation is excited to partner with Wentworth Healthcare to operate the WHOS Hawkesbury.

“WHOS Hawkesbury is 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 ensure people are provided with a tailored and flexible approach that meet their individual needs.

“At WHOS we are looking forward to further develop 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 Pople said.

The service, located at 2 Forbes Street, Windsor, operates from 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. Patients can be referred by GPs, other specialists or self-refer, and can either walk-in or attend prearranged appointments. Visit www.nbmphn.com.au/WHOSHawkesbury or contact WHOS on [4509 9110](tel:45099110) to make an appointment or for more information.

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