

## Submission to the Victorian Royal Commission on Mental Health 2019

### Question 6: What are the needs of family members and carers and what can be done better to support them?

The issues of Alcohol and Drug Residential and Medically supervised Detoxification availability in the Latrobe Valley area of Victoria is a serious need that families have been raising over recent months.

Mental Health issues tend to have a higher incidence correlated with the long term and serious use of the Alcohol and other drugs including opioids and amphetamines.

In three recent community forums sponsored by the Rotary Club of Moe, there was considerable discussion about the needs of families and addicts for treatment in our community.

The three meetings took place as follows:

1. At the Moe RSL at 7pm on Wednesday 10th April
2. At the Morwell RSL at 7pm on 17th April.
3. At the Traralgon RSL at 7pm on 24th April

Overall around 70-80 people attended across the three meetings.

The Department of Health and Human Services Victoria, has revealed that there are only four supervised medical detoxification funded beds in the system across the total Gippsland Region (1 in Leongatha, One in Bairnsdale, and 2 in Sale).

It emerged, from the discussions at these Community Consultations, that there were no such funded beds in the Latrobe City area (census population, 2016, of over 70,00 people).

The issue of provision of funded "Detox beds" emerged as the number one need in the area.

Most, if not all, rehabilitation centres funded to deal with the impacts of Alcohol and/or Drug addiction and the associated mental health issues, require evidence of detoxification for admission.

The absence of any such availability in the Latrobe area is a serious issue given the high incidence of hospitalisations for alcohol and "illicit" drugs in this community. [REDACTED]

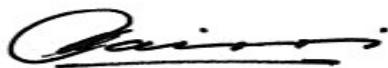
The absence of appropriate "detox" and rehabilitation supervised facilities, other than admission to the Flynn Psychiatric Ward at the Latrobe Regional Hospital, has a serious impact on the further mental stress on addicts and families seeking support and treatment solutions.

Arising from the Community Consultation the following key points are presented as a short summary of the suggestions made by the concerned community.

## **Main Community Responses from the Consultations**

- 1. Detox Beds in the Latrobe Valley are essential.**
- 2. A rehabilitation facility for “over 25 years olds” is necessary in the Latrobe Valley**
- 3. Follow up mentoring and support post-Rehabilitation is necessary for ongoing success.**
- 4. Realisation that Drug and Alcohol addiction is a health issue across Community needs publicising.**
- 5. Addicts must want to go through Detox and rehabilitation.**
- 6. AA and NA should be supported more in our City**
- 7. Prevention through Schools, Families and work with the young is essential as well as Treatment of the already addicted.**
- 8. Funding from Gambling, Tobacco taxes and Seized funds from Drug Dealers should be used for all the D and A and Gambling treatment provisions.**

As Rotary is a non-political organisation, this submission is made as a Community awareness and support submission by the organising Community Member, Dr Len Cairns (PhD), and does not suggest that the Rotary Club of Moe has any other intent beyond supporting our community to express its views.



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