



Media Release

6 December 2015

The Salvation Army Welcomes Recommendations of Ice Taskforce

The Salvation Army cautiously welcomes today's recommendations of the Ice Taskforce and the commitment of funding by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull which will provide additional resources for specialist drug treatment services.

The Salvation Army is Australia's largest provider of specialist drug treatment services, providing residential recovery and detoxification services, as well as out-client and day programs.

The Salvation Army Clinical Director of Recovery Services, Gerard Byrne, says even with the large range of services The Salvation Army does provide, the organisation has struggled to meet the ever increasing demand created by the use of ice in Australian communities.

"Ice users who cause the greatest concern for families and the community are those at the severe end of the substance use scale, these are the people depicted on our TV screens in ads and in news and current affairs program reports," Mr Byrne said.

"We see them in hospital Accident and Emergency rooms and in Police custody. These are the people who are causing and experiencing the greatest harms of ice use and who are jamming up treatment services waiting lists as they desperately try to gain much needed treatment."

The announcement today by Prime Minister Turnbull that the funding will be channelled through the Primary Health Networks (PHNs) raises some concerns for The Salvation Army due to the fact that while the PHNs, which have evolved from the Medicare Locals, are working effectively in some areas, many are not yet fully established.

The Salvation Army also cautiously welcomes the Prime Minister's announcement of the extension to the current alcohol and other drug service contracts for a further 12 months until 30 June 2017, the continuation of this funding will enable The Salvation Army's specialist drug treatment services to continue tackle the devastation caused by ice.

"Our drug and alcohol services make a real, lasting and profound difference to individuals, families and the community," Mr Byrne said.

"However, we would call on the government to ensure that in future, funding is provided over a 5 year contract period, rather than the current three years - which are the grants that are subject to the 12 month extension announced today."

The Salvation Army wants the Australian community to know, there is hope - treatment works.

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For more information or media comment please contact:

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