

MEDIA RELEASE

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“There’s always light at the end of that tunnel” - Melissa’s story shows why AOD counselling services need urgent support

IPC Health is calling for urgent government action to increase funding for alcohol and other drugs (AOD) counselling services. Demand continues to rise, and too many people still struggle to access the help they need. Last year, IPC Health supported 536 clients in Melbourne’s west through its AOD services, highlighting both the critical need and the life-changing impact of these services.

The demand for community-based mental health services is increasing rapidly. In 2023–24, Victorian health services provided 1.8 million hours of community-based mental health care, and by 2036–37, demand is projected to reach between 3.4 and 8.9 million hours. This illustrates the urgent need for expanded access and investment in services like IPC Health’s AOD counselling.

Melissa, a mother of three and client of IPC Health’s AOD service, has lived through childhood trauma, domestic violence and years of addiction. She says the support she received was life-changing.

“My drinking escalated badly. It was my way of numbing everything.”

“Everything around me shattered. I got out of the DV, but I kept struggling. Then I came to IPC Health. My councillor helped me through so much. I stayed with her for about 6–8 months, and she gave me the confidence to get back out there.”

“I started working in construction, in a male-dominated industry, and I did really well. But I had a lapse, became suicidal and tried to take my life. I re-engaged with IPC Health, and again, it was an incredible support. It felt like a reset.”

“The support has been life-changing. My councillor is non-judgmental, she gets it. Between her and the gym, which I go to seven days a week now, I’ve found ways to cope. I feel stronger than I did before.”

“IPC Health was a game changer. Sometimes you just need someone who understands that addiction is often about numbing trauma, not because you’re a bad person. They helped me get to the root of it and move forward.”

“My children are my biggest motivation. I’ve come to believe I deserve more. I didn’t deserve the pain and trauma I went through. There’s always light at the end of the tunnel, you just sometimes need help finding it.”



“Mental health support needs to be more accessible. There are so many people suffering in silence. I was lucky to survive my suicide attempt, but many aren’t. We need more services like IPC Health.”

IPC Health’s Call for Action

IPC Health CEO Jayne Nelson said Melissa’s story reflects both the life-saving impact of counselling and the urgent need for investment.

“Alcohol and other drug counselling can be transformative — even lifesaving. Last year alone, IPC Health supported 536 clients through our AOD services. But demand continues to outstrip supply. Victorian community-based mental health services provided 1.8 million hours of care in 2023–24, yet by 2036–37, demand is projected to reach between 3.4 and 8.9 million hours. We urge government to increase investment in AOD and mental health services to ensure no one falls through the cracks.”

Need help?

If you or someone you know is struggling with alcohol or other drugs, please reach out:

- **IPC Health:** free, confidential support — call 1300 472 432 during business hours or visit www.ipchealth.com.au
- **DirectLine:** 24/7 support and referrals — call 1800 888 236 or visit www.directline.org.au

About IPC Health

IPC Health is committed to providing trauma-informed, person-centred care for people affected by alcohol and other drugs. In 2024–25, IPC Health supported 536 AOD clients, demonstrating the critical role these services play in helping people rebuild their lives. We advocate for systemic reform and increased funding to ensure everyone can access the support they need, when they need it.

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