

Our Future Directions

Collaborating
for Change

TREATMENT RESEARCH EDUCATION LEADERSHIP



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Turning Point acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work and live and pays respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge their significant cultural heritage, their fundamental spiritual connection to Country and value their unique contribution to our diverse community.

We are proud to embrace the spirit of reconciliation and learn from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about how to best work with them to advance their health, social and economic outcomes.



Recognition of Lived and Living Experience

Turning Point recognises the expertise, bravery and wisdom of the lived experience workforce and all clients accessing our services. Their experience and partnership help us shape services that are safe, accessible and effective in meeting their needs.

Recognition of Diverse Backgrounds

Turning Point is committed to ensuring that the needs of all consumers, families and carers as well as our staff, students and volunteers are identified and met in an appropriate and respectful manner.

Working in partnership with our communities, Turning Point will ensure it provides a culturally safe environment that recognises, responds to and supports the diverse needs of its consumers and workforce.

Turning Point recognises that many LGBTIQ+ people experience stigma, discrimination and violence because of their identity. We work in partnership to learn and grow so that we can support and respond appropriately to the needs of our LGBTIQ+ colleagues, consumers and their families.



A copy of this publication in an accessible format can be found at:

<https://www.turningpoint.org.au/>

Authorised and published by Eastern Health,
Arnold Street, Box Hill, VIC 3128.



OUR VISION

A society free from the harm, discrimination and stigma of addiction.

OUR MISSION

Transforming lives through innovation, education and compassionate care.

Our Foundations

Embedded within Eastern Health, one of Australia's largest healthcare providers, we drive excellence from inside the health system. Our partnership with Monash University powers world-class research and education and attracts the brightest minds. Through our extensive network of government, healthcare, academic and community partners, we identify emerging challenges and drive meaningful change.

Eastern Health is proud to support Turning Point's transformative Future Directions. As Australia's leading addiction treatment, research, and education centre, Turning Point exemplifies our commitment to evidence-based healthcare through its integrated approach to clinical excellence, groundbreaking research, and workforce development. Their strategic priorities—strengthening treatment pathways, building evidence for impact, inspiring change, and empowering their people—perfectly align with Eastern Health's vision for comprehensive, compassionate care. Through Turning Point's continued innovation and dedication, we are confident that together we will create lasting improvements in how addiction is understood and treated across Australia, deliver Eastern Health's promise of 'Healthier Together' and ultimately transform countless lives through collaboration and systemic change.

Adjunct Professor David Plunkett,
Chief Executive, Eastern Health

Toni Gutschlag, Executive Director,
Mental Health, Clinical Support and
Transformation, Eastern Health

Our longstanding academic partnership with Turning Point exemplifies Monash University's commitment to addressing society's most complex health challenges through world-class research and education. Together, we're pioneering innovative approaches to addiction treatment while developing the next generation of clinical leaders through our prestigious postgraduate programs. Turning Point's evidence-based, compassionate approach to addiction perfectly complements our mission to improve lives through research excellence and transformative education. We're proud to support their future direction, which promises to reshape how addiction is understood, treated, and prevented across Australia and beyond.

Prof Christina Mitchell AO,
Dean of Medicine, Nursing and Health
Sciences, Monash University

Prof Ian Davis,
Head of Eastern Health Clinical School,
Monash University and Eastern Health



From our leaders



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Dan Lubman'.

Prof Dan Lubman AM

Executive Clinical Director,
Turning Point, Eastern Health
Professor of Addiction Studies and
Services, Monash University



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Denis Hovic'.

Denis Hovic

Program Director, Statewide
Services, Eastern Health

Turning Point has a long-standing reputation as Australia's leading national addiction centre, built on more than 30 years of experience and expertise. With a focus on research, treatment, workforce training and advocacy, our work has global reach.

By integrating education and research with treatment, Turning Point provides high-quality and evidence-based support to people impacted by alcohol, other drug and gambling harms.

But the landscape continues to shift. The cost and impact of alcohol, other drug and gambling harms continues to rise, and the fact addiction remains highly stigmatised means many people delay seeking help for years.

We need to drive systemic change to prevent harm in the first place, and tackle stigma to ensure people are able to access more timely and effective treatment and support earlier.

By building on our long track record, and working alongside our partners, we're uniquely placed to respond to these challenges.

This Future Directions document is our roadmap, guiding us through the next chapter of our journey.

This is our plan, infused with the hope, resilience, and dedication that defines Turning Point.

Together, we will collaborate for change to transform the lives of people impacted by alcohol, other drug and gambling harms.

We would like to thank all our staff and those who contributed to the development of this plan. We are excited about our Future Directions and look forward to working together with you all to continue our impact.

Our Story

Since its inception, Turning Point has over the last 30 years been at the leading edge of responding to health reforms, delivering high quality services and shaping the conversation on addiction.

90's



- Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre launched in 1994 as a statewide service, located initially in Smith Street, Collingwood
- Strengthened Directline, Victoria's 24/7 helpline, to support more people struggling with alcohol and other drug issues
- A growing centre focused on clinical work, research and education led to a new purpose-built facility at 54-62 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy
- Recognised as a national leader in innovation and clinical trials, including the roll-out of new treatments for opioid dependence
- The first Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in the Victorian Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Sector, delivering nationally accredited AOD courses at Certificate IV Level

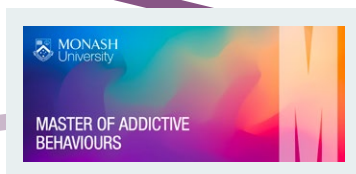
00's



- Expansion of helpline services across multiple states, as well as the first national online counselling services for alcohol, other drugs and gambling
- Pioneering online AOD accredited education and training, including at postgraduate level
- Established a comprehensive surveillance system to capture non-fatal AOD harms across the Victorian community, in partnership with Ambulance Victoria
- Key role supporting Victorian Government policy development, including the establishment of the Victorian Minimum Qualifications Strategy (MQS) for AOD workers
- Became part of Eastern Health and established a formal academic partnership with Monash University

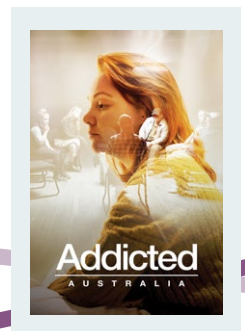
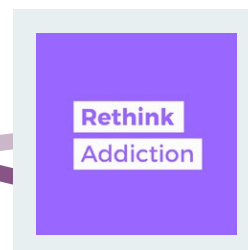


10^s



- Led the formation of the Eastern Consortium of Alcohol and Drug Services to provide assessment and treatment services across the eastern region of metropolitan Melbourne
- Opened the first sub-acute addiction medicine unit in Victoria, at Box Hill Hospital, supporting Victorians with more complex physical and mental health needs
- Developed BreakThrough in partnership with the Self Help Addiction Resource Centre, a family drug education program that has equipped thousands of families to support their loved ones
- Established an addiction leadership course for the Victorian sector, as well as a Master in Addictive Behaviour course with Monash University
- Moved our statewide operations to a purpose-built facility in Church Street, Richmond, providing the opportunity to enhance integration of our core services

20^s



- Established world-first National Ambulance Surveillance System to inform state and national policy development and evaluation
- Partnered with SBS and Blackfella Films on the Walkley-nominated factual documentary series, Addicted Australia
- Launched the Rethink Addiction campaign to educate and advocate for the need to change Australia's attitude and approach to addiction, supported by more than 60 partner organisations
- Awarded multiple national research grants for innovative clinical trials, including novel medications, psychotherapies, brain training and peer support
- Established the Hamilton Centre after the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, enabling people with co-occurring substance use and mental health issues to access integrated and holistic care

What We Do

Turning Point is Australia's leading addiction treatment, research, and education centre, dedicated to transforming lives through evidence-based care.



Local

Frontline, high quality and evidence-based clinical treatment integrated within Eastern Health services.



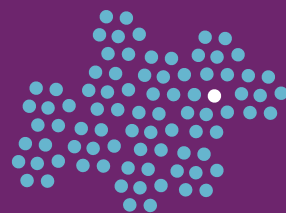
State

State-based treatment, specialist services, including Victoria's state-wide specialist centre, the Hamilton Centre, for people living with co-occurring mental illness and addiction



National

Accredited workforce qualifications, community education, pioneering research, state and national helplines, and leadership towards systemic change



International

World-leading research and translation to inform policy and practice

Treatment

We deliver comprehensive addiction treatment services, offering specialist assessment, inpatient detoxification, short stay rehabilitation, pharmacotherapy, neuropsychology, psychotherapy, counselling, and peer support. Through the Hamilton Centre and its Clinical Networks, we provide statewide integrated care and support for individuals with co-occurring addiction and mental illness, including service navigation, capacity building and mentoring for clinicians and workers. Lived experience is integral to our service design, ensuring compassionate, person-centred care that truly addresses the needs of those we serve.

Our 24/7 state and national helplines, including DirectLine, Counselling Online, and Gambling Help Online, provide immediate support when it's needed most. Specialised programs like our Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Support deliver culturally informed care, while the Drug and Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service (DACAS) offers expert guidance to healthcare professionals.

Workforce Development and Education

We elevate the workforce through multifaceted education spanning vocational training to advanced higher education. Turning Point delivers nationally accredited AOD competency-based training, customised professional development, and Monash University's prestigious postgraduate programs in Addictive Behaviours. Through scholarships, internships, and community initiatives like BreakThrough, we empower professionals and families with vital knowledge and skills to better support those affected by addiction.

World-Class Research

Our groundbreaking research drives systemic improvements in addiction treatment and policy. This includes innovative clinical trials that develop novel approaches to reduce addiction-related harms and strengthen recovery pathways, as well as delivering internationally unique national health surveillance data that shapes policy and practice.

Policy and Engagement

Beyond treatment and research, Turning Point serves as a powerful catalyst for change. Through policy development, strategic partnerships, and initiatives like the Rethink Addiction campaign, we challenge stigma, influence decision-makers, and champion a health-focused approach to addiction. By seamlessly integrating clinical care, education, research, and leadership, Turning Point is forging a future where everyone affected by addiction can access high-quality, evidence-based support that honours their dignity and potential.



Our People

At its core, Turning Point is the sum of its staff, volunteers, partners and supporters. Their dedication to reducing stigma and delivering meaningful outcomes for people and communities makes us proud to be Turning Point.

Our specialist workforce harnesses the strengths of multidisciplinary clinicians, researchers and educators, alongside a vital and growing group of lived experience staff. Together, their insight and understanding of addiction are critical to the overall success of everyone at Turning Point in delivering high quality services.

We recognise that driving change and delivering this strategy requires collective effort. To this end, we strive to continuously build upon our workforce's capabilities, and to strengthen our partnerships, to create lasting impact.

The state of play: Alcohol, other drug and gambling harms

The impacts of alcohol, other drug and gambling harms are wide reaching

1 in 4



One in four Australians will struggle with an alcohol, other drug or gambling problem in their lifetime¹²

These harms often co-exist alongside other health issues



More than 50% of Australians experiencing alcohol, other drug, or gambling problems will be living with a co-occurring mental health disorder³⁴

This is everyone's business

Addiction is the most stigmatised health condition, impacting help-seeking, investment in treatment and harm reduction, and the adoption of evidence into policy and practice



Due to stigma, people can wait up to two decades before seeking help, with the median time to first treatment for severe alcohol problems an astonishing 18 years⁶

The cost of alcohol, other drug and gambling harms continues to rise, placing strain on the broader health system, law enforcement and the wider community



In 2021, the estimated cost of addiction to Australia was \$80 billion⁷

¹ Timothy Slade et al, The Mental Health of Australians - Report on the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (Report, No 2, 2014) 5 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236611613_The_Mental_Health_of_Australians_2_Report_on_the_2007_National_Survey_of_Mental_Health_and_Wellbeing>.

² Rebecca Jenkinson et al, Gambling Participation and Experience of Harm in Australia (Research Snapshot, March 2023) <<https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-snapshots/gambling-participation-and-experience-harm-australia>>.

³ Christina Marel et al, Guidelines on the Management of Co-Occurring Alcohol and Other Drug and Mental Health Conditions in Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Settings (Guidelines, 2016) <<https://comorbidityguidelines.org.au/pdf/comorbidity-guideline.pdf>>.

⁴ Dan Lubman et al, Problem Gambling in People Seeking Treatment for Mental Illness (Report, July 2017) <<https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/problem-gambling-in-people-seeking-treatment-for-mental-illness-61/>>.

⁵ Robin Room et al, 'Cross Cultural Views on Stigma Valuation Parity and Societal Attitudes Towards Disability' in Tevfik Üstün et al (eds), Disability and Culture: Universalism and Diversity (Hogrefe & Huber Publishers, 2001) 247, 277.

⁶ Cath Chapman et al, 'Delay to First Treatment Contact for Alcohol Use Disorder' (2015) 147 (February) Drug and Alcohol Dependence 116, 118.

⁷ Rethink Addiction, Understanding the Cost of Addiction in Australia (Report, November 2022) <<https://www.rethinkaddiction.org.au/understanding-the-cost-of-addiction-in-australia>>.

Our Priorities

01

Strengthening addiction treatment and support

Reducing barriers, building connections and empowering people through evidence-based, contemporary treatment and holistic support

02

Building and communicating evidence for impact

Driving and disseminating cutting-edge research to transform policy and practice





03

Inspiring hearts and minds

Building the capacity of the healthcare workforce and broadening the community's knowledge and attitudes about addiction

04

Empowering our people

Fostering an environment and culture that maximises staff potential to thrive, excel and support change



Priority 01

Strengthening addiction treatment and support

Reducing barriers, building connections and empowering people through evidence-based, contemporary treatment and holistic support.

Outcomes we expect to see:

- Improved health and social outcomes
- Earlier intervention and access to treatment
- People seeking treatment contributing to their care decisions
- Adoption of evidence across clinical services
- Embedding treatments for addiction and co-occurring illnesses across the health system

Actions we will take:

- Improve access, navigation and engagement into treatment and aftercare
- Design pathways of care that enable integrated support across services and systems for people living with addiction and co-occurring illnesses
- Embed lived experience and carer perspectives into service strategy and delivery
- Drive implementation of research into service delivery
- Promote our services, and those we provide in partnership with others
- Provide modern and inclusive treatment facilities



Priority 02

Building and communicating evidence for impact

Driving and disseminating cutting-edge research to transform policy and practice.

Outcomes we expect to see:

- Novel treatments, and impactful research and data insights
- Effective and contemporary services and policy settings
- Expert commentary and advocacy
- Timely translation of evidence into policy and practice

Actions we will take:

- Grow partnerships across the mental health sector and the broader health system
- Continue research into world-leading clinical trials, interventions and technologies
- Advance program evaluation and implementation activities across the sector
- Expand and promote the ways data, research findings and best practice are shared to maximise impact
- Align research with the needs of our consumers, clinical partners, policymakers and the broader community
- Leverage insights from national addiction and mental health surveillance research to identify at risk populations and appropriate responses



Priority 03

Inspiring hearts and minds

Building the capacity of the healthcare workforce and broadening the community's knowledge and attitudes about addiction

Outcomes we expect to see:

- A highly skilled specialist addiction workforce
- An engaged and confident broader health workforce
- Meaningful lived experience and carer representation
- Greater community and government support for health-led responses

Actions we will take:

- Broaden the reach and impact of our addiction training and education offerings
- Develop the leaders of the future through world class higher education pathways, placements and leadership development
- Develop and lead effective initiatives and campaigns to combat stigma, promote treatment, connect sectors, and show the benefits of treating addiction as a health issue
- Grow the impact and influence of the Rethink Addiction campaign, and other similar initiatives



Priority 04

Empowering our people

Fostering an environment and culture that maximises staff potential to thrive, excel and support change

Outcomes we expect to see:

- Vibrant and inclusive staff culture
- Strong personal connection to organisational culture and strategic direction
- A highly skilled, diverse and capable workforce
- Effective and impactful collaboration across teams
- Contemporary fit for purpose environments, systems and processes, technology and equipment

Actions we will take:

- Inspire and support our people to work to their best and full potential
- Strengthen opportunities for collaboration, sharing of knowledge, skills and ideas
- Build a strong positive culture through improved connection, trust and respect
- Implement programs to enhance career opportunities and development for all
- Pursue the best technology, tools and infrastructure to improve our ways of working



Our Principles:

How we work

Respect for all.

Valuing all voices.

Turning Point respects and listens to a diversity of voices and perspectives.

Partnering in care.

Working together across the system.

Turning Point collaborates with consumers, health care providers, universities, researchers and government to reduce the harms caused by addiction.

Safe always.

Committed to accessibility and inclusion.

Turning Point is committed to ensuring its services are accessible and inclusive. We seek to uphold the rights and dignity of those who experience addiction and to reduce shame and judgement.

Learning and improving everyday.

Striving for the best.

Turning Point drives continuous improvement to enhance the quality and safety of all its services and prioritises ongoing learning for all.

Appendices

Our sincere thanks go to all of those who so generously gave their time, ideas and insights into the development of this plan. Your contribution both in the development, and in supporting the collaborative delivery of this plan is greatly valued and appreciated.

- Turning Point staff (including our Lived Experience workforce)
- Turning Point students
- Turning Point consumers and supporters
- Eastern Health
- Federal Department of Health
- Victorian Department of Health
- Monash University
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Eastern Alcohol and Drug Services Consortium (ECADS)
- University of New South Wales
- University of Sydney
- FARE Australia
- Australian Alcohol and Other Drugs Council
- Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA)
- The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
- National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

The Future Directions document has been developed to ensure alignment with various strategy documents and actions both internal and external to Eastern Health. This includes Eastern Health's Strategic Plan 2022-2025, Monash University's Impact 2030 Strategic Plan 2021 - 2030, the National Drug Strategy 2017-2026, the National Alcohol Strategy 2019-28, the National Framework for Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Treatment 2019-2029, the Victorian Health and Medical Research Strategy 2022-2032 and the Victorian Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Strategy 2021-2024.

As we work to implement 'Collaborating for Change', we will regularly measure our progress and performance and seek feedback from our people, including consumers, staff, community and partners.

We look forward to working with you as we drive change together for a healthier future.



