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Additional Services For A Safer Alice Springs

People at risk from alcohol abuse will receive intensive support through a new Safe and Sober Program under the $150 million Alice Springs Transformation Plan.

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, and the Northern Territory Minister for Central Australia, Karl Hampton, today announced more than $5.4 million over two and a half years to provide much needed services for people seeking alcohol rehabilitation.

In 2008 more than 65 per cent of assaults in Alice Springs involved alcohol.

“Alcohol abuse is destroying the lives of town camp residents and must be urgently dealt with if we are going to see any improvements,” Ms Macklin said.

“Acute overcrowding and sub-standard housing combined with alcohol abuse and hopelessness has led to despair and horrific violence in the camps.

“Additional support and rehabilitation services are essential to helping people get off the grog.”

Eight, two person teams made up of a therapist and an Aboriginal Family Support worker will help link people to a range of government services, including health, family, justice, harm minimisation and youth services. People will receive structured and intensive therapy in a culturally sensitive environment.

This funding will also support the expansion of community-based interventions and an in-prison program, both of which are recognised gaps in current services.

Mr Hampton said the Alice Springs Transformation Plan is about working together through new partnerships, with a higher level of coordination and integration of services.

“In addition to the Safe and Sober Program, the Alice Springs Transformation Plan will invest a further $80,400 to help fit-out a Transitional Aftercare facility, managed by Drug and Alcohol Services Association (DASA),” Mr Hampton said.
“The fit-out of the DASA facility is an important part of the overall alcohol rehabilitation strategy, supporting up to eight people in an extended program of re-integration into community.

“The fit-out includes furniture and equipment to make eight beds available for people in treatment and office space for staff. The funding will help purchase aids and equipment for use in the rehabilitation process, landscaping and play equipment for children visiting family.”

The Australian and Northern Territory Governments today also announced Anglicare Northern Territory will receive $3 million to lead the new Communities for Children initiative in Alice Springs.

Anglicare and local service providers will work with vulnerable families and children at risk in Alice Springs to provide additional support through intensive early intervention programs.

Families with children from newborn to 12 years will have access to intensive support programs, including home visits, early learning and literacy programs, early development of social and communication skills, parenting and family support programs, child nutrition, and family community events.

Ms Macklin said early intervention and support services were critical to helping prevent child neglect and abuse.

“Families and children in Alice Springs, many of them Indigenous, face significant disadvantage and have complex needs which require a range of targeted services,” Ms Macklin said.

The Minister for Indigenous Health and Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon, welcomed the additional services.

“This investment will help empower local people to take responsibility for their lives and provide long-term benefits for individuals, their families and the whole community,” Mr Snowdon said.

Contact: Edwin Edlund 0401 119 563