

Media Release – February 24, 2023

Return of Regional Summit in 2023: SMLC

It's a new year, new premises and the return of a successful event for Substance Misuse Limestone Coast (SMLC), as the organisation looks to build on its successful community and advocacy work over the past four years.

Late last year, SMLC moved from its previous home at the Limestone Coast Local Government Association into an office on Mount Gambier's Commercial Street.

Project Officer Sophie Bouchier said the prominent main street frontage was a visual reminder of the important work the organisation does throughout the Limestone Coast region.

"We want people to know what SMLC stands for and also, be aware of our good work in the local community," she said.

"We are not open to the public, however we do provide information about alcohol and other drug (AOD) local services available in our region."

Ms Bouchier and the board will also tour Warrnambool's Western Region Drug & Alcohol Centre (WRAD) in late February.

"The WRAD facility is a great example of a holistic alcohol and other drug service model working for a regional community," Ms Bouchier said.

"We will be there to listen and learn but above all, ask questions about how this model could potentially work for Mount Gambier and the Limestone Coast."

Also, planning will soon commence for the return of the successful Limestone Coast Alcohol and Other Drug Regional Summit, which was first held in 2021 and was attended by 45 frontline workers.

Ms Bouchier said many of the original summit attendees had indicated it should be a regular event.

"We received so much good feedback from that first event and much of what we learned, we have incorporated into SMLC's future planning around workforce training," she said.

"I expect the next summit will also raise some gaps and/or issues which SMLC can proactively work with local organisations and politicians to get funding for."

Over the next two years, two Alcohol and Drug detoxification beds would open at the Mount Gambier and Districts Hospital, following an election commitment made by the Labor Government.

"This is a direct outcome of SMLC meeting with our past and current State Health Ministers to speak about the need for that service to be provided locally," Ms Bouchier said.

Ms Bouchier said the opening of the beds would be a “game-changer” for people requiring medically managed detoxification in the Limestone Coast.

“Detox beds are most often used for detoxification for alcohol, cannabis and gammahydroxybutyrate (GHB), but alcohol is by far the most common drug where medically managed detoxification is needed,” she said.

“Currently, people needing this service have to travel to Adelaide and local people should not have to travel 500 kilometres to access a medical service.

“That is why we need local detox beds.”

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