

## The Australian (illicit) drug policy timeline: 1985-2013

The Australian (illicit) drug policy timeline provides a list of key events, policy and legislative changes that have occurred in Australia between 1985 and February 28 2013. Events are listed by jurisdiction, at the national and state/ territory level. All events added in the last six months are highlighted in blue.

Here we list events in **Victoria only**. For events in other jurisdictions please see the relevant timeline.

DPMP will continue to update the timeline every June and December. Please feel free to email through any comments or suggested inclusions.

### Suggested citation:

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Year	Victoria
2013	<p>New drug strategy released: "<i>Reducing the alcohol and drug toll. Victoria's plan 2013 – 2017.</i>" The strategy contained a 15 point plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better referral of drug users to education and treatment, through expanding existing court-diversion initiatives and building a more systemic approach to diversion provision: by drug, age and population groups</li><li>• Improved harm-reduction services and targeted prevention, through increasing the use and availability of naloxone as an emergency response to opioid overdose</li></ul> <p>Plan also outlined new advisory and decision making arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A ministerial committee</li><li>• An executive group (comprising key Victorian Government executives from Departments of Health, Justice, Human Services, Education and Victoria Police)</li><li>• An alcohol and drug advisory board</li><li>• (comprising ≤ 12 non-government leaders, experts and stakeholders)</li></ul> <p>Also outlined was a plan to establish an alcohol and drug research and innovation fund with a focus on applied research (Jan).</p> <p>Minister Wooldridge released a new Adult Alcohol and Drug (AOD) Screening and Assessment Tool designed to minimise duplication of screening and assessment, streamline intake, improve clients' experience, and inform treatment planning, referral and pathways. The tool had been successfully piloted at 8 AOD agencies and comprised three steps: (1) a self-complete initial screen by the client, (2) comprehensive assessment, (3) review. The tool will be mandated from 2014 for all Department of Health funded agencies (Feb).</p> <p>Victorian Police Minister Peter Ryan announced new road laws ('cocktail' laws) would be introduced for drivers under the influence of <i>both</i> alcohol and illicit drugs. The minimum penalty for a first offence will be higher than the penalty for either drug or drink driving alone: 20 penalty units (\$2800) and a 12 months license suspension (Mar).</p>
2012	<p>Bans on cannabis bongs entered into force (Jan 1).</p> <p>Community Correction Order (CCO) introduced, replacing the Community Based Orders, Intensive Correction Orders and Combined Custody and Treatment Orders. The CCO is a flexible order served in the community. All those sentenced to a CCO must abide by basic conditions such as not reoffending and at least one other optional condition e.g. undertaking AOD treatment, remain free of drugs and alcohol, be supervised, abide by curfews, undertake unpaid community work (Jan 16).</p> <p>Minister for Youth Affairs, Ryan Smith, launched the Victorian Government's Youth Statement, <i>Engage, Involve, Create</i>. This sought to increase opportunities to engage young people in education and/or employment and to build mentorship, links and partnerships between business and philanthropy with young Victorians (Apr).</p> <p>Victorian Police Assistant Commissioner Stephen Fontana highlighted the frustrations of policing illicit drug use at music festivals and raves. Following the arrest of 200 individuals for use/ possession at Creamfields he noted "we are just progressively getting more and more and we are still not scratching the surface." A total of 190 officers and 7 drug detection dogs were used for the operation (Apr).</p> <p>Operation Permute, a 7 month investigation, led to 29 warrants being simultaneously executed across the North West Metropolitan Region and seizure of 5,200 suspected cannabis plants: one of the most significant hauls of cannabis in Victoria Police history. 11 people were arrested (Apr 18).</p> <p>The Federal Government announced that a Task Force would be established to examine organised crime on the Melbourne waterfront. Operation Trident will begin on 1 July 2012, with key members being Victoria Police, Australian Customs and Border Protection, Australia Federal Police &amp; Austrac (May).</p> <p>Victorian Drug Statistics Handbook: Patterns of drug use and related harm in Victoria for the period July 2009 to June 2010 released. Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During 2009–10, opioid-related hospitalisations opioid-related bed days and hospitalisations for heroin overdose all increased (by 15%, 20% and 24% respectively).</li><li>• Stimulant-related harms were largely stable e.g. ambulance attendances decreased by 5%.</li><li>• The number of cannabis-related ambulance attendances increased significantly from 2008 to 2010 (from 675 to 920) (May).</li></ul> <p>New report released: "<i>Trends in alcohol and drug-related ambulance attendances in Melbourne: 2010-2011.</i>" Showed a 107% increase in crystal methamphetamine-related ambulance call-outs: 282 incidents in 2010-11 compared with 136 in 2009-10 (May).</p> <p>New report released: "Victorian Pharmacotherapy Review" (Jun).</p>

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	<p>Minister for Mental Health Mary Wooldridge released a 'roadmap' for reform: "New directions for alcohol and drug treatment services." Principles underlining the new reforms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person-centred, family and culturally inclusive, recovery-oriented treatment – that involves clients in treatment planning and identifies goals, strengths and weaknesses and tailors services to fit needs;</li> <li>• Integrated pathways – that connect individuals with services to address health, social or economic needs;</li> <li>• Intervention at the earliest possible point;</li> <li>• (Multiple) bridges to treatment – from the multiple NSPs and primary health centres funded throughout Victoria and improved screening of forensic AOD clients.</li> </ul> <p>Key actions in 2012 include piloting common screening and assessment tools across 5 treatment sites; the redevelopment of the pharmacotherapy system; and expansion of access to NSPs and counselling services in growth corridors and regional areas (Jun).</p> <p>2012-13 State Budget allocated funding for a new 500-bed medium-security male prison, to be located at Ravenhall in Melbourne's north-west, and an additional 395 permanent beds at existing prisons across Victoria (Jun).</p> <p>Victoria police charged two prison officers in connection with an alleged drug ring at the Barwon prison (Jul).</p> <p>The Victorian Opposition called for an inquiry into drug trafficking in the state's prison system (Jul).</p> <p>The Department of Health commenced consultations across Victoria about the AOD treatment reform. Organisations including the Victorian Alcohol and Other Drug Association (VAADA) and the Association of Participating Service Users (APSU) were used to support and co-facilitate input (Jul-Aug).</p> <p>The <i>Youth Cohort Study</i>: Young people's pathways through AOD treatment services. Study recruited 150 young people using AOD treatment services (aged 16-21 years) was completed (Aug).</p> <p>Roundtable on fentanyl convened by ANEX in Wodonga after a surge in overdoses amongst drug users injecting the opiate (Aug).</p> <p>Victorian Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Principles Consultation paper released (Sep).</p> <p>The Australian Medical Association and the Australian Greens call for a safe injecting facility in Melbourne (Oct).</p> <p>Amendments to Schedule 11 of the <i>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981</i> added eight synthetic cannabinoids and five synthetic stimulants (including MDPV, 4-MMC/mephedrone and BZP) permanently to the list of prohibited substances. The 8 synthetic cannabinoids were previously subject to a temporary 12 month ban (Nov 8).</p> <p>Victorian Government discussion paper released: 'Practical Lessons, Fair Consequences: Improving Diversion for Young People in Victoria' (Aug).</p> <p>Victoria Police undertook a two month operation (Operation TAXA) focused on short term disruption of commercial scale cannabis cultivation. Led to the execution of 48 search warrants, 20 arrests and the seizure of almost 7,000 cannabis plants as well as associated equipment. The operation received significant media attention in Victoria (Aug-Oct).</p> <p>Report from the Victorian Auditor General released: "Prison Capacity Planning". Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 38% increase in prisoner numbers over the past decade (2002-2012) and a heavy reliance on temporary beds has resulted in the existing prison infrastructure nearing its capacity limits.</li> <li>• Male prisoners are more affected: since May 2011, the male prison system has been operating close to or above 95% utilisation.</li> <li>• Overcrowding is leading to adverse effects on other parts of the CJS e.g. increasing prisoners are held in police cells.</li> <li>• Prisoner support programs and health services have not kept pace with the growth in prisoner numbers (due largely to a lack of funds).</li> <li>• The rate of serious incidents per prisoner e.g. assaults and self-mutilation have doubled.</li> </ul> <p>It concluded that the demand pressure on the prison system was unsustainable and that if forecast trends continued substantial investment in prison infrastructure would be required (Nov).</p> <p>Minister Wooldridge released two new workforce strategies: "Victoria's alcohol and drug workforce framework: Strategic Directions 2012-22" and "Victoria's alcohol and drug workforce framework: Implementation plan 2012-15" (Dec).</p>
2011	<p><i>Severe Substance Dependence Treatment Act</i> came into effect, thereby enabling involuntary drug treatment and detention for up to 14 days, where this is necessary as a matter of urgency to save the person's life or prevent serious damage to the person's health (Mar).</p> <p>New report released by the Victorian Auditor-General: "Managing Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Treatment Services". Report noted that the state allocated \$135.7 million for AOD prevention and treatment activities in 2010-11 (81% for treatment &amp; 19% for prevention activities). Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department has no assurance that objectives are being achieved.</li> <li>• Treatment services remain difficult for clients to access and navigate.</li> <li>• 31 internal reviews have been conducted since 1999. But few have been acted on.</li> <li>• The poor track record has resulted in scepticism among service providers.</li> </ul> <p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a whole-of-government AOD prevention strategy</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address the fragmentation and inconsistency of service provision.</li> <li>Revise the treatment service mix so that services funded align with need (Mar).</li> </ul> <p>Sentencing Further Amendment Act 2011 adopted. This extended the abolition of suspended sentences to a range of 'significant offences' including trafficking in a large commercial quantity of a drug of dependence and trafficking in a commercial quantity of a drug of dependence (Apr).</p> <p>GHB overdose victim videoed by Herald Sun at 11am on a Sunday morning, drawing new attention to GHB use in Melbourne. Paramedics confirmed that Melbourne was the GHB capital, with rates of use increasing in Melbourne but declining elsewhere and that 'drug' overdoses are at their highest levels since the heroin epidemic of 1999-2000 (Apr).</p> <p>A Sunday Herald Sun investigation exposed that the Richmond housing estate had become a public 'shooting gallery,' and site of rampant drug dealing: 'Shame of our Needle Town' (Apr).</p> <p>After a decade long legal battle Tony Mokbel pleaded guilty to three drug charges: trafficking a large commercial quantity MDMA between February and August 2005; urging an undercover police officer to import a commercial quantity of MDMA in the same year; and trafficking a large commercial quantity of methylamphetamines in the mid 1990s. A plea deal reached between the Director of Public Prosecutions and Mokbel's defence team resulted in him avoiding trial on other drug charges arising from four separate police operations dating back to 2000. Mokbel has admitted he was the main man behind the manufacture and distribution of the multimillion-dollar drug trafficking enterprise, consisting of at least 10 people, known as "The Company". A spreadsheet of drug transactions between July 2006 and June 2007, known as "The Bill", shows that The Company's gross turnover during that time was more than \$4 million. He was sentenced in July 2012 to 30 years in prison, with a non-parole period of 22 years (Apr 2011 and Jul 2012).</p> <p>Long-standing suppression orders that prevented media coverage of Mokbel case for 24 months and the unedited screening of tv show "Underbelly" within Victoria removed. Victorian Attorney-General Robert Clark ordered a review of suppression orders due to concerns that secrecy may be undermining the principle of open justice (Apr).</p> <p>Yarra City Council voted 6-1 in favour of a trial of a medically supervised injecting facility in Richmond's Victoria street, and outlined intent to lobby for State Government support for a trial (May 17).</p> <p>Victorian Premier Ted Ballieu said he would not support the proposal by Yarra Council for a medically supervised injecting room in Richmond, saying it would send the wrong message and that improved law enforcement and education were needed instead (May 18).</p> <p>New measures introduced in efforts to address drug trafficking and use at the Richmond housing estate: four new CCTV cameras were installed and a police command post established (May).</p> <p>Bill introduced – 'Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Drugs of Dependence) Bill 2011' – to increase government responsivity to new and emerging 'legal' substances such as synthetic cannabinoids. Under the proposal the Governor would have regulation-making power to ban substances that are deemed to pose a significant risk to the health of consumers or public safety, for a 12 month period, until the substances can be proscribed into legislation and Commonwealth regulations (28 Jun).</p> <p>Development of a whole of government Victorian Alcohol and Drug Strategy commenced. The objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease the current rates of alcohol and other drug abuse in Victoria.</li> <li>Reduce the amount of harm that alcohol and other drug abuse causes in the community.</li> <li>Increase access to treatment options so that people with an alcohol or drug problem can get help when they need it.</li> </ul> <p>To enable input into the development, a community consultation document was released: 'Victorian Alcohol and Drug Strategy: Community Consultation' which led to over 120 written submissions (Aug).</p> <p>Victorian Government established an independent advisory group to provide expert advice on AOD issues and to inform the development of the new Victorian Alcohol and Drug Strategy. Advisory group included representatives from: Victoria Police, Australian Hotels Association, Master Grocers Australia, The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (Victoria), Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council, Australian Drug Foundation, VAADA, and City of Greater Bendigo. Chair: Professor Richard Larkins (Aug).</p> <p>The Department of Health released the Victorian framework for recovery-oriented practice (for mental health specifically) (Aug).</p> <p>In response to the Momcilovic High Court ruling that upheld the right of the courts to deem sections of the Drugs Act to be incompatible with the Victorian Human Rights Charter the Victorian Attorney-General Robert Clark announced he was considering amending the <i>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981</i> (Vic) (the Drugs Act) (Sep).</p> <p>Amendment to the <i>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981</i> banned the sale, display and supply of bongs in Victoria from 1 Jan 2012. Minister for Mental Health Mary Wooldridge said this addressed a long-standing contradiction in Victorian law namely that it was illegal to smoke cannabis but legal to display &amp; buy bongs (Oct).</p>
2010	<p>Opposition leader Ted Baillieu said if elected he would 'ban the bong' to send a clear message to young people about the harmful effects of cannabis (Jan).</p> <p>Push by a doctor from the Royal Melbourne Hospital's neurology department to trial Sativex - a liquid marijuana-based mouth spray- to ease the symptoms and pain of MS sufferers. Push followed evidence that Sativex could alleviate loss of movement control &amp; pain &amp; imminent regulatory approval in the UK &amp; Spain (Jan).</p>

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	<p>Evidence from the 2008 Drug Use Monitoring in Australian survey of police detainees reported 48% detainees in Footscray tested positive to heroin (compared to a national rate of 11%) (Feb).</p> <p>Supreme Court of Appeal: <i>R v MOMCILOVIC</i> [2010] VSCA 50 found that s 5 of the <i>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981</i> ('the Drugs Act'), was inconsistent with Victoria's <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i>. The court declared that section 5 of the Drugs Act, which declares that an occupier of premises in which drugs are found is deemed to be in possession of those drugs unless he/she 'satisfies the court to the contrary', cannot be interpreted consistently with "the presumption of innocence under s 25(1) of the Charter". In so doing, the Court rejected arguments advanced on behalf of the Attorney-General that the infringement of the presumption of innocence by s 5 of the Drugs Act was a 'reasonable limit [which] can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.' But the court upheld the conviction against Momcilovic and concluded that the declaration of inconsistent interpretation under the Charter did not affect the validity of s 5 (Mar).</p> <p>Reports by the 2008-09 Illicit Drug Data Report that the price of cocaine in Victoria had dropped to \$20 (May).</p> <p>Victorian Drug &amp; Alcohol Prevention Council released the report, "2009 Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey" which measured use of and attitudes towards alcohol and drugs among 16-24 year old Victorians. Between 2004 and 2009 self-reported lifetime use of any illicit drug decreased from 51.7% to 41.3% and recent use decreased from 31.4% to 25.6% (May).</p> <p>A public sentencing survey was conducted in response to a Coalition election promise that they would provide Victorians with the opportunity to have direct input into future sentencing. The survey was conducted for one month and used 17 hypothetical case studies including on murder, manslaughter, rape and two categories of drug trafficking. The survey generated a total of 18,562 responses and indicated the harshest sentences were reserved for murder and drug trafficking in a large commercial quantity (Jul-Aug).</p> <p>Release of report by the Burnet Institute: "The Potential and Viability for Establishing a Supervised Injecting Facility in Melbourne." Report funded by the Yarra Drug and Health Forum reviewed evidence from 76 supervised injecting facilities (SIF) throughout the world and concluded the facilities led to public health benefits and improved public amenity and community well-being. The report concluded that fixed or mobile SIFs could be suitable for Melbourne. But they recommended that attaining SIFs would require an advocacy strategy to gain community and political support and investigation of the viability of integrating a SIF within existing Victorian harm reduction and treatment services (Jun).</p> <p>Yarra Drug and Health Forum commenced advocacy for a mobile supervised injecting van for Melbourne. They argued this would best meet residential concern about public injection, particularly surrounding the housing commissions in Fitzroy and Collingwood (Jun).</p> <p>Statewide expansion of the Court Integrated Services Program was announced. This followed evaluations of the pilot program (introduced in July 2006) which showed reductions in reoffending and estimates of \$5 million in savings (up to \$5.9 for every dollar invested) (Jun).</p> <p>Victoria Police developed a proactive strategy to address illicit drug use at dance events by conducting a training trial to enable Passive Alert Dogs to detect unlawful use/possession of 1, 4 Butanediol and GBL. Both precursor chemicals were sold and consumed as GHB and had contributed to a recent increase in overdoses in Victorian dance festivals.</p> <p>Victoria Police expanded the provision of Crime And Traffic Connecting on Highways (CATCH) training to law enforcement agencies from other states and territories.</p> <p>Victorian Alcohol and Drugs Association released a report, <i>Review of the cost of Counselling Consultancy and Continuing Care (CCCC) drug and alcohol services</i>, which provides evidence for significant structural underfunding across the Victorian Alcohol and Other drug sector. They recommended a number of measures to address this problem with one being the Department of Health funding the full cost of CCCC (Aug).</p> <p>Inquiry into the Impact of Drug-Related Offending On Female Prisoner Numbers – Interim Report released by the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee. Report showed female prisoners had increased by 27% from 2008 to 2009 (compared to only 3% for males). Concluded this reflected a shift towards increased use of imprisonment as a first resort for females on remand and a failure to recognise that the causes of female drug-related offending are often more complex (than for males), and requires systematic approaches to address frequent histories of trauma, mental health issues and debt (Oct).</p> <p>After a two year investigation targeting a number of alleged organised crime syndicates involved in the production of cannabis, the largest single operation in Victoria Police's history was conducted. 'Operation Entity' sought to reduce the supply of cannabis through high-level market disruption, and involved: &gt;630 Victoria Police members, Australian Federal Police, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Office of Public Prosecutions, AUSTRAC, Australian Taxation Office, State Revenue Office, New Zealand Police, Australian Crime Commission and a number of power companies. Police executed 69 search warrants on cannabis grow houses across Victoria; 9296 cannabis plants were seized; 43 persons arrested; millions of dollars in criminal assets have been restrained to date; and a number of 'Persons of Interest' were identified by DIAC amongst those arrested (Nov 23).</p> <p>The Victorian Liberal party was elected, under Premier Ted Baillieu under a platform of a tough zero tolerance approach to crime (Dec 2).</p>
2009	<p>Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009 – 2019 adopted which recognised the link between mental health and harmful D and A use, and need for early identification of and response to co-morbid problems in an integrated networked system (Feb).</p> <p>The Victorian Department of Human Services released a "Discussion Paper on the Forensic Drug Treatment System" in the aim of improving treatment outcomes for forensic clients (Feb).</p> <p>Newly appointed Victoria Police Commissioner Simon Overland said police could not win a drug war and he would support the decriminalisation of some drugs "if there was evidence that was the best way to go" (Mar).</p>

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	<p>First Victorian Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Related Drugs Strategy 2009– 2012 adopted. The strategy has five priorities: prevention and early intervention; treatment; workforce development; justice and law enforcement; and new knowledge collection and dissemination (Apr).</p> <p>Twenty-six people were taken to hospital after reportedly overdosing at a Melbourne rave on GHB. This followed 30 overdoses at a Festival Hall event and 10 at a Summadayeze music festival (Apr).</p> <p>Dutch music festival promoters cancelled their upcoming Melbourne rave saying there were too many people who took GHB at Melbourne music events and it was tarnishing the reputation of festival organisers (Apr).</p> <p>Victoria Police commenced a pilot program aimed at improving the detection of contraband on roads. The program Crime And Traffic Connecting on Highways (CATCH) brought in an additional \$317,000 worth of illicit drugs and other contraband over the 6 month trial (July-Dec 2009).</p> <p>More than 100 Melbourne-based drug couriers were identified smuggling heroin from Vietnam for seven major crime syndicates. The couriers identified by a taskforce involving Victoria Police, Australian Customs and Australian Federal Police were recruited from the Western suburbs to pay off gambling and business debts. Most were Vietnamese (Jul).</p> <p>Report from the Youth Drug Reporting System (YDRS) released: "Social contexts of substance use for vulnerable 13 –15 year olds in Melbourne". Report sought to enhance understanding of the patterns and meanings of illicit drug use among hard-to-reach youth populations. This identified that substance use played a central role in the lives of young people but that few young people viewed their drug use as problematic and most wanted to be seen as competent, not vulnerable (Oct).</p> <p>Victorian Police expand drug driving testing with provision of extra 25,500 drug testing kits and 25 extra secondary testing machines (Nov).</p> <p>Victorian Premier John Brumby promised to launch an investigation into claims of increased drug use at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre amid concern about the amount of contraband smuggled into Victoria's largest women's jail and increasing overdoses (Nov).</p> <p>Launch of a new interactive website "Bluebelly" that seeks to reduce harm for users of ecstasy, meth/amphetamines and cocaine. Harm reduction information including stories and tips is updated and added to collaboratively by hosts and registered users (Nov).</p> <p>Victoria Police detectives seized 260 litres of a liquid industrial solvent being masked as a "harmless" party drug by crime syndicates. A drought of gamma hydroxybutyrate (commonly known as GHB, GBH, grievous bodily harm, fantasy or liquid ecstasy) had prompted syndicates to turn to gamma butyrolactone (GBL) and similar chemicals (Dec).</p> <p><i>Severe Substance Dependence Treatment Bill 2009</i> introduced for debate. Bill proposed to repeal the Alcoholics and Drug-dependent Persons Act 1968 and enable the detention and treatment of persons with a severe substance dependence for up to 14 days under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person has a severe substance dependence;</li> <li>• Immediate treatment is necessary and urgent to save the person's life or prevent serious damage to the person's health;</li> <li>• The treatment can only be provided by admitting them to a treatment centre; and</li> <li>• There is no less restrictive means reasonably available to ensure treatment is provided (Dec).</li> </ul>
2008	<p>Legislation on compulsory drug testing within Victoria Police extended to include all members in "selected units" e.g. drug squad. New laws were set to commence in August (Apr).</p> <p>Victorian Alcohol and Other Drug Quality Framework released. Six core standards were specified for AOD treatment in Victoria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer Focus</li> <li>• Evidence-based Practice</li> <li>• Continuous Quality Improvement</li> <li>• Corporate and Clinical Governance</li> <li>• Workforce development and</li> <li>• Partnerships (Apr).</li> </ul> <p>Victorian Department of Human Services commenced implementation of the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Action Plan 2007-2010 (May).</p> <p>Victorian Government issued a discussion paper proposing amendments to the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 to mandate a sales, storage and record-keeping regime for nominated precursor chemicals and equipment to prevent their diversion to the manufacture of illicit drugs in clandestine laboratories (Jun).</p> <p>New research confirmed that ambulance attendances involving gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) in Melbourne had increased at a much higher rate than paramedic callouts for heroin. The research published in the <i>Medical Journal of Australia</i> revealed clear resource implications: 90% of GHB OD patients were transported to hospital vs. 21% heroin (Jun).</p> <p>The Victorian Ombudsman recommended strengthening preventative and detection processes in Victorian prisons to lessen the risks associated with contraband, including illicit drugs (Jun).</p> <p>Trial of 24 hour Needle Syringe provision in St Kilda extended until 2010 (Sep).</p> <p>Access Point Stimulant Treatment Centres established in St Kilda and Fitzroy on one year trial to provide information, advice and treatment for stimulant users (Sep).</p> <p><i>A New Blueprint for Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services 2009-2013 -Client-centred, Service-focused</i> was released. The blueprint set out the vision to "prevent</p>

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	<p>and reduce the harms to individuals, families and communities" by becoming more client centred and service focused by making links into, through and out of treatment clearer and more integrated, and prioritising prevention and earlier intervention, removing barriers to services and improving the quality, consistency and responsiveness of services and interventions. Specified strategies included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring routine dual diagnosis screening for all young people entering treatment</li> <li>• Stronger support and training resources for GPs to intervene earlier and</li> <li>• Redeveloping funding and reporting systems to promote service flexibility and innovation (Dec).</li> </ul>
2007	<p>New Mental Health and Drugs Division commenced operation and the Minister for Mental Health convened Victoria's first drug taskforce on 'ice' and amphetamines to guide the State Government's strategy (Mar)</p> <p>Discussion paper released titled "Towards a New Blueprint for Alcohol And Other Drug (AOD) Treatment Services" (Mar).</p> <p>Earlier identification of drug harms project (EIDHP) commenced by the Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre. The project sought to provide an early warning system to Victorian policy makers through an information collection system that on a bi-monthly basis draws together insights from interviews with key stakeholders and surveillance data including ambulance attendances, treatment data and the pattern of needle and syringe distribution (Mar).</p> <p>Victorian Government released report on "Dual diagnosis: Key directions and priorities for service development" (Jun).</p> <p>Victoria Police adopted an <i>Illicit Drug Strategy 2007-2011</i> involving three approaches: disruption; targeting repeat offenders; and reducing re-offending through the use of treatment and diversion programs. The strategy outlined the need for new tools to facilitate planning and performance monitoring. These included a drug attribution model (to collect and analyse information on the drug problem) and a drug harm index (to quantify the amount of harm being caused by drugs) that were proposed to be developed in the first year of the strategy (Jul).</p> <p>Discussion paper released on the "Victorian amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and related drugs strategy 2007–2010" (Sep).</p> <p>After six years of negotiation on drug testing, the Police Regulation Amendment Bill 2007 was adopted. Bill gave Victoria Police Commissioner the restricted power to drug and alcohol test Victoria Police members, but only following critical incidents e.g. police shootings (Oct).</p> <p>A review titled "Ecstasy, ketamine &amp; GHB: A review of users and Victorian alcohol &amp; other drug treatment interventions" identified current treatment EKG related interventions and barriers to seeking interventions. The research identified that while EKG users had sought treatment for other drug use, they did not see their use of EKG as a problematic. Service providers reported that infrequent contact with these clients reduced the capacity of treatment services to provide information to this group on the long term effects of EKG (Nov).</p> <p>Trial of 24 hour Needle Syringe provision at Health Information Exchange, St Kilda (Nov).</p> <p>Victorian Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council (VDAPC) established to provide expert advice to government. VDAPC succeeded the Premier's Drug Prevention Council (PDPC) which finished in March 2007 (Dec).</p>
2006	<p>Victorian Drug Strategy 2006-2009 adopted</p> <p>CounsellingOnline, an online counseling service for drug users, family and friends, was piloted by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre (May).</p> <p>Roadside drug testing made permanent following success of pilot and extended to include testing for ecstasy (Jun).</p> <p>Evaluation of Connect Us (an early intervention partnership program for at risk youth) found 80% of youth were engaged post program participation, 42% in employment or apprenticeships and 38% in education (Oct).</p>
2005	<p>Victorian Government GHB education initiative (Mar).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act</i> banned the display or sale of cocaine kits and imposed penalties of \$6,300 for individual offenders or \$31,500 for businesses (May).</p> <p>Victoria Police <i>Organised Crime Strategy 2005-2009</i> introduced. Core aims were: developing a greater capacity to identify, measure, prevent, disrupt and deter organised crime; and better focusing resources and powers on major criminal threats (Dec).</p>
2004	<p>Final evaluation of the VGDI (Feb).</p> <p>Koori Drug Diversion introduced</p> <p>11 people were taken to hospital after overdosing on GHB, Gamma Hydroxybutyrate, at the Two Tribes dance party at Rod Laver Arena (Mar).</p> <p>Use of drug detection dogs in nightclubs piloted by Victoria Police (May).</p> <p>Report on Rural and Regional Service System Review released: "Rural pathways: A review of Victoria's drug treatment system in rural and regional Victoria" (Jul).</p> <p>Report on Victoria's youth drug treatment system released: "Youth Service System Review" (Sep).</p> <p>Transport Accident Commission commenced anti-drug driving advertisements (Nov).</p> <p>Victoria Police commenced a pilot of roadside drug saliva testing for cannabis and amphetamines. Pilot targeted heavy vehicle drivers, rave party patrons and general public (Dec).</p>

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	Evaluation of the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative (VDDI) found that the VDDI's effectiveness was strongly supported by stakeholders. Evaluators recommended a number of changes including that a strategy be developed for promoting the VDDI at sector management and policy levels, that specific formal requirements be adopted regarding use of the VDDI by agencies and that there be improved upskilling and training of the workforce.
2003	<p>Voluntary agreement adopted between the Victorian Government, Australian Hotels Association, the Nightclub Owners Association and Restaurant and Catering Victoria to provide free or low-cost drinking water on licensed premises (Jun).</p> <p>Koori Alcohol and Drug Plan 2003-04 released as precursor to a strategy (Sep).</p> <p>First Service System Review (SSR) of Victoria's drug treatment system completed.</p> <p>Connect Us (an early intervention partnership program) initiated and funded through the Premiers' Drug Prevention Council in the aim of identifying at risk youth aged 16-21. The 12 month program aimed to engage young people in education, training and employment and thereby prevent problematic drug use and minimise risk taking behaviour.</p>
2002	<p>Drug Court introduced (May)</p> <p>Rural Outreach Diversion introduced</p> <p>Preliminary Evaluation of the VGDI concluded with positive results – 30 initiatives implemented (Oct).</p>
2001	<p>Safe Needle Disposal Strategy launched including a syringe help-line (Jan)</p> <p>Cautious with Cannabis education session developed at Moreland Hall for Cannabis Cautioning referrals (and other referrals)</p> <p>Victoria Government allocated \$2 million to develop a Koori drug and alcohol strategy and established a Koori Drug Strategy Advisory Committee (KDSAC) to undertake the development (Sep).</p> <p>Two reference groups were established into Temazepam Injecting (with Victorian Drugs Policy and Services Branch).</p> <p>Kit on problem and dangers of Temazepam Injecting mailed out to each Victorian doctor and pharmacy. Kit urged them to stop prescribing and supplying temazepam gel capsules because of health risks if injected (Nov).</p> <p>Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative (VDDI) established to support the development of better treatment practices and collaborative relationships between drug treatment and mental health services. The initiative commenced with four small Dual Diagnosis teams covering the state.</p>
2000	<p>Drug Policy Expert Committee (DPEC) released report. Concluded that community support for a trial injecting facility was high in all locations with the exception of Dandenong and recommended proceeding with trials (Mar)</p> <p>Resident group Footscray Matters called for a referendum on trials and said Government was ignoring community views. Traders – Myer and David Jones – said they were likely to leave if city didn't become a drug free area (Jun).</p> <p>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances (Injecting Facilities Trial) Bill 2000 (Vic) introduced into parliament (Jun).</p> <p>Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances (Injecting Facilities Trial) Bill 2000 (Vic) not enacted after the opposition announced it would vote against the bill (Aug)</p> <p>Victorian Labor Government made commitment to expand methadone and drug diversion and signed the COAG-IDDI agreement (Aug).</p> <p>Drug Policy Expert Committee (DPEC) released second stage report. This suggested need for significant reform in Victorian drug strategy and outlined a framework for future development including the development of a Koori drug and alcohol strategy (Nov).</p> <p>Victorian Government adopted Victorian Government Drug Initiative (VGDI) and committed \$77 million in funding for period 2000/01 – 2002/03 (Nov).</p>
1999	<p>Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett announced support for heroin trial (Jan)</p> <p>Herald Sun newspaper introduced a "heroin toll" – a daily toll of the number of drug overdose deaths in Victoria. The heroin toll ran alongside the toll of road crash deaths in Victoria in every Herald Sun newspaper (Feb).</p> <p>Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett held a premiers meeting involving the NSW, SA and WA Premiers and ACT health minister on heroin trial (Mar)</p> <p>Victorian Election – New Labor Government. Incoming Labor government made a commitment to examine feasibility of establishing five supervised injecting facilities in areas known for drug use – inner city Melbourne, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Dandenong and St Kilda (Sep).</p> <p>Drug Policy Expert Committee (DPEC) appointed under the Chair Dr David Penington to consult with proposed locations and to assess the feasibility of implementing a trial (Nov).</p>
1998	<p>Cannabis Cautioning Program state-wide and Illicit Drug Diversion Pilot commenced – Victoria Police (Sep)</p> <p>Court Referral &amp; Evaluation for Drug Intervention and Treatment (CREDIT) Trial (Nov)</p>
1997	<p>Cannabis Cautioning Program trial – Victoria Police (July 1997 to Jan 1998)</p> <p>Victorian Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee (PCPC) Report concluded there was "some merit in suitably regulated and controlled safe houses" for</p>

Year	Victoria
	<p>injecting</p> <p>Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) commenced in Victoria, collecting data on illicit drug market trends</p> <p>Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (COATS) established as a brokerage service, to increase access for forensic clients to drug and alcohol services.</p> <p>The Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS) was established to increase access and engagement of young people in drug treatment, rehabilitation and outreach services.</p> <p>New surveillance project commenced: "Surveillance of drug related events attended by ambulance in Melbourne." Run by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre the project uses ambulance patient care records to collate information on drug-related events (both illicit and licit) attended by Melbourne ambulances.</p>
1996	<p>Premier's Drug Advisory Council Report – recommended cannabis decriminalisation and diversion (Mar)</p> <p>Cannabis decriminalisation failed to win support – liberal backbenchers opposed (Jun)</p> <p>Turning the Tide – Victorian Drug Strategy released. Included \$100 million over three years for a range of projects (Jun)</p> <p>Victorian Government introduced new parliamentary committee - Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee (PCPC) – to oversee implementation of Turning the Tide and inform public debate on current issues (Dec)</p>
1995	<p>Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre commenced service provision</p> <p>Premier's Drug Advisory Council (PDAC) established to examine drug use, with a focus on illicit drugs (chaired by Professor Penington)</p>
1994	First Specialist Methadone Services (SMS) established in Victoria
1993	<p>More spending cuts to health announced - \$381.7 million over two years (Apr)</p> <p><i>Public Sector Management Act 1992 introduced. Key changes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Service Act 1974 repealed</li> <li>• the Premier became the employer of all department heads</li> <li>• no. of government departments reduced from 22 to 13, (then to 8 in 1996). Led to merger of Health and Community Welfare Services to "Health and Community Services"</li> <li>• employment contracts became limited-term and able to be terminated with 4 wks notice (Nov)</li> </ul>
1992	<p>Liberal government elected under Premier Jeff Kennett (Oct)</p> <p>Large scale spending cuts and public service redundancies commenced across areas of health and education (Oct)</p>
1991	Redevelopment of specialist treatment services began under Labor government
1990	
1989	First Victorian Needle and Syringe Exchange Programs introduced
1988	
1987	User group - Victorian Intravenous AIDS Group (VIVAIDS) launched (Aug)
1986	
1985	<p>Victoria's first Drug Strategy released</p> <p>Start of the official Victorian Methadone Program</p>