Why is this important?

- Mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse often go hand-in-hand and require treatment of both disorders. Research in 2004 showed that almost two in five people who used an illicit drug experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress.
- Drug and alcohol workers need specialist training and resources to assist them to provide effective treatment for people with both mental illness and substance abuse problems.

Who will benefit?

- This measure will build the capacity of the non-government organisations to provide best-practice services that effectively address and treat coinciding mental illness and substance abuse.

What funding is the Government committing to the initiative?

- This measure forms part of the Government’s contribution to the COAG Mental Health package, as announced on 5 April 2006.
- The Government is committing $73.9 million to this initiative.

What have we done in the past?

- The Government has spent over $1 billion on initiatives to tackle Australia’s drug problems, including the current National Comorbidity Initiative.
- Since 1997 over $124 million has been allocated to more than 200 NGOs nationally to assist with establishment and operation of a range of alcohol and illicit drug treatment services. The current initiative will enhance the capacity of such organisations to deal with the more complex needs of people with coexisting mental health and substance abuse problems.

When will the initiative conclude?

- Funding has been allocated for the next five years with a review being conducted in 2010-11.