

ABOUT ACSO

Established in 1983 as a drop in centre for ex prisoners, ACSO is a courageous organisation with a vision to create a safe and inclusive community freed of crime and prisons.

It's our goal to reduce re-offending and our mission is to help people transition from prison, assist them in the community, stop them from re-offending and divert others from committing crime. Our ethos is simply to create another chance; to promote recovery and to support rehabilitation and re-integrating people back into the community.

Our commitment to our vision and mission has seen ACSO become a "provider of choice" in the delivery of forensic services and programs for people who are transitioning from prison back into the community, along with those with complex and multiple needs who are in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

We offer innovative services responding to unemployment, mental illness, disability, homelessness, substance use and offending behaviour throughout the metropolitan area and regional Victoria. These services are delivered through our 'wrap around' service delivery model that integrates ACSO's Housing, Complex Care, Clinical, Employment and Community Enterprise Divisions to achieve better outcomes for our clients and the communities we serve.



ACSO Head Office: How to find us

- Train:** North Richmond Station
(South Morang and Hurstbridge Line)
- Tram:** No. 24 & 109. Tram stop no. 19
- Bus:** We recommend finding bus routes via www.ptv.vic.gov.au



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StepOut

Community Offenders Advice & Treatment Service

Client Information Brochure



BACKGROUND

The Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (COATS) is the state-wide government funded forensic drug treatment program. Its role is to provide a comprehensive drug and alcohol assessment and treatment plan for forensic clients who have come in contact with the criminal justice system or are at risk of doing so.

StepOut was established within the COATS program to assist those prisoners serving a straight sentence to access free and confidential alcohol and drug counseling services in the community.

WHAT IS StepOut?

It is a VOLUNTARY program for people who are on straight release and who are choosing to have drug and alcohol treatment on release from custody.

It is designed for support in the transition from prison into the community.

It is a free service.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

You are eligible for this free service if:

- you are out on straight release. That is not on parole and not on remand.
- you want drug and alcohol counselling support when you are out.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF StepOut?

StepOut offers you the opportunity to be linked into post release drug and alcohol counselling.

This presents you with a unique and vital opportunity to sort through your difficulties with substance use and to be supported as you look at related life issues.

The counselling can help you settle back into the community by dealing with the issues that can be overwhelming when you are released.

Staff will work with you to develop a treatment plan to meet your individual needs and they will ensure that you receive quality and respectful care.

THE StepOut PROCESS

- If you want to participate in the StepOut Program, see your prison-based Drug and Alcohol Counsellor, TAP coordinator or Case Manager at least a month before your release date.
- After StepOut has received your referral, a staff member (a COATS assessor) will come and see you in prison in the month before you are released.
- They will talk with you about your individual needs and in consultation with you, link you into a drug and alcohol counselling service.
- An appointment will then be arranged at an agency close to where you live, within 48 hours of your release or at a time convenient to you.
- You will receive a letter with your appointment for treatment, and the location before you leave prison.
- After your release, you will need to attend your appointment at the treatment service for ongoing support.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like more information about the StepOut program, please contact your Case Manager, who can then contact COATS on **94137000** or email: **intake@acso.org.au**

OTHER CONTACTS

After your release from prison, there may be times when you feel a bit down, lonely, or just need someone to talk to.

You can ring the following number and talk to someone any time:

DIRECT LINE PHONE: 1800 888 236

(DIRECT LINE is a 24 hour confidential drug and alcohol counselling service.)

LIFELINE PHONE: 13 11 14