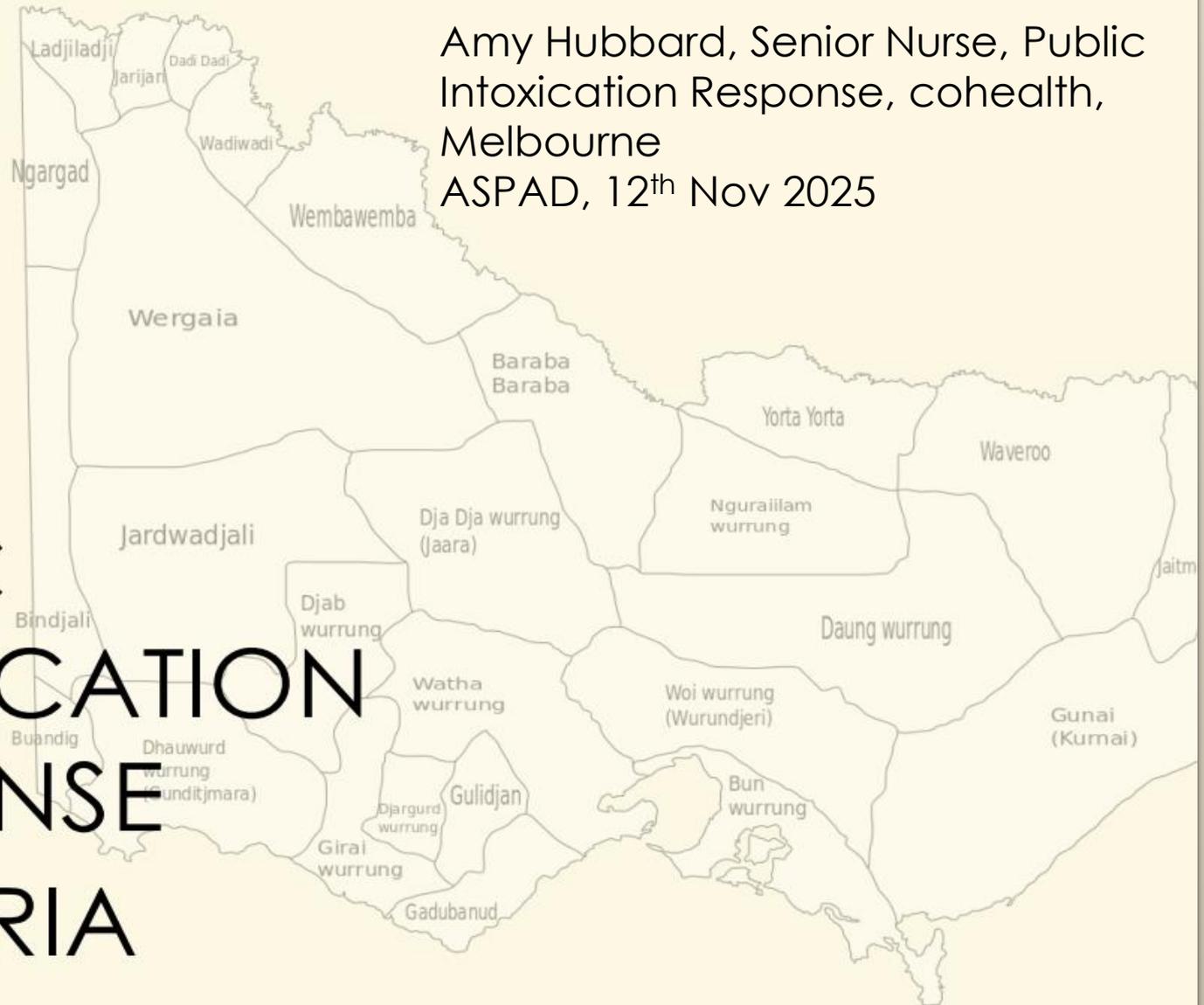


Amy Hubbard, Senior Nurse, Public  
Intoxication Response, cohealth,  
Melbourne  
ASPAD, 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025

# PUBLIC INTOXICATION RESPONSE VICTORIA





We acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet here today, their elders both past and present and in doing so acknowledge their continuing connection to land and waters, their culture and community.

We also wish to pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and elders from other lands who are with us here today.

# Disclosure of Interest

cohealth receives funding from the Victorian Department of Health to deliver the Public Intoxication Response (PIR) program in Metropolitan Melbourne.

This includes the 24/7 sobering centre in Collingwood and outreach services across Melbourne's CBD.

# From Punishment to Care

Victoria  
decriminalised public  
drunkenness on 7  
November 2023.

A key  
recommendation  
from the 1991 Royal  
Commission into  
Aboriginal Deaths in  
Custody.

Recognises  
intoxication as a  
health and social  
issue, not a crime.

Driven by decades of  
advocacy from  
Aboriginal  
communities.



# Why the Reform Matters

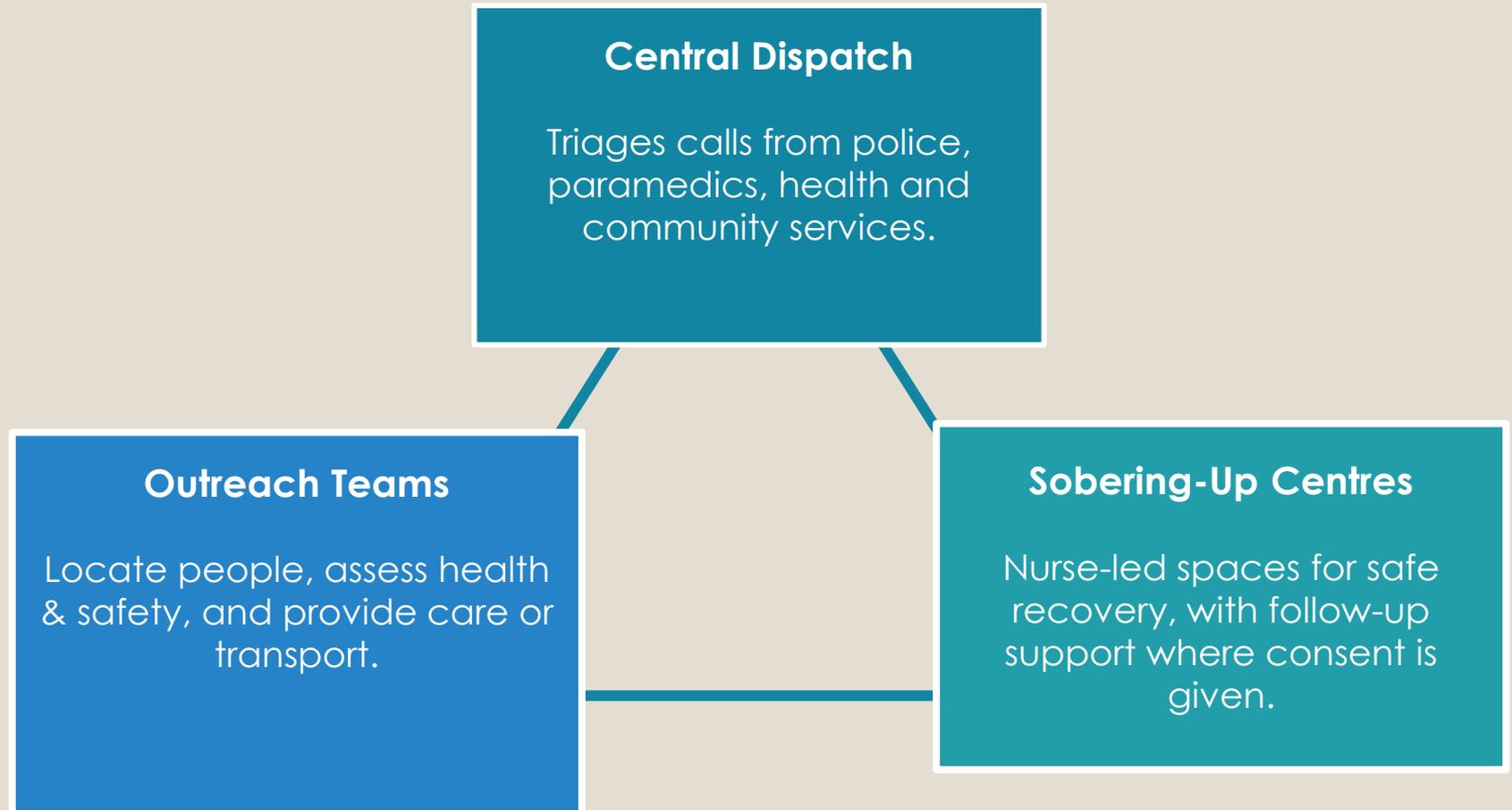
People were previously arrested or detained while intoxicated.

Groups most affected:  
Aboriginal people,  
migrants  
people experiencing  
homelessness, mental ill-  
health, or dependence.

PIR = Public Intoxication  
Response  
Focus on safety, dignity and  
connection.

# Public Intoxication Response (PIR)

## Three Key Components



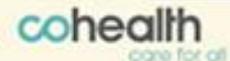


# Culturally Safe & Community-Led Care

Aboriginal-led design & governance central to PIR

Services like Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) & Ngwala Willumbong, ensure care is culturally grounded and community informed

Rebuilds trust with groups historically over-policed.



# A Typical Client Journey

Call comes to Dispatch -  
Outreach team attends

Assess location & safety;  
decide together on next  
steps.

Many go home or to friends.  
others (20%) go to Sobering-  
Up Centre for up to 12 hrs.

Voluntary referrals to GP,  
AOD or housing services.



# The People Behind the Response



Teams conduct assertive outreach and community engagement.



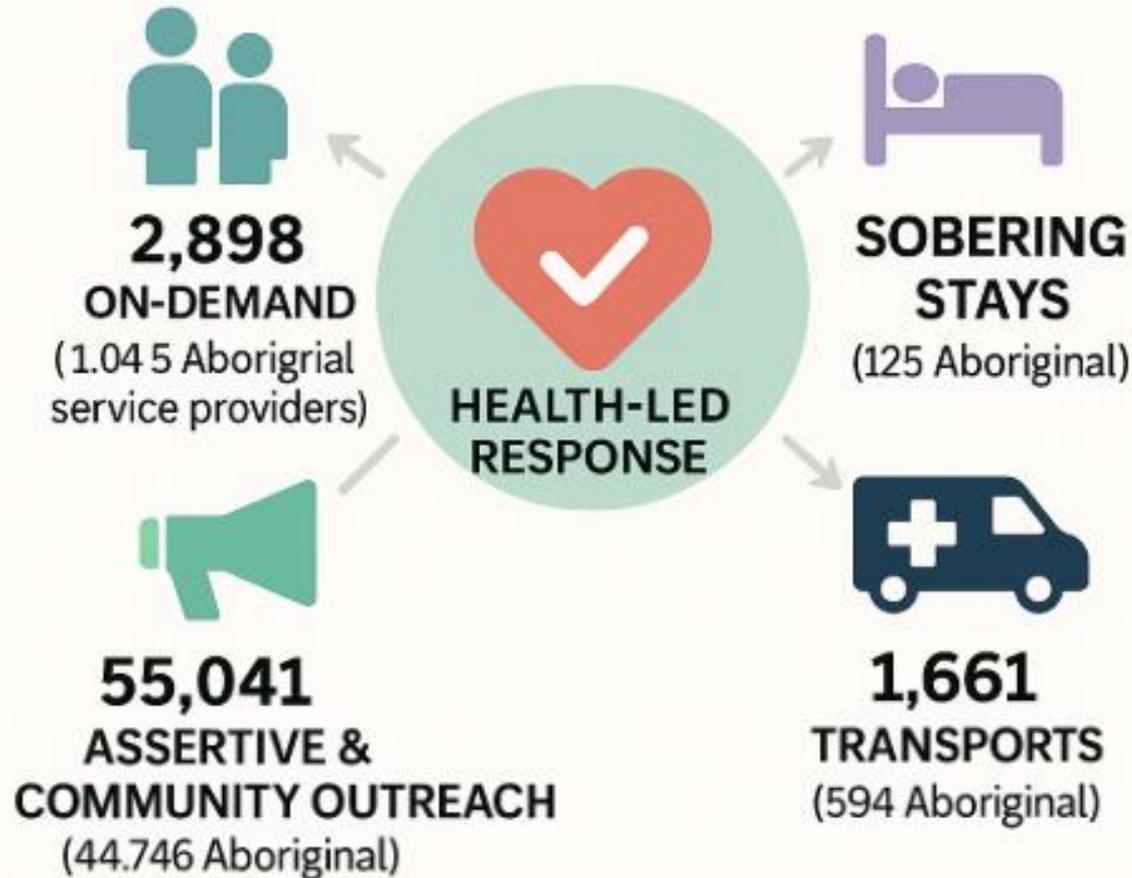
Delivered by a diverse workforce.



All trained in trauma-informed and culturally safe practice.

# KEY OUTCOMES

From 7 November 2023 to 30 June 2025



# What We've Learnt

Two evaluations  
underway -  
Indigenous-led &  
KPMG.

Busy nights aren't  
confined to  
weekends.

Terminology matters  
–  
'public intoxication'  
vs  
'public drunkenness'.

Workforce wellbeing  
& training essential.

Discharge referrals  
are life-changing.



# Looking Ahead

PIR redefines how we respond to public intoxication.

- From punishment to compassion.
- From crisis to care.
- From stigma to safety.