



Hello Sunday Morning

WE'RE CHANGING THE WORLD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ALCOHOL.
ONE SUNDAY AT A TIME.

PRE BUDGET SUBMISSION

March 2025



We are creating a world where every individual has the right support
at the right time to change their relationship with alcohol.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About Hello Sunday Morning

Hello Sunday Morning is a **global leader in digital early interventions for alcohol** and the largest organisation of its kind in the world, and we are Australian. Our aim is to change the world's relationship with alcohol. One Sunday at a time. We offer a **range of programs accessible 24/7 from anywhere in Australia** and the world. All you need is a smart phone.

Our programs have been shown to result in

- **Reduced alcohol consumption:** Participants in our programs report an average 50% reduction in alcohol use within the first 90 days of engagement
- **Improved mental health:** Service users experience an 80% measurable reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression
- **Cost savings:** For every dollar invested in Daybreak, it saves \$2.49 in other costs. Reduced alcohol consumption leads to fewer alcohol related hospitalisations and emergency department visits, generating long term savings for the healthcare system

Our innovative and evidence based programs increase accessibility and reach of alcohol support and intervention and **translate to real changes to people's lives.**

Policy alignment

Hello Sunday Morning's mission to help people change their relationship with alcohol strongly aligns with the ACT Government's health priorities, as outlined in the **ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030**, the **ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026**, and the **ACT Preventative Health Plan 2020-2025**. Our digital programs put individuals in control of their own health journey, providing accessible tools that support behaviour change and recovery. By working alongside existing health services, we help integrate care pathways, ensuring people can navigate support options in a way that works for them.

Prevention and early intervention are central to our approach, in line with the **ACT Preventative Health Plan 2020-2025**. Our tools help individuals recognise risky drinking patterns early and take action before alcohol use escalates into a bigger issue. Aligned with the **ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026**, we address stigma—one of the biggest barriers to seeking help—by providing a safe, judgment-free space for people to reflect on their drinking and access support. By leveraging digital innovation and collaborating with the broader health system, we can contribute to the ACT Government's goal of driving long-term improvements in alcohol-related health outcomes.

Why our work is important

Alcohol can have important social benefits to Canberra residents, but it also comes at enormous cost. The financial cost to governments, the community and individuals in Australia has been estimated at more than **\$67 billion** through lost productivity and increased health care costs. Alcohol related deaths are on the rise in Australia – regular drinking can **reduce life expectancy by 7 years**. There are 100,000 risky drinkers in Canberra. Alcohol has been the leading drug of concern every year in the past decade, with 42.2% of treatment being alcohol related in 2019-2020¹.

¹ Australian Institute of Health & Welfare. Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia: early insights. Canberra: AIHW, 2021.

Our submission

In this pre budget submission, we propose actionable ways in which the ACT Government can work with Hello Sunday Morning to reduce alcohol related health impacts. This partnership has the potential to significantly reduce costs to the community, while balancing alcohol's social benefits, through a strong focus on early intervention and prevention utilising the unique digital infrastructure that Hello Sunday Morning has built.

Our platform can be easily used to build similar online peer support communities and interventions for people with mental health needs or provide peer driven waitlist and aftercare services for residential rehabilitation. The infrastructure is already in place, so scalability is unlimited.

There are 100,000 risky drinkers in Canberra, equating to 25% of people aged 14 years and over.

We are extremely cost efficient for our impact. Among existing ACT members of our programs, 93% enter in the moderate to high risk drinking category. By 3 months 73% are in the low risk drinking category.

For every \$500,000 investment we can significantly expand our reach into ACT and help an additional 2000 ACT residents every year live healthier lives. ACT would be contributing the potential \$8 million a year in health and productivity savings across Australia.

ABOUT HELLO SUNDAY MORNING

Hello Sunday Morning is a globally recognised Australian not for profit organisation dedicated to helping individuals change their relationship with alcohol. One Sunday at a time.

We started with a blog in 2009, when our founder took a year off alcohol and documented his experience. Momentum grew quickly and Hello Sunday Morning became a movement of people working together on their own unique journeys toward a healthier and happier life.

We have since grown into a fully fledged digital health organisation integrating technology and evidence based prevention and early intervention to support alcohol behaviour change and improve mental health outcomes.

We are now the world's largest online peer support platform dedicated to alcohol change.

Our 12 Consumer Advisors are central to the development and improvement of all our programs, our marketing and our research efforts.

Our growth now spans six distinct program areas that address the full spectrum of alcohol use with the potential to target over 22 million drinkers in Australia, including the 5 million risky drinkers.

Our government, corporate and philanthropic partners and sponsors have enabled us to build an integrated digital health system with infinite scalability and unparalleled reach into regional areas.

Our key program areas

Daybreak: A bespoke, cutting edge technology platform, enabling unparalleled reach, anonymity and 24/7 access to help for those who need it. It provides access to immediate peer and clinical support for individuals seeking to reduce or abstain from alcohol consumption. Our moderators are the cornerstone of our clinical governance and are what sets us apart from other digital health platforms. Daybreak is funded by the Australian Government.

Care Navigator: A pilot program requiring ongoing funding to assist people to access additional help if they need it and connect them to the broader health system.

My Drink Check: A self assessment tool designed to help people understand their drinking and mental health risk and how to make changes where desired. Research indicates that assessment can result in reductions in drinking without any further intervention. Development of My Drink Check was funded by the nib foundation.

Drink Tracker: A tool for monitoring alcohol consumption and drink free days. Monitoring consumption has been shown to reduce drinking without further intervention and is typically the first step in treatment after assessment. Development of Drink Tracker was funded by the nib foundation.

Hello Change: A self directed treatment program over 6 sessions. It's like having a psychologist in your pocket! Evidence shows that online self directed treatment is about as effective as seeing a psychologist in person or via telehealth. Development of the Hello Change program was funded by the nib foundation.

Education and information: Public health campaigns and resources that equip people and communities with the knowledge and tools to foster better relationships with alcohol. Our public health education, information and advocacy, as well as promotion and evaluation, are funded by Ian Potter Foundation.

Who we support

Through innovation and science driven solutions, Hello Sunday Morning has **supported 150,000 Australians**, demonstrating measurable improvement on individual well being and community health.

The Australian government's support has been instrumental in making Daybreak the world's largest online support community for alcohol, with almost 10 times the number of members as Alcoholics Anonymous and instantly accessible.

Sixty five percent of our members are women because women in particular experience a lot of shame and stigma when they need help. And they often have family responsibilities and work commitments that make it difficult to see a health professional. Our digital solutions allow them to get the help they need anonymously 24/7.

Scalability and operations

The scalability of our digital programs is almost infinite, limited only by funding. The Australian Government currently supports 7,500 new Daybreak places a year. As a testament to need and popularity of Daybreak, **we grow by more than 11,000 new members every year**. Over 250 a year are from ACT, and ACT is our largest member population by state.

Our operations and offerings have grown into a self contained stepped care digital health system with scalability only limited by funding.

Our services currently now include a self assessment tool (My Drink Check), an online tool to monitor consumption (Drink Tracker), a care coordination advisory service (Care Navigator) and a 6 session self directed online CBT program (Hello Change). We seek to scale up significantly in ACT to connect with all 100,000 risky drinkers.

Wherever people are in the cycle of change, our challenge is to provide the right tools at the right time to enable them on their journey. Early intervention is the key. For some taking a break, cutting back or quitting alcohol is the first step to a healthier happier life. For others it is a necessity.

Hello Sunday Morning Strategic Plan 2024 2027

WHY OUR WORK IS IMPORTANT

Alcohol costs the community \$67 billion a year in health and productivity costs

Alcohol can have important social benefits to South Australians, but it also comes at enormous cost to the community. The National Drug Research Institute conservatively estimated the cost to Australians of alcohol related preventable healthcare, workplace injuries and low productivity, and other costs at around **\$67 billion a year**, far outstripping the cost of illicit drug use.² The top 5% of drinkers drink nearly 40% of the alcohol in Australia.³ In ACT, 25% of people aged 14 and over consume alcohol at levels that put their health at risk.

Alcohol contributes significantly to preventable mortality and morbidity

Globally alcohol contributes to 2.6 million deaths annually, accounting for 5% of all deaths and 13% among young people. In Australia there has been a 9% increase in alcohol related deaths between 2020 and 2021. Men are twice as likely as women to be affected. **Regular heavy drinkers can shorten their life by 7 years.**

These deaths are preventable.

And it's not just the drinker that is affected. Alcohol use also significantly impacts the wellbeing of families and communities and is recognised by the World Health Organisation as a global health and social issue that requires urgent attention.

Early intervention is the key

Decades of research shows that alcohol interventions reduce these alcohol harms and has economic benefit in improving productivity, reducing health costs and increasing longevity.

Five million Australians drinking at risky levels. **Only one in ten get the treatment they need.**

Early intervention is the key and digital health enables greater access in areas where services are unavailable especially in regional and remote locations.

Hello Sunday Morning fills a gap, intervening early to prevent major problems

If we can **reduce risky drinking early**, people are less likely to go on to experience more serious alcohol problems. Our early intervention programs work downstream using a stepped care model to provide self help, peer support and self directed behaviour change for risky drinkers.

The majority of South Australians who use our services want to reduce their alcohol consumption to decrease health related harms while balancing the social benefits of alcohol.

ACT's investment in our programs will ensure all ACT residents have access to the tools they need for healthier, happier lives and reduce the social and economic costs of alcohol in ACT.

² [https://ndri.curtin.edu.au/news_events/ndri_news/media_release_\\$67_billion_cost_of_alcohol](https://ndri.curtin.edu.au/news_events/ndri_news/media_release_$67_billion_cost_of_alcohol)

³ https://www.ias.org.uk/2024/01/23/10_of_drinkers_consume_over_half_of_all_alcohol_consumed_in_australia

OUR IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Improved health outcomes

We can demonstrate through our collaborative research program:

- **Reduced Alcohol Consumption:** Participants in our programs report an average 50% reduction in alcohol use within the first 90 days of engagement
- **Mental Health Improvements:** Service users experience an 80% measurable reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression
- **Cost Savings:** For every dollar invested in Daybreak, it saves \$2.49 in other costs. Reduced alcohol consumption leads to fewer alcohol related hospitalisations and emergency department visits, generating long term savings for the healthcare system continued funding for early intervention is essential to improve the health of Australians

I had tried to reduce my alcohol intake so many times and each time failed. Daybreak gives you that anonymous support network that you need to make that big change in life – I am so thankful. It is non judgmental support from others on the same journey plus professional support when you need it.

Daybreak member, 2024

Accessibility and reach

Hello Sunday Morning ensures accessibility for all Australians, particularly in rural and remote areas where traditional health services are limited. In 2023/24, Hello Sunday Morning provided over 35,000 clinical and peer support interactions, demonstrating our scalability and capacity to meet growing demand.

Innovation and evidence based practices

Our programs integrate AI driven insights to tailor support and enhance engagement. Hello Sunday Morning has collaborated with leading research institutions to evaluate and refine our services, ensuring they remain evidence based and effective.

Real changes in people's lives

The impact is not just reflected in the numbers but also in the profound change experienced by individuals and their families. Our services reduce risky drinking by 50% and mental distress by 80%, and for every dollar invested into our digital support community, there is a saving of \$2.49 to the community.

Hello Sunday Morning is one of the few options for people who may not want or need specialist treatment to get support to make changes. We provide a range of evidence based supports for drinkers right along the spectrum of alcohol use, so they're empowered to make the changes they want. True early intervention.

Hello Sunday Morning's alignment with ACT Government priorities

Hello Sunday Morning's mission to help people change their relationship with alcohol aligns closely with the ACT Government's health priorities, particularly in improving access to support, reducing stigma, and delivering person-centred care.

ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030

Our programs put individuals in the driver's seat of their own health journey. We provide digital tools that support behaviour change and recovery, ensuring people can access help in a way that works for them. By collaborating with other health services, we can improve integration across the system and contribute to better health outcomes.

ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026

Stigma is one of the biggest barriers to seeking help. Through our digital programs and community support, we create a safe space for people to reflect on their drinking and take action without fear of judgment. We also make it easier to navigate support services, particularly for those with co-occurring mental health challenges.

ACT Preventative Health Plan 2020-2025

Prevention and early intervention are at the heart of what we do. Our tools help people identify risky drinking patterns early and take steps before alcohol use escalates into a bigger issue. We also play a role in reducing alcohol-related harms, such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), by equipping people with the right knowledge and support when they need it.

By leveraging digital innovation and working in partnership with the broader health system, we can help the ACT Government drive meaningful, long-term change in alcohol-related health outcomes.

I spent years feeling like I was the only mum struggling with alcohol, unsure where to turn. When I found Daybreak, I realised I wasn't alone—there was a whole community like me, ready to make positive changes with support. Now, my life is transformed: no more guilt or anxiety, stronger relationships, and a future I'm truly grateful for.

Daybreak member, 2025

ENHANCING FUTURE IMPACT

Our bold mission is to reach 2 million people across the globe by 2030, providing tools and resources for anyone who wants to change their relationship with alcohol.

Professor Nicole Lee, Hello Sunday Morning CEO

Digital health is the future and Hello Sunday Morning is on the cutting edge.

We have bold plans to significantly enhance our existing services through the latest technology and expand our programs to reach more people and increase our impact. Examples of some of our plans and the investments we are seeking are outlined below.

There are 100,000 risky drinkers in the ACT. We are extremely cost efficient for our impact and with an investment from ACT of just \$500,000 a year, we can significantly expand our reach into ACT and help another 2000 ACT residents every year live healthier lives. ACT would be contributing the potential \$8 million a year in health and productivity savings across Australia.

Increase Daybreak's reach and impact in South Australia

Daybreak is a cost effective and effective service that reduces alcohol related harm and supports healthier alcohol use. Our impact is already high with a 50% reduction in drinking and significant reductions in psychological distress.

But we want to help even more people.

The complex technology infrastructure that supports Daybreak and our other programs has already been developed, so the platform has nearly infinite ability to scale to support the **five million risky and dependent drinkers** in Australia and **reduce health care costs**.

The cost to support each new member is just \$250 per year, substantially less than all other funded alcohol services. For every extra \$500,000 we receive we can help an additional 2000 people reduce risky drinking and live healthier lives.

We want to at least sustain the current level of support of new members at its real cost to ensure the **program remains sustainable** and continues delivering vital services for those seeking to change their relationship with alcohol. Our ultimate goal is to increase this number substantially.

Expanded rural and remote outreach campaign

We want to expand our targeted support for **regional, rural and remote communities**. More than 25% of Daybreak members are from regional and remote areas. These areas face unique challenges including limited access to traditional services (there are fewer services and most have long waiting lists) and more stigma towards people with alcohol related issues than people in metropolitan regions.

Risky drinking is 40% higher in remote or very remote areas compared to major cities.

We can increase our profile in these area through an advertising and marketing campaign to bridge the gap in access to care and create a more inclusive environment for individuals seeking help, regardless of their location.

Advertising campaign: We have developed a brief for a year long advertising campaign which will be substantially funded through pro bono support. **We need \$150,000 to contribute to this campaign to make it a reality in ACT.**

Social media campaign: Our social media campaigns have been very successful for a relatively small cost. In previous campaigns each new person we attract into Daybreak costs \$50 in social media campaign costs. We aim to attract an additional 2500 people in regional areas through an ongoing campaign. **Campaign collateral will cost \$50,000 and cost for the campaign itself \$100,000.**

Care Navigator: Stepped up care for those who need it

We know that self help and peer support are very effective in supporting change. Daybreak reduces drinking by 50% and sees significant reductions in mental wellbeing within 3 months.

Sometimes people need a little more. Our earlier trial of Care Navigator was a great success. More than 87% of users were highly satisfied and 70% said it was the key reason they reduced or stopped drinking.

*Care Navigator is currently available to members as a limited pilot service. Without further funding we will be unable to offer this service.
The **cost is relatively small at \$130,000 per year ongoing.***

Enhancing the user experience at Hello Sunday Morning

Hello Sunday Morning has been at the forefront of helping individuals transform their relationship with alcohol for 15 years. We are constantly working to improve the user experience.

Our products have grown organically with community need and funding priorities and as a result currently accessed through different doorways – Daybreak through smartphone app; Hello Change on its own URL; My Drink Check through the Hello Sunday Morning website; and Drink Tracker and Care Navigator through the Daybreak app.

We have had significant pro bono support from design thinkers and UX designers at the Mantel Group and have blueprints to expand accessibility of our services so they can all be accessed through web, smartphone app and wearables.

*To enhance the user experience which will attract and retain more members we are currently **seeking funds of \$250,000***

“Daybreak is the epitome of the goodness in this world. The love and support offered to fellow sufferers is unparalleled. It’s obvious it’s grounded in genuine empathy and compassion. The ability to be finally honest about our internal worlds is such a relief. For many, that honesty is then extended to the people who can help us too - medical professionals, family, friends. I’m not sure I would ever have told my GP I was at the end and needed help but for my fellow Daybreakers. I was convinced I was just a very bad person who didn’t deserve help - who couldn’t be helped. I say that appointment was the start of my recovery journey. But really it was the kind souls in Daybreak”

Daybreak member, 2025

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