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Referral criteria guide for Windana Residential Programs

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Introduction

At Windana, we believe in compassionate, evidence-informed care that meets people where they are. Our Youth Residential Withdrawal (WYCH), Adult Residential Withdrawal (DWH) and Therapeutic Community (Rehabilitation) programs offer distinct but complementary pathways for recovery from alcohol and other drug dependence.

This guide supports timely, appropriate, and well-informed referrals by outlining key eligibility and exclusion criteria, along with practical information to help clients prepare for admission.

Our approach is grounded in harm reduction, dignity, and respect. We assess each referral individually, with a focus on safety, readiness, and the best possible outcomes for both the client and the broader community.

To maintain safe and therapeutic environments, Windana applies exclusion criteria based on clinical safety, program design, and available resources. However, we recognise that many client needs exist on a continuum. Rather than applying blanket exclusions, we aim to assess each case contextually - considering individual circumstances, site capacity, and potential for safe participation.

Our programs are not medically supervised facilities and operate within a therapeutic community model. This means we are unable to accommodate clients requiring intensive medical care, one-on-one support, or management of acute psychiatric or behavioural risks. Where clients fall outside our current scope, we aim to work with referrers to connect them with more appropriate services, such as medically supervised withdrawal units or specialist mental health care.

Windana remains committed to expanding access and reducing barriers wherever possible, including through partnerships, infrastructure improvements, and staffing enhancements to support a broader range of client needs in the future.

Eligibility Criteria Across All Programs

Program Engagement Capacity

Clients will need to participate in a structured, short-term residential program, including:

- Basic literacy and comprehension skills.
- Capacity to engage in small group settings and follow daily routines.

Mental Health & Cognitive Support Needs

Severe Unmanaged Mental Health Conditions: Clients with conditions that significantly compromise safety or participation may not be suitable. This includes:

- Florid psychosis
- Unmanaged major depressive episodes with high-risk factors
- Severe panic attacks impacting daily function
- Active eating disorders requiring intensive support
- Recent suicidal or self-harm behaviours (assessed in context of substance use and current support)
- Anti-social personality disorder with high-risk behaviours

Cognitive or Intellectual Disabilities: Clients requiring one-on-one support for daily living activities may not be suitable unless appropriate support can be arranged.

Legal and Safety Considerations

- History of Child Sexual Offences: Referrals are not accepted.
- History of Sex Offences: Referrals involving individuals on the sex offender registry or with known convictions will be assessed contextually (e.g., public urination vs. serious offences).
- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) with History of Violence: Assessed on a case-by-case basis. Considerations include severity, behavioural history, and current support needs.
- Recent or Ongoing Acts of Violence: Assessed individually, considering:
    - Severity and recency (e.g., within past 12 months)
    - Context (e.g., substance-induced vs. deliberate harm)
    - Risk to resident and staff safety
    - Includes cruelty to animals

Adult Residential Withdrawal (Detox) – St Kilda, and Youth Withdrawal (WYCH 25 years and younger) - Dandenong

Our residential programs are supported by on-site nursing staff, but they are not staffed as 24/7 medical facilities, with no medical staff on-site overnight or on weekends. To ensure safety and quality care for all , we are best able to support people whose health needs are stable and can be managed within this setting.

Exclusion Criteria

- **GHB use exceeding 10ml per day** – due to the high risk of complex withdrawal, we are unable to safely support clients with this level of use.
- **Alcohol use exceeding 30 standard drinks per day for DWH and 20 standard drinks per day for WYCH** – as we are not a medically supervised withdrawal unit. Chronic, long-term, high-quantity alcohol use is often comorbid to impaired liver function – which impacts responsiveness to withdrawal medications.
- **Limited mobility** – our detox facilities cannot accommodate clients who require wheelchairs or walkers.

Current Capability for Opiate Withdrawal at WYCH

- We can support opiate withdrawal if the client is on Sublocade and stable.
- We cannot provide withdrawal support for clients requiring Schedule 8 medications (e.g., Methadone or Suboxone), as we do not have medical staff available to administer these medications.

Therapeutic Community (Rehabilitation)

For clients seeking residential rehabilitation in a structured, therapeutic community environment.

Exclusion Criteria

- **Limited mobility -** Our residential programs are located on large properties (e.g., Barwon TC – approx. 5 acres; Maryknoll TC – approx. 44 acres) and require clients to move between facilities for daily activities. While some sites have accessibility features such as ramps, the overall terrain can include uneven, rocky, or muddy ground, which may present challenges for individuals with limited mobility.

- Grampians TC: Equipped with ramps and can accommodate up to two clients using wheelchairs at a time, due to limited accessible bathroom facilities.
- Barwon TC: Has ramps and generally good accessibility; suitability will be assessed individually.
- Maryknoll TC: Includes ramps but also areas of undulating ground between facilities; mobility needs will require case-by-case assessment.
- Clients who use mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers, frames) are not automatically excluded. However, they must be able to move safely and independently around the property or with minimal assistance, given current infrastructure and staffing limitations. Recent examples show that some clients using walking frames have participated without issue.

- **Parents, Children, and Couples Accommodation –** We aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for all residents. At this time, we are unable to accommodate children within the residence. As a result, parents who need to stay with their children during treatment are not eligible for residential admission. Our programs are also designed for individual participation, so we are unable to offer shared accommodation for couples or family members, including family rooms.

General Notes

- All referrals are assessed individually to ensure the safety and suitability of the program for both the client and the broader community.
- These criteria are subject to ongoing review as infrastructure, staffing, and partnerships evolve.
- To avoid delays in processing, please ensure all referral documentation is:
  - Up to date (completed within the last 3 months)
  - Thorough and concise

Incomplete or outdated documentation can significantly delay the referral process and may impact a client's timely access to care.

To give clients the best chance of entering the program when they need it most, we ask that all required documents are submitted in full.

Standard Documentation for All Referrals

To ensure a complete referral, please include the following documents, dated and signed within the last **3 months**:

- **Consent to Share Information** form that lists Windana as an approved party
- **Comprehensive Assessment**
- **AOD Intake Tool**
- **Self-Completion Form**
- **Medical Summary**, including:
  - Presenting substance use concerns
  - Physical and mental health diagnoses
  - Current prescribed medications
  - Recent pathology results

Therapeutic Community – Additional Referral Requirements

To ensure client safety and program suitability, all referrals must include:

- **Comprehensive legal history**, covering:
  - Previous and current charges
  - Bail conditions
  - Court orders (including Family Court or Child Protection)
  - Mandated treatment requirements
- **Copies of relevant court documents**, where available
- **Current Intervention Orders (IVOs)**
- **FVISS report**, if applicable

Summary for Referrers: Bail and Legal Conditions

Windana requires accurate and complete information about bail conditions and Intervention Orders to assess program suitability and maintain community safety.

Please provide:

- Full legal history, including any current bail conditions, IVOs, and mandated treatment requirements
- Copies of relevant court documents, where possible

Windana's Role:

- Windana supports clients to understand and meet their legal obligations, however responsibility for complying with these conditions remains with the individual.
- Breaches disclosed during the program may be reported to authorities if safety is at risk

Additional Legal Disclosure Requirements for Interstate Clients

- For clients who have lived or are currently living interstate, additional steps are required to ensure transparency and safety:
- Clients must self-disclose any previous or current legal conditions, including mandated treatment history
- Clients must provide a legal history from each state they have resided in, obtained from the relevant law enforcement authority
- These requirements help ensure Windana does not inadvertently accommodate individuals who may be on bail or evading serious offences
- These requirements apply in addition to the standard documentation listed above

Financial & Medication Preparation

To support a smooth intake process and ensure residents are financially and medically prepared from day one, Windana has introduced the following procedures:

Financial Preparation

This process aims to:

- Improve financial preparedness at entry.
- Reduce arrears and compliance issues.
- Ensure residents are supported in meeting their obligations from day one.

Before Admission

- Centrelink Income Statement: You may be asked to provide a Centrelink Income Statement to help us understand your financial situation and agree on a contribution amount that is appropriate and manageable for you.
- Medications: To support continuity of care, residents are encouraged to bring at least two weeks' supply of prescribed medications on admission. Medications should be Webster packed, along with current prescriptions. If unable to be Webster packed, please bring prescriptions only as unverified medications or medications already opened, will be destroyed on admission into residential programs.

Payment Expectations

Residents will be informed of:

- Their fortnightly contribution amount
- Any backdated charges if Centrepay starts after admission.

Prescribed Medications – Guidance for Admission

We understand that some clients entering residential treatment may be prescribed medications such as benzodiazepines - not as part of a formal withdrawal regime, but to manage associated symptoms like anxiety, sleep disturbance, or other mental health concerns.

To ensure continuity of care and avoid disruption to the client's treatment plan, it is essential that any prescribed medications intended to be continued during the stay are clearly documented and supported by a valid script covering the full duration of the admission, or ongoing support and review by the prescriber. Windana is unable to arrange alternative prescribing during the stay, so this must be organised in advance.

This guidance is intended to:

- Support safe and coordinated care, especially where prescribed medications are part of a broader mental health plan.
- Clarify expectations for referring clinicians and ensure transparency in the admission process.
- Align with Windana's harm reduction approach, recognising that medication can play a role in stabilisation and engagement in recovery.

Medications Covered by the Fortnightly Fee

- All PBS-listed medications prescribed for the resident.
- Melatonin - a valid prescription from a medical practitioner is required before it can be administered or supplied
- Thiamine (available through local pharmacies).
- Paracetamol and Ibuprofen (for pain relief).
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) – lozenges and patches.
- Basic health supplies such as bandages and antiseptic cream.
- Other approved medications listed in Windana's Nurse-Initiated Medication Policy.

Medications Not Covered

- Any non-PBS medications will need to be paid for using the resident's personal funds.
- As medications are billed in bulk, a Windana staff member will collect any outstanding amounts from the resident on a fortnightly basis.

WINDANA

Life. Changing.

We celebrate and respect diversity in all its forms including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, sex, gender, sexuality, age, culture, language, disability and lived experience.