



## Victorian Drug Driver Testing for Illicit Drugs

VAADA will be sending out an information package as part of the Department of Justice's Drugs and Driving Campaign with this month's newsletter. VAADA will also be involved in facilitating forums for the Department of Justice that are aimed at informing the AOD and related sectors, about the new roadside saliva testing of drivers for illicit drugs.

The forums will consist of a presentation followed by a question/answer opportunity for the forum audience, each of these sessions will last an hour. The panel will consist of representatives from VicRoads, Victoria Police, the Department of Justice and will be facilitated by a VAADA representative.

The forum will address a range of issues including;

- Drugs and driving – road safety issues;
- Drug testing legislation;
- Roadside drug testing procedures/drug testing devices and;
- Communication resources.

Discussion at the previous VAADA conference also centred on the potential resource implications for the drug treatment service system, should those testing positive to drugs be diverted through the service system for treatment and education.

Forums will be held in rural and regional centres around the state. The first forum will be held at Ballarat on 4 April at the VicRoads Ballarat office at 30 Learmonth Road. The second forum will be held on the 6 April at the Benalla VicRoads office, 50-52 Clarke Street. The third forum will be held at Geelong on the 7 April at VicRoads Geelong office at 180 Fyans St. All Forums will be held between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. To register your interest please call Chris McDonnell at VAADA, on (03) 9416 0899 or at [cmcdonnell@vaada.org.au](mailto:cmcdonnell@vaada.org.au)

## Strategic Planning

The VAADA Board and staff undertook a strategic planning session on 14 February 2005. The Board and staff participated eagerly throughout the session that was facilitated by Russell Fisher. Areas that were looked at by the Board and staff were Board roles and responsibilities, VAADA's Mission and Vision, stakeholder relationships, strategies and directions for the organisation as well as defining the outcomes that VAADA should be trying to achieve.

Draft copies of the strategic plan will be made available to members sometime through March for their comments and suggestions. VAADA anticipates that the finished Strategic Plan will guide the direction it takes through to 2008.

VAADA's strategic planning session is part of a broad overhaul and review of governance issues within the organisation. Some of the things that will take place as a result of this review will include; governance training for the Board and Executive Officer; strategic planning; constitutional review and; re-development of VAADA's core policies and principles.

## IT Project

VAADA has commenced an upgrade of its information technology infrastructure which has been made possible through a grant provided by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF).

Some of the aims of the upgrade are:

- To upgrade its electronic security measures;
- To purchase a network server;
- Expand the scope of its ENEWS services and;
- Purchase new web software and;
- Redesign and upgrade VAADA's current website.

## Month in Review

### Windows on Economics

Ozprospect presented Window on Economics from Wednesday 9th to Friday 11th February 2005. The program was designed to present information, aimed at informing social policy advocates about the premises that underlie economic decision making as well as theory.

Window on Economics was for people working in advocacy roles in Australian social service, not-for-profit organisations; specifically those who:

- Are involved in policy conversations where economics is used in these discussions;
- Do not possess a background in economics and;
- Cannot easily access specialist economics advice.

Window on Economics was limited to approximately 60 participants to ensure that participants could ask questions and discuss the concepts that inform economic rationales.

Topics included how government budgets work; labour markets and labour market reform; housing economics; the measurement of poverty and inequality; triple bottom line; aged care funding and; gambling.

Window on Economics program is an excellent way for social policy professionals to quickly build a base of knowledge about key economic ideas, enabling them to better inform the decisions they make around forming policy.

### Thinking Drinking

Thinking Drinking 2020 an international alcohol conference held in Melbourne, ran from 21 February to 23 February 2005. The conference generated considerable media attention, which was given a kick-start by an opinion piece in the Age newspaper by Dr Rob Moodie, CEO of VicHealth and Chair of the Victorian Premier's Drug Prevention Council (PDPC).

Patterns of drinking were examined at the conference, and a key issues to arise, was the increased incidences of harmful drinking for adolescent males and females between 1984 and 2002.

The conference pointed out that over the last twenty years much of the alcohol industry has been de-regulated. As well, the community has seen rapid increases in advertising and promotion of alcohol consumption through

various media, from billboards, web pop ups, sms texting, viral advertising and word of mouth advertising amongst young people

The point was made at the conference research indicated the most effective measure for dealing with the harms associated with alcohol, are often the least popular with governments.

Some of the approaches that research indicated are effective in combating alcohol related harm included increasing alcohol prices, taxing alcohol according to the volume of alcohol in the drink and intensively countering alcohol advertising. Other effective but unpopular measures include enforcing responsible serving of alcohol practices; ensuring that sellers and patrons share responsibility in adhering to the legal limits of alcohol consumption and; limiting alcohol licences.

Probably the most controversial of these measures, as indicated by Dr John Toumborou from the Centre for Adolescent Health, is the suggestion that the minimum age for drinking be increased.

Overall the conference was a great success that looked closely at a pervasive and insidious drug; the way we use it and the impact it has on the community.

### AOD Workforce Development

VAADA is a member of the Work Force Development steering committee that helps inform Victoria's first Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Workforce Development Strategy. The strategy is jointly produced with AOD sector stakeholders and has been developed in full consultation with the AOD Workforce Development Steering Committee, (including VAADA, drug treatment service agencies and registered training organisations), DHS AOD Regional Coordinators and the broader sector at public forums.

As part of the Workforce Development Strategy, a number of training initiatives are being rolled out across Victoria during 2005. These include the Clinical Supervision Training Program; the Forensic Workforce Training Program; Management Training Program; a Professional Development Program and; First Aid training in conjunction with the Workforce Recognition Program.

Further details about these training programs will be in next month's newsletter.

## **YOUR SAY**

### ***“An Introduction”***

**Dr Janine Bush, VAADA Executive Officer**

14 February 2005 was my first day with VAADA as the new Executive Officer and was also VAADA's Planning Day. For me, this was an excellent way to come on board with the peak body and to get a sense of what's led us to where we are now and the strategic direction the peak is seeking to move in. I felt inspired by VAADA's commitment to its vision to work towards a community in which the harms associated with drug use are reduced and general health & wellbeing is promoted.

At the Planning Day, it was clear that VAADA is keen to build on the considerable developments made over the past few years. A key outcome of the day was the strength of commitment to devising new strategies for encouraging inclusive membership participation – particularly in determining and discussing the priority issues that the peak body needs to be advocating on. Over the next month, VAADA will be consulting with its membership and key stakeholders in relation to its strategic direction.

I look forward to taking advantage of this opportunity to begin meeting with you. Having come from outside the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) sector, I have much to discover about the key issues confronting member agencies and people who seek to examine their relationship with alcohol and drugs.

Prior to taking on this position, I was the Coordinator of the peak body for women's domestic violence services – Domestic Violence Victoria (DV Vic). Like VAADA, it is a small peak body with a large mandate – that is, to advocate on behalf of the sector on issues relating to how the government and community respond to domestic violence.

My first impression upon coming into the AOD sector is the similarity of many of the issues that the two sectors face. Some of the obvious issues result from the under-resourcing of services and the lack of growth funding over the past decade. These are issues which have affected the community sector broadly. In addition to this, however, are some other common practice issues – most notably, the gaps in services for clients with multiple needs who don't easily fit into one service system (including domestic violence, homelessness, drug & alcohol and mental health issues). My first challenge, therefore, will be combining my knowledge of these cross-sectoral

issues with a more in-depth understanding of their implications within the unique culture of the AOD sector.

I believe it's vital for VAADA to ensure it has a strategy for ongoing communication with (and learning from) members about both the core and emerging issues faced by the people they work with and the challenges agencies experience in meeting these needs. A key feature of the sector I've just departed from was the commitment of domestic violence services to advocacy, collaboration and networking within the sector. The peak body hosted networks and issue based sub-committees, which in turn formed the basis of the lobbying and advocacy work that it engaged in.

I look forward to exploring the options for VAADA members to come together to discuss common issues and to work with us in identifying priority issues.

It's my view that a peak body is only as strong as its relationship with its member base. The need for two-way interaction, support and collaboration between the peak and its membership is vital.

For me, therefore, the current process of strategic planning will be critical in determining the way forward in regard to VAADA's relationship with its membership. VAADA will explore ways to encourage greater member participation in the peak's activities and will look at the services the peak provides to its members. The input from members into our strategic planning process will assist VAADA in this process. A key development that I envisage will be the formation of sub-committees for all members to participate in discussing key interest areas. How such sub-committees are devised will be determined in consultation with members.

Equally important will be ensuring that relationships with our key external stakeholders are maintained and strengthened. Collaboration across sectors was identified by VAADA as vital to its advocacy role and direction. Whole-of-government strategies are increasingly identified as ways to respond to the complex environment we operate within.

It's an exciting time of transition and ongoing development – and I look forward to working with VAADA and the AOD sector.

## Calendar of Events

March 9	<p><b><i>Counselling skills using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for anxiety and depression: Difficulties and solutions.– TRANX/PADA</i></b>            To be held between 9.30am-4.00pm at Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre. Costs for workshops are: \$88 inc GST for a half day workshops; full day workshops \$192.50 inc GST. Workshops will include morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. TRANX/PADA members will receive a 10% discount as will agencies enrolling more than three staff members. For further information call TRANX on 9886 0955</p>
March 11	<p><b><i>Pre-Treatment Works! Family Structured Intervention- Turning Point Talking Point Seminar Series</i></b>            Presented by Deborah Dupre, Executive Director Duprevent International. Held at 142 Gertrude Street Fitzroy. Bookings essential – call Turning Point on 8413 8413 to register.</p>
March 16	<p><b><i>Relaxation Training: Theory and Practice TRANX/PADA</i></b>            To be held between 9.30am-4.00pm at Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre. Costs for workshops are: \$88 inc GST for a half day workshops; full day workshops \$192.50 inc GST. Workshops will include morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. TRANX/PADA members will receive a 10% discount as will agencies enrolling more than three staff members. For further information call TRANX on 9886 0955</p>
March 19	<p><b><i>What is Therapeutic Jurisprudence and How Can It Be Applied In The Criminal Justice System - Moreland Hall Lunchtime Seminar Series</i></b>            Presented by Astrid Birgden Forensic/Psychologist, Manager Clinical Services Development, Corrections Victoria. Held from 12.30-1.30pm at Moreland Hall. For information or to register to attend please phone 9386 2876</p>
March 22	<p><b><i>Engaging &amp; Assessing Women with Drug &amp; Alcohol Use in Pregnancy – Women’s Alcohol &amp; Drug Service</i></b>            Presented at the Royal Women’s Hospital, Supper Room, Basement. For all bookings and enquiries contact: Tony – Ph 03 9344 3631 or Email:<a href="mailto:womens.ads@wh.org.au">womens.ads@wh.org.au</a></p>
April 4	<p><b><i>Better Sleep: Strategies that work for improving sleep problems. TRANX/PADA</i></b>            To be held between 9.30am-12.30pm at Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre. Costs for workshops are: \$88 inc GST for a half day workshops; full day workshops \$192.50 inc GST. Workshops will include morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. TRANX/PADA members will receive a 10% discount as will agencies enrolling more than three staff members. For further information call TRANX on 9886 0955</p>
April 4	<p><b><i>Victorian Drug Driver Testing for Illicit Drugs Forum-Ballarat</i></b>            This forum will consist of a presentation followed by a question/answer opportunity for the forum audience and will be at the Ballarat VicRoads office, 30 Learmonth Road and will be held from 1.30-3.30pm. To RSVP call Chris McDonnell on (03) 9416 0899 or <a href="mailto:cmcdonnell@vaada.org.au">cmcdonnell@vaada.org.au</a></p>
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