

State Budget 2005-2006

The 2005-06 State Budget was the government's big social policy spend. Preceding the budget announcement on 3 May 2005 was the government's social policy statement – "*A Fairer Victoria*". The budget outcomes and the key themes of this social policy statement have significant implications for how the Victorian Government responds to alcohol and other drug related harm. *A Fairer Victoria* is the government's 'long term framework for helping people, groups and places overcome disadvantage'.

The government claims the new framework recognizes that the needs of some groups will be met by providing better access to mainstream services, while other groups with more complex needs will require more targeted, innovative responses.

This year's budget therefore, allocated \$788 million over the next 4 years towards new initiatives and reforms. Of this \$788 million, the key focus is on improving services for children, women and children experiencing family violence, people with mental illnesses and disabilities, older Victorians, and improving access to the justice system.

These are important initiatives that take significant steps towards addressing disadvantage in Victoria. It is important to note, however, that there are significant gaps in this new framework for those experiencing entrenched disadvantage, discrimination and stigmatization within the system.

In particular, the issue of disadvantage and harms caused through alcohol and other drugs has not been effectively addressed. The issue of homelessness also represents a noticeable gap in the government's social policy statement. In the context of whole-of-government strategies to address social policy - these issues reveal gaps

in the government's long term framework to assist people to overcome disadvantage. The harms caused by alcohol and other drugs have significant impacts on the disadvantaged groups identified by the government – including children, women experiencing family violence, older people and people with disabilities. It is critical that they are addressed through a broad, integrated strategy.

While there was nothing specifically for the drug treatment service system in the Budget, it is important to note that there were some funds embedded within other program initiatives that will affect AOD services. VAADA welcomes the government's acknowledgement that there is a need to improve responses to dual diagnosis clients – and has committed \$6.9 million (over 4 years) to build bridges between mental health and alcohol & other drugs workers.

Other initiatives that were welcomed by VAADA include:

- \$24.3 million over 4 years towards breaking the cycle of re-offending with the Court Intervention Program to assist defendants with drug or alcohol dependency or mental illness
- \$2.6 million over 4 years to respond to increased referrals to forensic drug treatment services provided through COATS
- an extension of the Bridging the Gap program – to help reduce the number of ex-prisoners who are dependant on drugs, which includes the extension of the post release support period from six to 12 months for up to 100 high need women exiting prison each year.

In order to effectively address broader systemic stigmatisation and discrimination, VAADA believes the government still faces a challenge to integrate responses to alcohol and other drugs more effectively into whole of government strategies.

Month in Review

Older, but not forgotten?

VAADA will be hosting a forum on Older People and Drugs called 'Older, but not forgotten?' The forum will be held on Tuesday 21 June 2005 as a part of Drug Action Week® (an initiative of ADCA) at the William Angliss Conference Centre.

The program will include national and state experts who will examine the issues surrounding the misuse of drugs amongst older populations (for our purposes 45 +); the implications of an ageing population and drug usage, and trying to get a sense of where this group currently sit within drug treatment systems, and where they may sit 10 and 20 years from now.

Presentations will be made by the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare; Mr Paul McDonald, (Director, Drugs Policy Services Branch); Mr David Crosbie, (Chief Executive Officer, Odyssey House), Geoff Soma (Chief Executive Officer, WRAD), Australian Drug Foundation; Ms Gwenda Cannard, (Chief Executive Officer, TRANX/PADA); Lisa Sammut, (Manager, Ozanam House); Sonia Berton, (Chief Executive Officer, ARBIAS); and Kevin Clarke, (Consumer Perspective).

The forum will be facilitated by Associate Professor Terry Laidler.

For further information please contact VAADA.

Drug Action Week®

We encourage event organisers to list their activities on the Drug Action Week® National Calendar of Events. The national calendar is a searchable database of all the Drug Action Week® activities that have been registered with ADCA.

To register your event at the Drug Action Week® website go to:

www.drugactionweek.org.au/addevent.html

Agency Visits by politicians

As part of Drug Action Week® 2005, VAADA is coordinating visits by politicians to drug and alcohol agencies. This is a great opportunity for agencies to showcase their work.

To register to participate please contact Sarah at VAADA on 9416 0899 or email to:

vaada@infoxchanbe.net.au

Your Say, Elena Tauridsky–Continued from page 3

It makes sense then to recreate the elements which promote learning. While careful preparation and planning can provide clear structure, the elements which are most important in creating a placement with 'the edge', are perhaps a little less tangible.

Staff groups which have a certain confidence about their own value in an organisation, who feel supported in their work are often more able to respond to the particular demands which student placements bring. The **X-Factor** at play is in part individual enthusiasm together with recognition that there are opportunities for their own skill development when spaces are created to mentor a student.

These are not elements which can be written into a Student Placement policy, but are a result of an organisational culture which promotes these values.

Students who experience this identify some key elements: a sense of having been welcomed into the life of the program and of feeling valued as both a student and as a contributor to the work of the agency. These students describe a placement which is enriched, and ultimately it is these enriched experiences which will draw graduate students back to the AOD sector.

VAADA Budget Briefing

VAADA hosted a 2005-06 State Budget Briefing in May for the Victorian AOD sector. The briefing was an opportunity for field to find out more about the impact the budget has on their services and the sector generally. Mr Paul McDonald, Director, Drugs Policy and Services (DHS) presented the outcomes of the budget for the Victorian AOD sector. Paul McDonald's presentation is available at the VAADA website www.vaada.org.au.

In reply, VAADA President, Mr Neos Zavrou, VAADA Executive Officer, presented VAADA's response, raising issues about the budget and its impact.



VAADA President, Mr Neos Zavrou

YOUR SAY

“Random Thoughts on Shaping Student Placements”

Elena Tauridsky Manager - Alcohol and Other Drugs Program Ovens and King CHS

Field Placements within the Alcohol and Other Drug sector, like any student placement, are designed to develop specific skills in students from the health and welfare professions as well as create interest amongst a potential workforce.

Over the years, I have spent time reflecting on how some placements seem to gel, while others are frustrating for all concerned. Since issues of workforce development have been placed in the centre of broader AOD sector development, it might be timely to consider the role of student placements in the development of an invigorated, progressive and well skilled workforce.

In trying to understand the elements of a ‘successful’ student placement, it is perhaps useful to define firstly what is meant by success.

In its broadest sense, it would mean that the four key players have met the goal of field placement, which is to provide opportunities which enable the student to develop particular skills.

That the student and supervisor might feel energised, or that the organisation might benefit through the work of the student, could be seen as a bonus, yet together they make an overall package with the **X-Factor**.

Benefits arising out of successful student placements are:

- The Student experiences a combination of challenge and support and leaves with positive feelings about themselves in relation to the work, the development of their skills and field of practice;
- The Supervisor experiences satisfaction through having created a well structured placement with opportunities for a student to extend their skills, and through providing tailored supervision for the student;
- The Organisation gains from the work undertaken by the student and from the unique questions and fresh perspective each student brings in exchange for staff time and resources; and
- The Educational Institution has opportunities to partner with agencies in order to meet its obligations to the students and to ensure academic benchmarks are met.

Clearly these successes are more likely when careful pre planning occurs, when placement tasks are negotiated with the student and educational institution, and when the culture of the organisation is such, that value is placed on the experience of student involvement. When Boards and Senior Management promote the value of student placements, staff more directly responsible for supervision can operate within an organisational culture supportive of the time and energy required to undertake this important work.

- Negotiating availability of staff and management for support and supervision
- Thinking through the elements of the placement, particularly in choosing developmentally appropriate tasks or projects for the student
- Ensuring administrative/IT tools and support will be available, as required
- Meeting with the student to discuss possibilities, negotiate tasks and deal with agency employment matters.
- Orientation to the organisation and the staff team in which the student will be working – this would include general information about the host organisation, as well as orientation to the culture and underpinning philosophy of the organisation
- Setting up the structures for supervision and support, both formal and informal
- Planning more specifically the objectives and tasks of the placement together with discussion about the ways in which evaluation of the placement will occur
- Opportunity for final evaluation and reflection on the placement as a whole, the tasks undertaken and the skills gained, as well as explore avenues for the agency to progress the work begun by the student.

Enthusiasm for student supervision is a real gift to a student, yet is often not really afforded the time it needs. It is useful sometimes to consider ones own experiences and think about the factors which contributed to you feeling valued and avoid those which left you with a sense of frustration and failure.

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Calendar of Events

May 13	<p><i>Patterns of Memory Dysfunction in Current and 2-Year Abstinent MDMA Users-Turning Point Talking Point Seminar Series.</i> Presented by Dr Kate Hall, Clinical Psychologist, Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre. Held at 142 Gertrude Street Fitzroy. Bookings essential – call Turning Point on 8413 8413 to register.</p>
May 19	<p><i>Working with older women. Responding to past or current violence CASA House</i> Women over 50 represent approximately half the adult female population but access domestic violence and sexual assault support service relatively infrequently. This one day workshop will be co-facilitated by DVIRC and CASA House. The cost of the workshop will be \$50.00 and limited to 20 places. Attendance is by booking only. Registration forms are available by contacting CASA House on 9347 3066</p>
May 20	<p><i>Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Definitions, difficulties and solutions. TRANX/PADA</i> 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>
May 27	<p><i>Working With Clients Who Self Harm - Moreland Hall Lunchtime Seminar Series</i> This presentation will be presented by Dr Sophie Reeves (Problem Behaviour Program, Forensicare) and will define and explore what motivates people to self-harm, and discuss intervention strategies using case examples. The seminar will be held from 12.30-1.30pm at Moreland Hall, with refreshments provided. For information or to register to attend please phone 9386 2876</p>
May 27	<p><i>Group work for anxiety: a treatment program and structure. TRANX/PADA</i> 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>
Commencing June 1	<p><i>Family Therapy Ideas for Working with Clients Facing Drug and Alcohol Problems - Odyssey House Victoria and The Bouverie Centre</i> A practical intensive four day training program over 4 weeks to be held at the Bouverie Centre. Proposed dates: Wednesdays June 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd. 9.15am - 4.30pm. Cost: \$290 (<i>Please note these costs are for 2004, a slight change may occur in 2005</i>). To register complete application form located on the Bouverie Centre Web Site. http://www.latrobe.edu.au/bouverie/</p>
June 8	<p><i>Post traumatic Stress Disorder: Definitions and Solutions - an outline of treatment using CBT. TRANX/PADA.</i> 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>
June 10	<p><i>Understanding Chemical Dependency in the Deaf Community- Turning Point Talking Point Seminar Series.</i> Presented by Walter Kadiki, Drug and Alcohol Information & Project Coordinator, Vicdeaf -Victorian Deaf Society. Held at 142 Gertrude Street Fitzroy. Bookings essential - call Turning Point on 8413 8413 to register.</p>
June 21	<p><i>‘Older, but not forgotten?’</i> The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association will be hosting the inaugural Older People and Drugs Forum ‘<i>Older, but not forgotten?</i>’ The forum will be held on Tuesday 21 June 2005 as a part of Drug Action Week® (an initiative of ADCA) at the William Angliss Conference Centre.</p>