

A Better State Budget for Drugs!

VAADA in conjunction with the Department of Human Services (DHS) held a budget briefing for the alcohol and other drug sector on Wednesday 7 May 2003. The briefing was opened by VAADA President, Mr Neos Zavrou, and was followed with presentations by Mr Chris Brook (Executive Director, Rural and Regional Health and Aged Care Services, DHS) and Mr Paul McDonald (Director, Drugs Policy and Services, DHS). VAADA Executive Officer Ms Carol Bennett, responded to the DHS briefing.

Overall VAADA was very pleased with the budget outcomes. The State Budget includes:

- a Human Services budget for Victoria of \$9.1 Billion (just under one third of total budget expenditure)
- the total drugs budget is \$98.6 million (which represents just over 1% of the human services budget or 0.4% of the overall budget)
- the drugs budget is broken down into:
 - prevention \$8.3m
 - treatment \$75.6m
 - service system development \$14.7m
- four year projected funding through DHS appropriation.

The most pleasing Budget outcome for VAADA is the commitment by DHS to three year funding and service agreements (this may include CPI if it is accepted as part of DHS 3 year agreements). VAADA has lobbied for these changes vigorously over the past few months.

Participants attending the budget briefing were positive about the usefulness of the session. Of particular interest to the sector is the capacity for 3 year funding bringing the drugs sector in line with other community services. While much of the detail of the budget remains to be sorted, participants showed a high level of interest as

demonstrated by the numerous questions asked of the Department.

Thankyou to all who participated in making the briefing such a success.

For a copy of the budget briefing and presentations please visit the VAADA website at:

http://www.vaada.org.au/state_budget_briefing_2003-04.htm.

Federal Budget 2003-04

The federal government handed down the Federal Budget for 2003-04 on Tuesday 13 May 2003. The Budget provided for a continuation of funding for National Illicit Drugs Strategy activities including diversion, CPI, Family Drugs Programs, National Schools, Drug Education Strategy and various supply control measures.

Details about what portion of funding will be allocated to Victoria are yet to be released. VAADA is hopeful that our services will gain from this new funding.



Paul McDonald and Chris Brook from DHS and VAADA Executive Officer, Carol Bennett, at VAADA's 2003 Budget Briefing



Month in Review

Workforce development consultations

Consultations in South Australia

VAADA participated in a very successful forum to explore the launch of a new peak body in South Australia. VAADA staff Carol and Litsa attended the meeting in Adelaide and look forward to working with the new South Australian team.

Following the peak body forum, VAADA conducted a South Australian focus group (VAADA Board member Trevor King facilitated the session). Key informant interviews were also conducted with South Australian representatives.

The sessions were very worthwhile in gaining a better understanding of the workforce issues faced by people working in the AOD sector in South Australia.

Consultations in Victoria

Victorian Consultations commence in June 2003. A focus group with Victorian NGO providers will be held on Tuesday 10 June 2003 from 12pm until 2pm at the Turning Point Training Room, 142 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy (a light lunch will be provided).

This will be an opportunity for the sector to raise issues that will inform state and national policy agendas for future directions in AOD workforce development.

During this consultation we will be trying to ascertain:

- how your capacity to provide effective services could be improved
- your vision of workforce development for the alcohol and drug sector and how this vision could be achieved.

Don't miss this chance to have your say on how to create a more productive and effective alcohol and other drug workforce.

Registrations close on Wednesday June 4 2003 and are essential. Please contact Amanda at VAADA (abolleter@vaada.org.au) to register your interest.

Poverty Evidence

VAADA President, Neos Zavrou, and Executive Officer, Carol Bennett, gave evidence before the Senate Inquiry into Poverty on Thursday 1 May 2003. They took the opportunity to highlight points made in the VAADA submission, *'The Links Between Alcohol and Drug Use and Poverty'*.

This was a valuable opportunity for VAADA to highlight the contribution that drug and alcohol issues play in relation to poverty levels and to present to the inquiry the unique perspective the AOD sector has on this issue.

A full copy of the report is available at http://www.vaada.org.au/new_page_9.htm.

Evidence for the inquiry will be available shortly and a notice will be posted to ENEWS.

Youth Party Drugs Symposium

As the name suggests, Drug Action Week (an initiative of ADCA), is a week of activities with different theme days to raise awareness about alcohol and other drug issues and promote the achievements of those who work to reduce drug-related harm. For Drug Action Week this year, VAADA will be hosting a youth party drugs symposium – *'Beyond e: exploring the impact of party drugs on current day youth and culture'* on Monday 23 June 2003 (sponsored by the Premier's Drug Prevention Council (PDPC) and the City of Melbourne).

The *'Beyond e: exploring the impact of party drugs on current day youth and culture'* symposium presents a great opportunity for the sector to find out more about party drugs. It aims to address fears and misconceptions on party drug issues.

The symposium will include experts from a range of areas including Paul Dillon and Bridget Barker from NDARC and Dr Catherine Quinn from Victoria Police Forensic Services. Also on the agenda are speakers from Ravesafe, law enforcement, prevention and research.

Registrations are \$100 (\$50 for VAADA members) and are essential. Please contact Litsa at VAADA to register.

VAADA IS MOVING!

VAADA has moved to brighter, larger and safer offices (if any one had tried to negotiate the stairs at the old office they would know what we mean). The new space will give VAADA room to grow and give us a flexibility that the old space didn't allow. The new office is located at **35 Smith Street Fitzroy 3065**. Other than our mail address our contact details will remain the same.

YOUR SAY

Christopher Foley-Jones, Service System Development Consultant, ECADA "A Question of Priorities"

A long-standing item on the AOD service sector wish-list is to achieve seamless service delivery. In that particular version of Utopia, a client passes smoothly and without a break from, say, residential withdrawal to residential rehabilitation or perhaps on to supported accommodation.

In the real world, there are frequently gaps between one service and the next so that a successful stint in residential withdrawal, for example, is frequently **not** followed by an immediate transition to residential rehabilitation.

Rather, there will be a further period of substance abuse with, in the best case, the client actually making it eventually to residential rehabilitation but still with a full blown habit to deal with.

In such cases, seamless service delivery has obviously unravelled somewhat. This is obviously an important issue that needs addressing as nobody, client or worker, wants to see their efforts go to waste.

However, difficulties in achieving seamless service delivery are not confined to agencies within the AOD service sector. This can also happen between, for example, the prison sector and the AOD sector or mental health and the AOD sector.

The STEPOUT program (the subject of a workshop at the recent Service Providers' Conference held by the Department of Human Services) is a case in point. STEPOUT engages prisoners about to be released at the end of a finite sentence and offers to assist them to make contact with an AOD agency after their release.



This is obviously a voluntary program compared with prisoners released on parole, who get a (whip) hand to chivvy them along in addressing their AOD issues following release.

There was some discussion of 'no-shows' by prisoners who had initially expressed an interest in the program prior to release. What is it that causes a change of heart?

It became clear that a newly released prisoner may put contacting his friendly community AOD worker a long way down the list of priorities. Other trifling matters may come first such as

getting a roof over your head, finding something to eat and a reliable source of income, not to mention possibly getting that celebratory taste to mark release from prison.

It is a waste of time searching around for ways to reduce the no-show rate for programs such as STEPOUT until basic issues such as accommodation and employment are addressed.

For example, there is a massive need for appropriate accommodation (not rooming houses or rent assistance that bears no relation to current rentals). Currently prisoners have the option of going back to stay with friends and relatives associated with their original offending and substance abuse, or living among strangers in grossly sub-standard accommodation where drunkenness and drugs are the norm.

Unless basic needs such as this are met, we cannot even start dealing with personal issues clearly associated with substance abuse. This case illustrates the point that it is a fundamental error to attempt to treat substance abuse in isolation from the psycho-social environment in which it occurs.

4th International Conference on Drugs & Young People

The 4th International Conference on Drugs & Young People will be held in Wellington, New Zealand on 26–28 May 2003. The conference theme will be *'Focusing on Solutions – The Way Forward'*. VAADA Executive Officer, Carol Bennett, will be attending the conference and presenting a paper *'Girl Power: tapping into a new alcohol market?'*

Funded Agency Partnership Meeting with the Secretary

VAADA President, Mr Neos Zavrou, and Board Member, Dr Rodger Brough, attended a meeting with DHS Secretary Patricia Faulkner, to discuss the partnership between DHS and the agencies it funds on Friday 16 May 2003.

VAADA is pleased to be entering into three year FASA's and believes that ongoing dialogue with senior bureaucrats within DHS and funded agencies is certain to ensure success of the new partnership.

Calendar of Events

13 June	<p><i>Management dilemmas in severe youth substance abuse: what can we achieve? – Turning Point Talking Point Program</i></p> <p>Lunch time seminar from 1pm-2pm. Presented by Dr Yvonne Bonomo, the seminar will be held in the Turning Point Training Room, 142 Gertrude Street Fitzroy. Bookings essential – call Turning Point on 8413 8413.</p>
18 & 19 June	<p><i>ANEX Harm Reduction Conference: Practice Politics Policy</i></p> <p>To be held on June 18 and 19 at the Malthouse at Southbank. For further details email the Conference Secretariat at info@anex.org.au or go to Anex website at www.anex.org.au.</p>
23 June	<p><i>Drug Action Week 2003 – Youth Party Drugs Symposium</i></p> <p>VAADA will be hosting a symposium focusing on Youth Party Drugs - 'Beyond e: exploring the impact of party drugs on current day youth and culture'. Speakers will include Paul Dillon and Bridget Barker from NDARC, Cate Quinn from the Victoria Police Forensic Services Department and many others. Registration costs will be \$100 per person (\$50 for VAADA members) and will include lunch, tea and coffee. To register your interest, please contact Litsa at VAADA on 03 9416 0899.</p>
24 June	<p><i>Strengthening Dual Diagnosis Service Delivery: A reflection on our theory and practice – Southern Dual Diagnosis Service</i></p> <p>A one day Drug Action Week Conference for creative discussion and reflection on contemporary thinking and practice in Dual Diagnosis. Held at the Bayview Conference Centre on Bayview Road Clayton. To register contact Tania Houston on 8792 2330.</p>
26 June	<p><i>Alcohol, the lethal legal drug – Family Drug Help</i></p> <p>Education seminar from 7pm at Moreland Hall – Jessie Street Coburg about binge drinking and the associated problems. Presented by Janet Carnegie from Turning Point and Hugh McKinnon from Oxford Houses. For further information and for bookings contact Angela Ireland on 03 9573 1782.</p>
27 June	<p><i>Narrative Therapy – What's Your Alternative? - UnitingCare Moreland Hall Lunchtime Seminar Series</i></p> <p>Lunchtime seminar from 12.30 – 1.30pm focusing on the use of narrative therapy in the conversations we have with people who consult us. To register call Liz on 9384 8836.</p>
27 June	<p><i>Understanding depression and antidepressants – TRANX</i></p> <p>Presented by Tomi Redman from TRANX, this workshop is aimed at health practitioners working in a range of settings. Held at St Paul's Lutheran Community Centre, 711 Station St Box Hill (Cnr Elland Ave) from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Cost \$50+GST. To register contact Anne on 9889 7355.</p>
4-26 June	<p><i>Eastern Region Alcohol and Young People Expos</i></p> <p>ECADA has organised a number of free community expos on Alcohol and Young People for the Eastern Region during Drug Action Week 2003. The expos will be held on various days from 4-26 June 2003 from 6.30 – 9.30pm. If you are interested in attending an eastern region expo, please contact Litsa on 9416 0899 or vaada@infoxchange.net.au for a copy of the flier with contact details for your municipality.</p>
23-28 June	<p><i>Drug Action Week Youth Arts Exhibition – Barwon South West Youth Alliance</i></p> <p>An exhibition of artwork created by young people involved in local health and youth services for Drug Action Week 2003 held at the Courthouse Café. For further information contact Di or Dome at BAYSA on 5221 4466 or Paul on 5244 7363.</p>

Drug Action Week 2003

If you are organising a Drug Action Week event VAADA would like to hear about it! Please send any promotional fliers or details to Litsa at VAADA to get your event promoted on the VAADA website, VAADA ENEWS and the ADCA website.