

The 'Little Purple Book'

VAADA launched 'The Little Purple Book' a directory of drug and alcohol services in the Southern Metropolitan Region (SMR) in September. The launch was hosted at Dandenong Hospital by Mr Tim Walsh from the South East Alcohol & Drug Service (SEADS). The directory was launched by Mr Laurie Harkin (Regional Director, SMR Department of Human Services) and Carol Bennett, VAADA Executive Officer. Over 50 attendees were given a demonstration of how effective 'The Little Purple Book' could be.

In addition, four information sessions were hosted by Major David Brunt (The Salvation Army - Bridge Program); Mr Simon Ruth (Peninsula Drug and Alcohol Program, PenDAP); Mr Shane Quinn (Central Bayside Community Health Services) and Ms Ruth Parramore (TaskForce Community Agency).

'The Little Purple Book' represents a positive collaboration between VAADA, SMR DHS and AOD agencies. It was very encouraging to hear that the Southern Region DHS are trying to find additional funding to keep 'The Little Purple Book' current, either in an electronic format or in further published editions.

VAADA would like to thank the participating agencies for their assistance in the launch and information sessions.

In a letter to VAADA, The Honourable Bronwyn Pike, Minister for Health, made the following comments in relation to 'The Little Purple Book':

"I commend the Southern Metropolitan Region and VAADA for developing a directory such as this... I am pleased that VAADA and SMR have worked together to develop and promote the use of this Directory.... This directory represents a significant investment to improve information flow and access to support by people directly affected by substance use and their families."

2003 VAADA AGM

VAADA held its 2003 AGM at Rydges Riverwalk on Wednesday 24 September 2003. There were 5 Board positions open for nomination at the AGM.

VAADA would like to congratulate returned board members: Neos Zavrou (President), Rigoula Paras (Vice President), Charlie Stewart (Treasurer) and Stephen Mihaly (non-metropolitan board member). We also welcome Major David Brunt who was elected to the position of ordinary board member. Many thanks to Rose McCrohan (nee Vercoe) for her dedicated service to VAADA in the last two years and we look forward to continuing to work closely with Rose on various VAADA activities.

Thank you to all those who nominated for available positions and the 50 VAADA members who attended. VAADA is grateful to all members for their continued support and involvement.

We look forward to another year of successful VAADA activities and collaboration with a wide range of organisations.

Copies of VAADA's Annual Report have been sent out to members. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting VAADA on 9416 0899.



Mr Laurie Harkin, Regional Director, SMR DHS, at the launch of the 'Little Purple Book'

Month in Review

VAADA launches 'Hitting the ground running' induction discussion paper

VAADA's discussion paper on induction for new workers in the Victorian alcohol and drug sector was launched at the VAADA AGM in September and is now available on the VAADA website at <http://www.vaada.org.au/Induction%20paper.doc>.

All of the 21 alcohol and drug organisations and over 50 individuals with whom we consulted performed induction of some kind for new workers. However, many agencies were not able to perform an adequate or ideal level of induction. The organisations we spoke to described situations where new workers were "dropped in the deep end", "hitting the ground running", "flying by the seat of their pants" and having to adopt a "fake it till you make it" approach in order to compensate for a lack of appropriate induction.

It was clear from our consultations that additional resources and structures are needed so that all workers in the Victorian alcohol and drug sector receive a standard level of quality induction.

VAADA would like to thank the many people who took the time to share their views on this issue with us.

Productivity cuts – a new offer

Representatives from VAADA attended a meeting hosted by VCOSS to discuss a sector wide response to the government's latest CPI proposal (2.4, 2.25, and 2.25% respectively over three years). 400 members of the community sector voted against the government's revised funding, slamming it as 'vastly inadequate'.

As of the time of printing, VAADA is considering its position in relation to the new offer. So far the new offer represents an increase of \$5 million, however this still results in a \$30 million shortfall to community services.

The broader sector resolved to widen the campaign to fight against these productivity cuts in order to defend the rights of the one in four Victorians who depend upon our essential community services, as well as ensure the survival of vital community service organisations.

As a result, a further Day of Action is planned for Tuesday 14 October, from 12-2pm. Details are available from VCOSS (9654 5050 or www.vcooss.org.au).

Details of an expanded campaign are being developed.

VAADA News Survey Response

Thank you to all the VAADA News readers who took the time to return their completed VAADA News Survey.

Responses were very positive with all respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they found the VAADA News useful and relevant. A very large majority of subscribers felt that VAADA News kept them informed about VAADA activities as well as activities taking place in the drug sector.

The *Your Say* section proved to be overwhelmingly popular to subscribers and the *Calendar of Events* also received strong support from our readership.

It also became apparent that our readers still want a hardcopy of our newsletter with 88% of respondents still preferring to receive a hardcopy.

We were also pleased to note that a majority of people found the title, formats and size of VAADA News to their liking. We will be posting the results of the ENEWS survey in the November Newsletter.

'The long term fix': Conference update

Abstracts for VAADA's 2003 annual conference, '*The long term fix: what is the future of the drug sector in Victoria?*' have now closed. The Steering Committee will be assessing all responses and a program will be available to all VAADA News readers shortly.

If you would like to register for the conference being held on 1 and 2 December 2003 at Rydges Riverwalk, Richmond please contact Litsa.

CPI Grants Assessment Update

Carol Bennett attended the National Assessment of CPI Grants held in Canberra during September. 173 applications were assessed and outcomes of the assessments will be provided to the sector by the Commonwealth shortly.

Focus on chroming

VAADA Executive Officer, Carol Bennett presented at the Adolescent Mental Health Conference on chroming. Chroming also received significant attention this month with the release of the Melbourne City Council's Drug Action Plan. Carol did some media on this. VAADA was represented on the committee by VAADA Vice President, Rigoula Paras.

YOUR SAY

Theadora Wallace, Counselling Coordinator, Mary of the Cross Centre and PACFA member, is currently developing and teaching in the Master of Arts Counselling course at Pacific College in 'Addictive Behaviours'.

"Is accreditation worth the hassle?"

Firstly, what is it that we are meaning when we refer to 'accreditation'? Accreditation refers to the achievement of an acceptable standard of work and skill required to perform the particular tasks of the agency, and its staff. The accredited body is granted acceptance in reaching this standard through official recognition. In the drug and alcohol treatment field, accreditation refers to a measurable standard for organisations, and staff operating according to those standards within their various roles. Accreditation provides the benchmark for the standard of service that can be expected to be delivered by staff from a particular service.

Having worked in this sector of the welfare field for over 13 years, I have observed significant changes to the drug treatment field. Overall, they have been very good changes - a progression in the development of the field as a whole. We as a service sector have advocated for our clients needs, conducted research, reflected on our practice, and sought to achieve our goals with the funding available to us.

It has been for many of us, from those working in Drugs Policy and Services Head Office through to working on the streets and out in academia, a labour of love and of passion, a commitment to the cause of alleviating the distress caused by drug and alcohol abuse. This effort to have our clients experiences understood has resulted in the need to be recognised and legitimised as workers in the field, that we have something significant to offer the community. It is this advocacy for our clients for quality service that I believe has been part of the backdrop toward generating the mood of promoting accreditation of agencies and workers.

My own particular response to the drive for the development of the field has been to continue on with my professional development. I have undertaken further training and accreditation and trained others, in order to be the best I can be for the people I work with and I have assisted others to do the same.



So what else besides gaining recognition is the point of accreditation? Accreditation assists in professionalising the service.

Professionalising the drug and alcohol field helps it be recognised as a particular specialised sector of health and welfare, that has its own code of practices, objectives, and set of worker skills.

Being professional as the worker is about understanding your field and the role of your organisation, understanding best practice methods, and having clear expectations about your goals and responsibilities.

My experience of working in an accredited agency has overall been a very positive and rewarding experience. Mary of the Cross Centre has both accreditation as a service - by Human Services as a drug treatment agency and with QICSA (Quality Improvement Community Services Accreditation) all counsellors have professional accreditation within their respective academic disciplines. Other

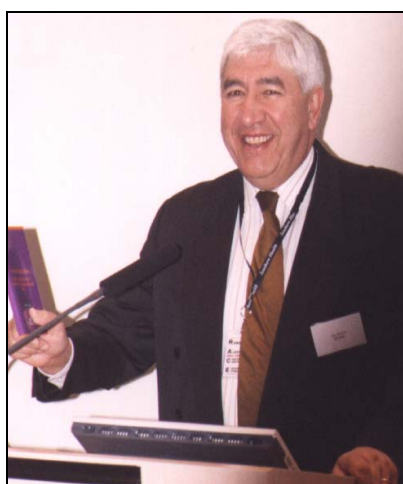
staff are undertaking drug and alcohol certification. To be sure, the process of getting this accreditation has meant spending many hours of work thinking, planning, developing structures and processes, filling in forms, and developing protocols.

The rewards are that the staff have now become well positioned to work as a team to achieve the goals of the service. The staff who have been involved in gaining workplace accreditation can better work together, having a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the service, a common mindset, and an understanding of the skill set required to achieve the objectives. This actually helps staff to use their own personal styles within their role and frees people up to be creative.

I look forward to the consolidation of the drug and alcohol field as a profession over the coming years, so that agency staff and the community alike know that the work in a very demanding area is significant and worthwhile.

Calendar of Events

10 October	<p><i>Self-Help Groups And Recovery From Drug Use Problems: Insights From Research, Practice And Theory - Turning Point Talking Point Seminar</i> Presented by Associate Professor John Toumbourou (Centre for Adolescent Health University of Melbourne) and Gordon Storey (Executive Officer, SHARC). Being held from 1-2pm at the Turning Point Training Room, 142 Gertrude St, Fitzroy. To register call Turning Point 03 8413 8413</p>
13 October	<p><i>Working with Adolescents In Action</i> Presented By Mario Cossa from New Hampshire USA. Held from 6-9pm. Email sehep@telstra.com to register.</p>
14 October	<p><i>Introduction to the Therapeutic Spiral Model of Working With Trauma.</i> Presented By Mario Cossa from New Hampshire USA. Held from 6-9pm. Email sehep@telstra.com to register.</p>
25 & 26 October	<p><i>Addictive Behaviours & Action Methods: Recovery and Multiple Realities.</i> Presented By Mario Cossa from New Hampshire USA. Held from 9am-5pm. Email sehep@telstra.com to register.</p>
17 October	<p><i>Understanding Depression and Treatment Options, Including Antidepressants & CBT. Level 1 One Day Workshop - TRANX</i> Presented by Tomi Redman from TRANX. Held in the Community Room at St Paul's Lutheran Community Centre, 711 Station St, Box Hill. To register contact Anne at 9886 0955 or email tomi@tranx.org.au. Cost \$140 + \$14 GST.</p>
31 October	<p><i>Management Of Complex Clients With Multiple Presentations For Residential Withdrawal: Pilot Project - UnitingCare Moreland Hall</i> Presented By Donna Ribton-Turner, Sheridan Cluning and Wendy Moncur from 12.30-1.30 pm. The workshop will discuss this project that provides an opportunity for enhanced treatment planning for high risk clients identified after conducting a clinical audit in July 2002. Contact Liz to register 9384 8836 or seminars@morelandhall.org</p>
Advanced Notice: 1 & 2 December	<p><i>2003 VAADA Annual Conference – The long term fix: what is the future of the drug sector in Victoria?</i> VAADA will be hosting its 2003 Annual Conference on Monday the 1st and Tuesday the 2nd of December 2003 at Rydges Richmond, 649 Bridge Rd. For further information or to register please contact Litsa at VAADA on 9416 0899 or vaada@infoxchange.net.au</p>



Mr Tim Walsh, General Manager of SEADS at the launch of VAADA's 'Little Purple Book'



Mr Scott Watson (SMR DHS) and new VAADA Board Member, Major David Brunt (Salvation Army – Bridge Program) at the St Kilda 'Little Purple Book' information session



Litsa Roussakis (VAADA Project Officer) at the Glen Eira 'Little Purple Book' information session