

Productivity Cuts Campaign Rally

A rally at Parliament House on 14 October 2003 attracted 3,000 people across sectors affected by productivity cuts.

Russell Savage, Independent MP, accepted 20,000 petitions to be tabled in Parliament. VCOSS also organised 6,000 postcards to be delivered to the Premier's office as a part of the campaign.

VAADA attended an extraordinary meeting of the VCOSS Peaks and Statewide Forum following the rally. The peaks have committed to stand by the resolutions from the public meeting held on 16 September 2003. Four major options for sector-wide implementation have now been endorsed.

Of the options, VAADA supports the coordinated signing of FASA's 'under duress', ongoing monitoring of the impact of the cuts, and continued campaigning for viable community services.

VCOSS conducted a community sector-wide public meeting detailing these options on Tuesday 28 October 2003.

If you would like more detailed information about the options, please contact VAADA.



Independent Member for Mildura, Mr Russell Savage accepts over 20,000 petitions at the VCOSS Day of Action.

VAADA Consultation on the Service System Review

The Service System Review final report: *'Pathways – a review of the Victorian drug treatment service system'* is now available and VAADA will be undertaking a consultation with the sector regarding its views on the directions outlined in the report.

Given that VAADA is required to provide its feedback to DHS by mid December, the consultations will be held at two existing major sector forums:

1. A workshop at the DHS service providers conference being held on 14 November 2003, and
2. VAADA's annual conference, *'The long term fix: what is the future of the drug sector in Victoria?'* held on 1st December 2003.

Dr Alison Ritter (one of the report authors) will present the findings of the review and Associate Professor Terry Laidler will facilitate an audience discussion at the VAADA conference.

The report is available to the sector through DHS regional AOD co-ordinators. Please note that the discussion papers are available on Turning Point's website: www.turningpoint.org.au.

VAADA also invites any written feedback from the review. Please send your comments to vaada@infoxchange.net.au.

Parliamentary Amphetamines Inquiry

VAADA President, Neos Zavrou, and VAADA Executive Officer, Carol Bennett, presented at the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee's *'Inquiry into amphetamines and 'party drug' use in Victoria'* in October. VAADA has prepared a submission to the Inquiry which is available for review on the VAADA website (www.vaada.org.au).

Month in Review

The long term fix: VAADA's Conference

VAADA's annual conference *'The long term fix: what is the future of the drug sector in Victoria?'* will be held on Monday the 1st and Tuesday the 2nd of December 2003 at Rydges Riverwalk, 649 Bridge Road, Richmond.

The conference promises to be one of our best yet, with keynote presenters including Minister Gavin Jennings, Ms Cath Smith (CEO, VCOSS), Ms Paula Beauchamp, (*Herald Sun* Social Affairs reporter) and Mr Rodger Clifton, (Managing Director, McCann Ericsson advertising agency).

The enclosed program details the range and quality of the presentations and workshops to be held at the conference.

We encourage you to complete and forward the enclosed registration form as soon as possible to ensure that you gain places in the workshops and presentations that interest you.

National Workforce Development Project Launch

VAADA will host the national launch of the AERF's Workforce Development Project Collaboration at VAADA's annual conference.

The project will be officially launched on Tuesday 2nd December (day two of the conference) by AERF Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Tracey Purdam.

The jurisdiction reports will be presented by VAADA Executive Officer, Carol Bennett, NADA Executive Director, Larry Pierce and WANADA Director, Arthur Toon. Professor Ann Roche (NCETA) will present findings from the literature review for the project.

VAADA would again like to thank all those agencies and individuals who participated in the Victorian arm of the project.

VAADA has now completed a draft report of the South Australian workforce development consultations which is available on our website at <http://www.vaada.org.au/Publications.htm>.

NIDS Grants Update

VAADA'S Executive Officer, Carol Bennett, participated in the assessment of the Victorian treatment grants as part of the state assessment panel in October.

State advice will be forwarded to a national advisory group who will advise the minister on recommended applications.

ENEWS Survey Results

The results of VAADA's *ENEWS* survey have proven to be very encouraging to the team here at VAADA.

The majority of people surveyed (56 percent), 'strongly agreed' and a further 29 percent 'agreed' that they found the information provided on VAADA's *ENEWS* service both useful and relevant.

With regard to the quality of information, we found that 56 percent strongly agreed and a further 32 percent agreed that it was high quality.

The *'what subjects are of interest to you?'* section of the survey indicated the sector's strong desire for informed and current information with all categories attracting strong support for level of interest.

In the area of how information should be sent, (whether as attachments or in the body of the email), 47 percent 'strongly agreed' and a further 32 percent 'agreed' that it was preferable to have the information in the body of the email.

Other formatting issues, such as font type and overall formatting were heavily supported with 38 percent of those surveyed 'strongly agreeing' and a further 41 percent 'agreeing' that they found the formatting and font style easy to read.

The results of our survey seem to indicate that we have the balance of traffic just about right, with a large majority of those surveyed finding the level of traffic generated by *ENEWS* manageable.

If you would like to subscribe to VAADA's *ENEWS* service please send your details to vaada@infoxchange.net.au or contact VAADA on 03 9416 0899.

AOD Supported Accommodation Workshop

VAADA is hosting an AOD Supported Accommodation Workshop which will provide interested workers in the sector with an opportunity for networking and discussion with others working in AOD treatment.

The workshop will be held on Wednesday November 5th between 2 pm and 4 pm at VAADA, 35 Smith Street, Fitzroy (near the corner of Victoria Parade).

Please RSVP for the meeting by no later than Monday 3 November, 2003 by contacting VAADA on 9416 0899 or emailing Litsa at vaada@infoxchange.net.au.

YOUR SAY

**Associate Professor John W. Toumbourou,
Centre for Adolescent Health, Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne and
Murdoch Children's Research Institute.**

"A researchers comment on reducing youth binge drinking"



Australia currently has high rates of binge drinking. Rates are particularly high in the adolescent and young adult age groups and there are concerns that this problem is rising amongst young women.

Although it's unfashionable to say so, we probably have the major messages wrong at this stage when it comes to alcohol and youth.

Longitudinal research shows that youth binge drinking habits begin in high school and tend to be either stable or to increase in young adulthood.

Regular youth alcohol use in high school tends to predict problems with alcohol in later life. In contrast youth who drink infrequently (less than weekly) or not at all in high school are unlikely to go on to heavy use.

The age at which young people first start to drink alcohol tends to be one of the strongest predictors of whether they go on to use alcohol regularly in high school.

Given this evidence a more concerted effort to encourage children to delay their first use of alcohol is warranted. I appreciate this message currently has a fashionability rating of zero or lower. For young people that are drinking already the message needs to move from just "drink lower amounts" to also include "drink less often". A large proportion of high-school age youth currently drink on a less than weekly basis. Drinking less frequently tends to be highly associated with less binge drinking.

If we could encourage more young people to join the infrequent drinker ranks a great deal of subsequent harm could be avoided.

**Mr Gordon Broderick, Executive Director
Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia (DSICA)**

"Youth and underage drinking"



Like the Australian Drug Foundation (ADF) and the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA), the Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia (DSICA) is concerned with the level of underage drinking in our community.

Alcohol is a product for adults to enjoy in moderation and use as a social tool and not for children or young people under the 18 years of age.

Underage drinking is not a new phenomenon, it is an age-old public issue that has been in existence for decades.

While a number of young people are drinking alcohol at 'risky' or 'high risk' levels on a regular basis, most are not, and many do not drink at all.

In 2001 the average age of initiation of young people to alcohol was 17.1 years of age.

Parents have a role to play in dealing with the issue of underage drinking. Parents need to assist in the education process of discussing and addressing alcohol with their children in a similar way that they would with drugs and sex.

Young people need to be educated on the responsibilities that are associated with drinking alcohol and how in moderation alcohol can be a very enjoyable social activity, but in excess can cause harm to yourself and others.

It seems that parents are actually contributing to the incidence of underage drinking with a recent study on the NSW mid coast finding that 70% of alcohol consumed by young people was supplied to them by their parents.

Of late, Ready to Drinks (RTDs) or mixed drinks have been blamed for increasing the incidence of underage drinking, particularly young women. However, RTDs are not a new product. The UDL, a popular drink today, was first produced in 1962.

The industry's opponents are trying to negatively portray RTDs as brightly coloured, sweet and attractive, so therefore targeted at minors. This is not true. The growing popularity of RTDs has been at the expense of bottled spirits and beer and the figures show there has been no increase in the overall consumption of alcohol.

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Calendar of Events

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| 5 November | <p><i>AOD Supported Accommodation Workshop - VAADA</i> VAADA is hosting an AOD Supported Accommodation Workshop for sector representatives to network and discuss issues with others. Being held on Wednesday November 5th from 2-4pm at VAADA, 35 Smith Street, Fitzroy. Please contact VAADA on 9416 0899 to register your attendance by 3 November 2003.</p> |
| 12 November | <p><i>Understanding Anxiety Disorders, Anxiety Management and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. 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> |
| 14 November | <p><i>Alcohol & Drug Service Providers Conference: 'A&D Service System: in Review' – Department of Human Services</i> Being held at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, cnr Bell Street and St Georges Rd Preston. RSVP 10th November 2003 to Alysha Batty on 9637 4230.</p> <p><i>First Service System Review Consultation with the sector – VAADA</i> VAADA will undertake the first of two consultations with the sector on the service system review report '<i>Pathways – a review of the Victorian drug treatment service system</i>'. The consultation will be held as a workshop at the DHS Service Providers Conference. To register your attendance please contact VAADA on 9416 0899.</p> |
| 28 November | <p><i>Spiritual Issues in Drug Treatment – UnitingCare Moreland Hall</i> Presented by the Rev Graham Morris (Chaplain UnitingCare Moreland Hall) from 12.30-1.30 pm. Contact Liz to register 9384 8836 or seminars@morelandhall.org.</p> |
| 28 November | <p><i>Reviewing Victoria's Alcohol and Drug Service System – Turning Point</i> Presented by Dr Alison Ritter and Dr Lynda Berends from 1-2pm at the Turning Point Training Room, 142 Gertrude St, Fitzroy. To register call Turning Point 03 8413 8413.</p> |
| 1 & 2 December | <p><i>The long term fix: what is the future of the drug sector in Victoria? - 2003 VAADA Annual Conference</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> <p><i>Second Service System Review Consultation with the sector – VAADA</i> VAADA will undertake its second consultation with the sector on the service system review report '<i>Pathways – a review of the Victorian drug treatment service system</i>' on the first day of VAADA's 2003 Annual Conference. To register please contact VAADA.</p> |

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Therefore, a growing number of adults including women prefer the taste, convenience and image of RTDs. All new RTD products are focus group tested on adults, so tastes, flavours and drink development is done to cater for adults and not young people. The industry cannot be blamed if these products happen to be attractive to underage people. These products are produced, aimed and marketed to adults over 18 years of age. Of all RTDs consumed in Australia, more than 65% are made from dark spirits (bourbon, rum, whisky), these products are preferred by over 24 year old males.

RTDs are a responsible way to consume alcohol as they provide a pre-measured amount of alcohol, which discourages people from mixing their own drinks, (often very strongly), and they come in a convenient package and taste great.

For the record, RTDs have the same alcohol strength as beer, and not double as quoted by a Member of Parliament at the Recent NSW Alcohol Summit.

At this summit a recommendation was presented to allow for "wet rooms" where underage people could go to have an alcoholic drink under supervision, this recommendation was strongly opposed by DSICA delegates.

Further education of young people at schools and at home is required in addressing underage drinking, not increased regulation on alcohol products.

DSICA will continue to work with Governments and interest groups to ensure that alcohol is enjoyed in a responsible manner and not used and abused by young people.