

VAADA NEWS

Victoria's Response to Drug Action Week 2002

Drug Action Week is a national week of action that aims to promote the achievements of those working to reduce drug related harm in our community.

The event aims to promote positive messages as a way of addressing the fears and misconceptions that hinder progress towards reducing drug related harm.

VAADA is planning a range of activities for the sector to participate in to showcase the value and importance of its work.

VAADA's major Drug Action Week event this year will be the **Victorian Drug Services Expo** which aims to promote the value of drug prevention and treatment to the public, demystify confusion and challenge misconceptions and beliefs on this issue. The Expo will be held on the Thursday 27 and Friday 28 June 2002 at the Melbourne Town Hall.

A public forum will be held on Thursday 27th June during the lunch period (12-2pm). The keynote speaker at the forum will be **Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon, Victoria Police**. VAADA will invite speakers to address treatment, prevention, law enforcement/criminal justice and media aspects of drug prevention and treatment.

The Expo will be a major public event and VAADA is aiming for maximum participation from all organisations involved in drug and alcohol services.

VAADA held a planning forum for the sector on 19 March 2002 to obtain feedback from the sector about possible activities as part of the Expo. There was a high level of energy and enthusiasm generated. VAADA is now seeking to assist agencies to translate that energy into effective public activities as part of the Expo. The Expo will be promoted widely through extensive use of media and community sector networks.

VAADA seeks to once again facilitate the process of linking Victoria's politicians with drug and alcohol services in their local electorates.

VAADA will seek **statements of support from prominent members of the community** that will be used to promote drug services in Victoria.

A media release launching Drug Action Week will highlight the range of activities occurring across the state as part of campaign, including the Victorian Drug Services Expo and Public Forum.

To kick the Week off, VAADA will participate in a joint launch with the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia. Julie McCrossin will be the guest speaker at the national launch.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to showcase your work. To find out more about the campaign, contact Lindi Martin at VAADA.

Chroming: Horror Headlines and Harm Minimisation under threat?

Written by Charlie Stewart

Charlie Stewart is the Manager South East Region, Youth Substance Abuse Service. He is also a member of the VAADA Board. This article does not reflect the views of VAADA and is written from Charlie's personal perspective as a senior manager in the field who has worked for many years to address the complex needs of young people with drug problems.

The recent controversy surrounding Berry Street Victoria and volatile substance use raises a raft of issues specific to young people and providers of residential care. Not least of these is the resources allocated to the training, remuneration and support able to be given to residential care workers. Other issues are relevant, and concerning, to a broad range of service providers particularly agencies providing Drug & Alcohol services, all of which operate, *and are required to operate*, under the broad policy framework of harm minimisation.

One is the knee jerk threat of funding withdrawal to Berry Street based on emotive and inaccurate media reporting. Berry Street is an agency which has sought to directly address the complex issues of drug use in general, and volatile substance use in particular, by young people in their care. They have done so in a planned, systematic and consultative way consistent with the philosophy and policy framework of harm minimization

Two other issues have been revealed or highlighted which have a particular resonance and relevance to Drug & Alcohol services – one is the role of the media, another is the misunderstanding and misinterpretation, including in and by the D&A sector, of harm minimization.

Media reporting of the issue from the inaccurate newspaper headlines and reports, through to the step by step instructions in

chroming broadcast by one Melbourne radio station, has been disgraceful. All the (admittedly sparse) research on volatile substance use suggests that 'advertising' by reporting increases uptake especially when these substances are common in every household. A media code of practice similar to that which applies to youth suicide would be a positive step together with education and awareness for the media and the community.

We (the D&A sector) are the obvious educators and awareness raisers around D&A issues and have a duty as the experts in these things to do so. While we, or a significant number of us, continue to see and describe harm minimisation as somehow confined to practices such as needle and syringe programs, education on vein care and the plastic bag and tube of Tarzan's Grip, we perpetuate the view of harm minimisation as 'anything goes'. This view of harm minimization as an 'anything goes' approach gives comfort to those in and out (mostly out) of the sector who view drug use as intrinsically 'bad' and for whom abstinence based approaches are the only approaches which should be supported. The community deserves responses to controversial D&A issues from the sector which are thoughtful and which show an understanding of the real issues.

Chroming Forum Program

9.30am	Welcome and Introduction, Neos Zavrou, VAADA President
9.40am	Setting the Scene: Terry Laidler, plenary facilitator
9.50am	Brief Presentation of Panelists Perspectives (5 minutes each) Panelists presenting 'expert' opinions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sandie De Wolfe, residential Services (Berry Street)• Carolyn Atkins, VCOSS• Rodger Brough, rural A&D physician• Barb Honeysett, Koori D&A worker• Andrew Brunn, youth alcohol and drug services• Gordon Storey, self-help• Nicola Thompson, VIVAIDS• David Crosbie, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation/Australian National Council on Drugs• Paul McDonald, Department of Human Services
11am	Morning Tea
11.30am	Plenary Facilitated Panel Discussion
Noon	Facilitated Questions to Panelists from the Floor
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	Workshop Sessions Development of guidelines for AOD workers on chroming, Turning Point VAADA workshops
3pm	Report Back by Facilitators
3.30pm	Summary of Forum Outcomes, Carol Bennett, VAADA EO
4pm	Forum Close

'Chroming: beyond the headlines'

VAADA invites you to participate in an important forum for the drug and alcohol sector focusing on some of the issues raised by the recent controversy around 'supervised chroming'.

The forum will be hosted by Terry Laidler and will include a panel of experts representing a range of views on the issue from within and beyond the sector.

A forum discussion together with a series of workshop activities will enable you to have input into the development of a Victorian policy response to this issue.

Where: Melbourne Town Hall (Yarra Room)

When: Wednesday 10th April 9.30 - 4pm.

(A light lunch will be provided.)

To reserve your place, contact Lindi Martin, VAADA

9416 0899 or vaada@infoxchange.net.au

RSVP COB Friday 5 April 2002.

Calendar of Events

25 - 27 March	3rd Australasian Conference on Hepatitis C , Hilton on the Park, Melbourne, Australia, www.hepc.conf.au
10 April 9.30am – 4.00pm	Chroming: beyond the headlines. A VAADA forum consisting of an expert panel discussion focusing on some of the issues raised by the recent controversy around 'supervised chroming'. To be followed by workshop activities to enable input into the development of a policy response to this issue. Contact: Lindi Martin at VAADA : 9416 0899 or vaada@infoxchange.net.au
12 April 1.00 – 2.00pm	Talking Point – Turning Point seminar series. <i>Are Drugs the Solution?</i> David Crosbie, CEO Odyssey House. Bookings essential: 03 8413 8413
28 April - 5 May	5th WONCA World Conference on Rural Health , <i>Working together : communities, professionals and services.</i> Melbourne Convention Centre, Victoria www.ruralhealth2002.net
1 – 3 May	2nd Workforce Development Conference , <i>Catching Clouds : Exploring Diversity in Workforce Development in the Alcohol and other Drugs Field</i> hosted by NCETA, ALAC (N.Z.), ADAC, Turning Point (Vic), NSW Health, & Commonwealth Dept. Health & Ageing, Hilton International Hotel, Adelaide www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/symposium2002.htm
7 - 9 May	2nd Australasian Conference on Drugs Strategy (incorporating the Inaugural South East Asian Prevention Symposium) <i>Beyond Enforcement : Policing, Prevention, Innovation.</i> Hosted by the Western Australia Police Service. Hyatt Regency, Perth. www.adcuwa.org
10 May 1.00 – 2.00pm	Talking Point – Turning Point seminar series. <i>Dual Diagnosis, the Chicken & the Egg</i> , Northern Dual Diagnosis Team Bookings essential: 03 8413 8413
9 - 10 May	15th Annual Conference Drug & Alcohol Nurses of Australasia , Avillion Hotel, Sydney, NSW www.danaonline.org
13 – 15 May	3rd International Conference on Drugs and Young People ACJ Convention Centre Randwick, Sydney Contact: events@adf.org.au www.adf.org.au
14 June 1.00 -2.00pm	Talking Point – Turning Point seminar series. <i>Exploring Issues Around Peer Administration of Naloxone</i> , Kate Cantwell & Stephen Burgess Bookings essential: 03 8413 8413
24 - 29 June	Drug Action Week - A national week of action promoting drug and alcohol treatment and prevention. A Victorian Drug Services Expo will be part of the week. This will provide an opportunity to showcase work / issues in the area. Contact Lindi at VAADA to get involved. 9416 0899 or vaada@infoxchange.net.au
1 – 4 July	Winter School in the Sun – Directions Hosted by Alcohol & Drug Foundation Queensland. Carlton Crest Hotel, Brisbane. www.winterschool.netgen_info.html
31 July – 2 August	VCOSS Social Policy Congress 2002 - Developing Visions for New Way Forward A forum for those in the social and community sector to engage in dialogue around innovative strategies across policy, program and legislative areas that address key needs and issues in our community. The focus of the Congress is on options and solutions for ways forward across policy, program and legislative areas. Contact: Carolyn Atkins, phone 03 9654 5050 Email: carolyn.atkins@vcoss.org.au VCOSS Website, http://www.vcoss.org.au