

VAADA Update – Neos Zavrou (VAADA President)

This year has seen VAADA undergo enormous change with significant staff turnover taking place in the context of a small organisation. What is heartening to me and the board is that through the dedication of the past and present staff and board members, VAADA continued to operate throughout this period. VAADA met its responsibilities to both the Department and importantly the membership during this time of transition.

Despite (or because of) the challenges that VAADA has faced, we have evolved into a disciplined, focused and effective peak body. VAADA continues to be involved in a number of key actions for the sector such as the development of the partnership protocol with DHS and promoting the interests of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Sector within key policy frameworks such as A Fairer Victoria.

VAADA has seen this year as a year of consolidation and refocus on what are the important activities that VAADA ought to undertake.

Janine Bush as the new Executive Officer has met with a broad range of stakeholders and members to inform the strategic plan that will guide VAADA's activities for the next two years. Integral to this is the development of state-wide consultation processes that will enable members to have an active voice in policy development. This will inform VAADA's advocacy.

VAADA is also in negotiation with the Department to ensure that Key Performance Indicators reflect strategic activities that are important to members. This negotiation is in line with VAADA's broad strategic direction, which aims to continually inform its special projects, day to day business as well as its advocacy activities, through consultation with its membership.

We at VAADA continue to be heartened by the active support and interest of the membership

A brief list of other VAADA activities includes:

- The move to a new premise in October that will better serve member needs at significantly reduced cost.
- The move to February and change of format of the annual conference based on member feedback.
- Undertaking of two targeted major consultations on Indicated Prevention in response to the Youth Service System Review and the Nurse Practitioner Model in response to the Rural and Regional Service System Review.
- Conducting of a symposium *Older But Not Forgotten* as part Drug Action Week.
- Organising and conducting information forums on drug driving trial presently underway in Victoria.
- Organising politician visits to agencies as part of Drug Action Week in order to promote the good work the sector undertakes.

Other activities that are ongoing include:

- Redesign of our web page and list serve and improving our electronic communication to our members and others.
- Revising all our governance structures including redrafting our constitution for the member to approve at our annual general meeting.

Deliberation and exploration of Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) continues as tasked by the membership at the last Annual General Meeting. The board and secretariat have been pursuing this, but due to the complexities of the issue (including proposed national changes to industrial relations laws), and the changes in personal, have deferred undertaking the survey until a later date.

Month in Review

Human Rights Consultations

The Victorian Government – through its Human Rights Consultation Committee – is undertaking a consultation process about how to improve the protection and promotion of human rights in Victoria. All Victorians are encouraged to participate.

The project has emerged from the Attorney-General's *Justice Statement* – released in May 2004. Further information can be accessed from the DOJ website – www.justice.vic.gov.au/humanrights

This is an opportunity for consumers of AOD services to get their views across about the importance of human rights in the development of policy and the delivery of services. Rights to cover in this context might include:

- Dignity & respect;
- Equality and freedom from discrimination;
- Participation & citizen empowerment
- Holistic ; and
- Transparency and accountability.

Some of the questions under consideration include:

- Do human rights need to be better protected?
- What rights should be protected?
- What should happen if rights are breached?
- What should be the role of community?

The Association of Participating Service Users (APSU) in partnership with VIVAIDS will be hosting a forum to assist consumers from the AOD sector to have an input. For further information, contact Karenza Louis-Smith at APSU on PH 9572 1151 or Mobile 0403 451 421

Hepatitis C Booklet

The Hepatitis C Council of Victoria have produced a detailed resource booklet, *Impact*, which contains accessible, easy to understand information on the issues surrounding Hepatitis C. This is the fourth edition of *Impact*, and is an ideal resource for professionals working within AOD or for people who have contracted Hepatitis C.

The range of topics include in *Impact* include:

- A definition of hepatitis
- An explanation of the hepatitis c virus
- The differentiation of the different types of hepatitis virus
- A detailed explanation of the mechanics of hepatitis c transmission
- An account of the processes used to test for hepatitis c
- A discussion of the impacts of living with hepatitis c
- A summary of orthodox treatment options and alternative treatments

Copies of *Impact* are free, and can be ordered at the Hepatitis C Council of Victoria website, or by phoning (03) 9380 4644.

Rural Victorian Alcohol & Drug Conference

VAADA will be holding a stall at the upcoming WADAC Conference in Warrnambool and is keen to promote the services of any interested VAADA members.

If your organization is not attending the conference or is unable to set up its own stall – and you're interested in making your promotional material available at the WADAC conference, let us know. Please contact Chris at VAADA before 8th August to discuss further.

"Welfare to Work" – Action Network

VCOSS is encouraging community sector organisations to participate in the ACOSS joint advocacy initiative, to raise concerns about the proposed "Welfare to Work" changes announced in the last federal budget.

The changes could affect up to 27,900 Victorians who apply for Disability Support Pensions or Single Parent Pensions after July 2006.

ACOSS have developed an online tool, called the Action Network, which allows respondents to inform and lobby their local MPs about concerns of the impact of this legislation on disadvantaged Australians.

A new national website www.acoss.org.au will take you to the Action Network, whereby entering your local postcode generates a letter to your Federal MP or State's Senators. The letter calls for politicians to assist the jobless back into work rather than further the disadvantaged in poverty.

YOUR SAY

Personal Profile and Strategic Plan for UnitingCare Moreland Hall Laurence Alvis, Executive Director – UnitingCare Moreland Hall

I have come to UnitingCare Moreland Hall (UCMH) after spending over twenty years in various positions in the Community Services sector in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

The majority of my time has been in a local government setting, but I commenced my career in the Community Services sector in 1982 at Uniting Care Broadmeadows, where I set up and operated the inaugural Financial Counselling service.

I moved to the City of Broadmeadows in 1986 as the Emergency Housing Officer and stayed with Council through subsequent changes until my commencement at UCMH in February 2005.

During my 19 years at Broadmeadows/Hume City Council, I undertook roles as Aged Services Development Officer, Manager Aged & Disability Services, Manager Client Services, Manager Community Support and Manager Community Services.

UCMH have recently launched our Strategic Plan 2005-2008. Our Strategic Plan defines the Vision of UCMH as “*A community where people reach their full potential and are not disadvantaged by alcohol and other drug (A&OD) issues.*”

The Mission of UCMH is “*To provide alcohol and other drugs treatment and education services. To build a deeper understanding in the community about how to respond to alcohol and other drug issues.*”

The Values of UCMH reflect the desire of the Uniting Church to express the Christian faith through both its words and actions.

- **Hope** – affirming the possibility of change for all
- **Social justice** – supporting the right of all people to be treated equitably and with dignity
- **Empowerment** – seeking to enhance people’s strengths and enabling people to speak and act for themselves
- **Compassion** – accepting people as they are and acting with care, respect and justice.
- **Diversity** – embracing and celebrating difference
- **Excellence** – upholding the highest of standards and encouraging innovation in all we do

- **Integrity** – upholding honesty, openness and responsibility in all our interactions
- **Collaboration** – creating partnerships to achieve common goals
- **Sustainability** – adopting environmental work practices in the responsible management of our resources

The goals we have set for UCMH over the period 2005-2008 are to:

1. Deliver high quality services that incorporate innovative practices for all clients and stakeholders.
 - Actions in this area will include the consolidation and strengthening of A&OD services across the agency and investigating opportunities to develop new services, which address current gaps in service provision.
2. Strengthen the position of UCMH as a leading alcohol and other drugs agency.
 - Actions in this area will include the provision of high quality training programs and a strong advocacy and leadership role across the A&OD sector
3. Support and provide opportunities for staff development.
 - Actions in this area will include the development of a qualified and integrated workforce and provision of a positive and supportive work culture and environment for UCMH staff.
4. Promote and develop partnerships to enhance the capacity of the agency
 - Actions in this area will include the maintenance and creation of new partnerships across the A&OD and other sectors.
5. Ensure sustainability, accountability and value, in the operation of all services.
 - Actions in this area will include creation of a sustainable funding base and improvement to quality management systems.

We are excited by the direction the UCMH Strategic Plan will take us in as an agency within the A&OD sector and look forward to working with diverse agencies, both within the A&OD sector and the broader community.

For a copy of the UCMH Strategic Plan 2005-2008, please contact us on 93862876 or email us at queries@morelandhall.org

Calendar of Events

August 4	<p><i>Governing our Communities - Brotherhood of St Laurence Lunchtime Seminars</i> This seminar is presented by Mike Hill who has nineteen years of close involvement with local governments including positions as a Councillor and Mayor with the former City of Brunswick and with Moreland City Council. For further information contact Jacinda Kleidon, Administration Officer, Research & Policy Brotherhood of St Laurence Ph:03 9483 1364 Fax:03 9417 2691.</p>
August 10	<p><i>“Cannabis Use and Mental Health in Adolescence and Young Adulthood” - Turning Point Talking Point Seminar Series</i> .Prof David M. Fergusson Department of Psychological Medicine, Christchurch School of Medicine & Health Sciences Note: This Talking Point is being held at 54 Gertrude Street, bookings essential – call Turning Point on 8413 8413 to register.</p>
August 11-12	<p><i>The 6th Annual Rural Victorian Alcohol & Drug Conference (RVADC)</i> The State’s only rural-specific alcohol & other drug (AOD) Conference. The two-day Conference brings the best professionals in the field of AOD to south west Victoria: remarkable people doing remarkable things when it comes to AOD related health promotion, community development, project development, treatment, and research. Enquiries to Email: enquiries@wadac.wrad.org.au Web: www.wadac.wrad.org.au</p>
August 12	<p><i>“Thinking about drug use as ‘everyday practice’: research into the meaning of drug use in youth cultures”</i> Dr Cameron Duff, Director of Research, Centre for Youth Drug Studies, Australian Drug Foundation at 1-2 pm, Training Room, 142 Gertrude St Fitzroy, bookings essential. Call Turning Point on 8413 8413</p>
August 15	<p><i>Anxiety in children and adolescents: Age appropriate assessment and treatment 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>
August 18	<p><i>Information, e-government and opportunity: a public housing estate online Brotherhood of St Laurence Lunchtime Seminar</i> This presentation by Scott Ewing draws on data from an entrepreneurial 'wired community' established at Atherton Gardens in Fitzroy, Melbourne (e-ACE). It summarises a four year study of the effects on 800 low-income and multiethnic households of access to free networked computers, training and information resources. For further information contact Jacinda Kleidon, Administration Officer, Research & Policy Brotherhood of St Laurence Ph:03 9483 1364 Fax:03 9417 2691.</p>
August 22	<p><i>Working With Individuals Who Are Or Have Been Incarcerated- Moreland Hall Lunchtime Seminar Series</i> Presentation by Franca Guglielmino Co-ordinator Port Phillip Prison Team UC Moreland Hall. An exploration of the challenges and transitional difficulties. 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>
August 30	<p><i>Relaxation Training: Theory and Practice 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>
September 9	<p><i>“Logistical and ethical dilemmas in researching drug and alcohol use among refugees and asylum seekers in Australia”</i> Presented by Prof Sandy Gifford Director, Refugee Health Research Centre, La Trobe University', at 1-2 pm, Training Room, 142 Gertrude St Fitzroy, bookings essential. Call Turning Point on 8413 8413</p>