

AOD Service System Blueprint

The Drugs Policy and Services Branch (DPSB) have identified four thematic areas that will provide the focus for the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) service system blueprint (BP). These are:

- Promoting the health and wellbeing of young Victorians
- Building stronger communities
- Ensuring access to effective, quality treatment services
- Reducing the harms caused by drugs

DPSB states in its BP terms of reference, 'that the new blueprint will create a more cohesive AOD services system and will build upon findings from the Turning Point service system reviews, changing drug trends and more recent Government policy directions.'

The development of the BP will be guided by a reference group whose role is set out clearly in the terms of reference. There are four components to this role. Firstly, to provide advice to the DPSB on matters concerning the development of a blueprint for the AOD service system. Secondly, assist with the identification of stakeholders to be consulted at different stages of the project. Thirdly, to provide advice to ensure appropriate consideration of issues that may arise with the service system. And finally, to consider strategic directions and proposals and assist in developing innovative approaches and responses to improve the AOD service system with existing resource constraints.

It is envisaged that reference group members will meet three to four times throughout 2006. Those sitting on the reference group are: Nick Crofts (Turning Point); Laurence Alvis (Moreland Hall); Janine Bush (VAADA); David Crosbie (Odyssey House); Glenn Howard (Ngwala Willumbong Co-op Ltd); Rosemary McClean (ADF); David Murray (YSAS); John Ryan (ANEX); Anne Sommerville (Bendigo Community Health); Tim Walsh

(SEADS); Regina Brindle (APSU); and Peter Wearne (Premiers Drug Prevention Council).

Peaks Campaign on the Price Index

VCOSS through its Price Index (PI) working group have been negotiating with the Department of Human Services (DHS) around its PI processes in relation to Non-Government-Organisations (NGO). Indexation in this context, can be defined as the adjustment of funding or the 'price' for service delivered by funded agencies in the light of cost inflation.

Indexation of core funding allows NGOs to keep pace with costs as they increase (such as petrol and wages), ensuring that core funding isn't diverted away from service delivery. The PI working group have determined that to have a viable NGO sector a minimum 4.15% indexation of funding is needed.

Currently on offer from DHS is a 2.6% CPI, well below what is needed. Subsequent to this offer, on 25 July the PI Working Group representatives met with the Treasurer to forward Sustainability and PI issues. Outcomes from this meeting will be forthcoming – and in the meantime, efforts will continue in advocating to the Victorian Government for a PI of 4.15%.

A media campaign covering the PI issue (and supported by peaks, including VAADA) will begin on 31 July. More details will be forwarded about this campaign as they come to hand. The next public forum on this issue will be held on 5 September. Detailed information about the Price Index issue can be found at the VCOSS website: http://www.vcooss.org.au/sector_sust.htm

Project Reduction

On 29 June 2006, the *Herald-Sun* carried a front-page story entitled "Drugs no-go zone" about a new police operation called Project Reduction. The scheme is designed to facilitate the exclusion of drug offenders from the City of Maribyrnong. (Continued on page 2)

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This scheme differs from bail-related exclusion conditions, because it is used at the point of sentencing rather than arrest. Police will apply to the Court for “exclusion orders” when a non-resident, alleged to have committed a drug-related offence is being sentenced and has “no lawful purpose” for being in the municipality.

Police have not clearly defined what they consider a “lawful purpose” to be. The *Herald-Sun* report suggests that a lawful purpose will include “being able to demonstrate that they have immediate family in the area, require medical or legal advice or need to be there for any purpose or business that could not be conducted elsewhere.”

The extent to which this scheme will impact upon local AOD services and service users remains to be seen. The first arrest under the scheme occurred on 14 July 2006. Exclusion orders will not be sought until those charged eventually face sentencing hearings.

It may be of concern to AOD services in the Western region that police have indicated that they may seek exclusion orders against people accessing these services. In practice, police intend to provide the sentencing Court with a list of AOD and other services outside the municipality to demonstrate that the non-resident offender could theoretically access services outside the municipality. It is not clear whether this list will take into account practical issues, such as waiting lists, availability, continuity of care or integrated support services.

Politician's visits to AOD agencies

As part of Drug Action Week® 2006 VAADA facilitated many visits to agencies by politicians. Many others have contacted VAADA seeking alternative appointment times and other activities.

VAADA would like to thank all politicians who visited agencies during the week including:

- Ann Corcoran (Member for Isaacs)
- Brendan Jenkins (Member for Morwell)
- Daniel Andrews (Member for Mulgrave)
- Glenyys Romanes (Member for Melbourne Province)
- Helen Shardey (Member for Caulfield)
- Jeanette Powell (Member for Shepparton)
- Johan Scheffer (Member for Monash)
- Jude Perera (Member for Cranbourne)

- Judy Maddigan (Member for Essendon)
- Kelvin Thomson (Member for Wills)
- Ken Smith (Member for Bass)
- Maxine Morand (Member for Mount Waverly)
- Noel Pullen (Member for Higginbotham)
- Peter Walsh (Member for Swan Hill)
- Rosy Buchanan (Member for Hastings)
- Simon Crean (Member for Hotham)

Withdrawal and Beyond

Withdrawal and Beyond: Integrating Hospital and Community AOD Services, co presented by VAADA and the Addiction Medicine Hospital Liaison Group saw more than one hundred people attend.

A dense program examined the relationship that currently exists between the acute medical and community sectors and how links between the two sectors could be strengthened.

The day concluded with the inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Inter-hospital Group who will be known as the Victorian Addiction Inter-hospital Liaison Association (VAILA).

VAADA Member CEO / Manager Network

On 26 July CEOs and Managers met to discuss sector issues and the value of an ongoing VAADA member's network.

In addition to sector funding, a range of issues were identified by the group as important to the AOD sector and which was felt could be advanced through the attention of a CEO / Manager Network, including:

- Promoting the value the sector provides to the community
- Examining emerging issues
- Acting as a support mechanism for VAADA member CEO's and Managers
- Improving recruitment and retention of staff in/to the AOD sector
- Exploring the sector's obligations to its funders and clients
- Developing an understanding of how the different agencies and service types interact to deliver the services they do
- The need for a long term approach, when advocating for the viability of the AOD sector

The network has agreed to meet on a quarterly basis and initially will further explore strategies for addressing sector funding issues.

YOUR SAY

Sustaining Rural and Regional Outreach

Paul Weight - AOD Services Manager - BAYSA Youth Services

Currently, 35% of Victorians live in regional and rural settings as mental health and drug and alcohol issues continues to escalate for rural and regional Victorians. Therefore it is critical that vulnerable young people within rural and regional communities have access to both mental health and drug treatment services, funded at levels commensurate with metropolitan services.

The BAYSA Youth Access Program (YAP) arose as a response to significant treatment access issues that became apparent between 2001 – 2003, and saw the numbers of young people from the Barwon South West Region accessing youth residential withdrawal, fall as low as two. After identifying a need in the Barwon South West Region, BAYSA, Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre, with the support of the Barwon South West Youth Alliance developed a submission to the AER Foundation for a pilot program, which proved to be successful.

A team of regional youth outreach workers commenced working with the Barwon South West Region as of September 2004. Within only 6 months of operation, the three youth outreach workers had engaged with up to 315 young people resulting in 140 episodes of care and has seen youth accessing withdrawal services rise to eighteen. One in every seven episodes of care is for Indigenous youth.

YAP workers travel up to 3,000 kilometres each week. Outreach must be what the term means – engaging with people within their communities and settings. An integrated approach is essential if treatment and prevention measures are to be successful and sustained.

An external evaluation by Turning Point in September 2005 indicated that seven different service types were accessed through the team. The evaluation also identified, that over a ten month period, 15 – 19 year olds were the largest group engaged in the program and the primary drugs of concern were alcohol 86% and cannabis 83% followed by tobacco and a range of illicit substances.

YAP provides a robust example of specialist youth outreach within regional and rural settings, targeting the most at risk young people with problematic drug use issues and Indigenous communities through an assertive outreach model.

We feel that YAP is a service that is a success on any scale; an innovative service whose success is evidence based and deserving of funding on those measures alone.

In recognition of this, BAYSA recently received notification from The National Drug and Alcohol Committee that YAP is a finalist in the Excellence in services to young people category to be announced on the 23rd of June in Sydney. This is on top of our Regional Service Excellence Award at the Regional Victorian Alcohol and Drug Conference in August 2005 demonstrating the effectiveness of rural and youth outreach to provide effective outcomes.

The 1999 Evaluation of Youth Alcohol and Drug Outreach by the Department of Human Services (DHS) defined four types of youth outreach - Satellite Outreach, Detached and Mobile Outreach, Street Work Outreach and Assertive Community Outreach which best describes the YAP model.

Recommendation 13 is of particular interest and in summary states that Regional Youth Alcohol and Drug Service providers work together on defining and developing regional models for integrating adolescent withdrawal services, supported accommodation and peer support.

Seven years on and we have only just developed youth outreach guidelines, and YAP, an award winning outreach model, is struggling for funding beyond September of this year.

Currently, BAYSA and the Barwon South West Youth Alliance (consisting of eight youth and health services) is calling on the State Government to provide recurrent funding to YAP. This will ensure that the three outreach workers currently employed in YAP can continue operating across rural and regional Victoria, providing services that those living in metropolitan settings can take for granted.

Boosts to funding are often described as starting as waterfalls, changing to rivers, becoming irrigation, and finally reaching rural and regional settings as a droplet to be divided amongst several communities. Are rural and regional Victorians once again to receive a drop for their mental health and AOD services, when what they need is a waterfall?

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Calendar of Events

August 8	Responding to sexual assault Level 1 - CASA House This one-day workshop is designed to assist those working with victim/survivors of sexual assault who have not had the opportunity to access training previously. The cost of the workshop will be \$100.00 and limited to 20 places. Attendance is by booking only. Registration forms are available by contacting CASA House on 9347 3066 or go to www.rwh.org.au/casa/
August 10	2006 FADNET Conference - Widening the Lens: Families in the AOD Picture to be held at the John Scott Meeting House, La Trobe University on 10th August 2006. For more details please visit the website: www.familydrughelp.sharc.org.au/fadnet
August 10- 11	7th Rural Victorian Alcohol & Drug Conference - Warrnambool, 10 & 11 August 2006. This year's Conference explores the commonalities and disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous alcohol and other drug issues and services. Registrations open late May, to take advantage of early-bird rates and preferences, send an e-mail with your contact details to enquiries@wadac.wrad.org.au soon!
August 18	Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre WIP (Work in Progress) 2006 - Translating research into practice: Making services, research and development matter To be held at the Michael Chamberlain theatre, St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne. Registration fees (inc. GST): \$75 per person, \$30 student concession.. For further information contact tracey.brooke@turningpoint.org.au
August 25	Supporting AOD clients to Enhance Their Parenting Skills – Moreland Hall Seminar Series 12.30 – 1.30pm Seminars will be held Moreland Hall, 26 Jessie Street Moreland. For further enquiries please call 03 9386 2876 or email seminarseries@moreland.hall.org
August 31	Providing pregnancy care – engaging and minimising the harm - Women's Alcohol and Drug Service Training 2006 Thursday, 31 August – 9.00am to 1.00pm. to be held in the Supper Room and available to all professionals from hospitals and community organisations. For bookings and enquiries contact Tony on 9344 3631 or email womens.ads@rwh.org.au
September 5	Working with older women responding to past or current violence - CASA House This workshop will focus on older women's experience of violence and barriers to disclosure and reporting. The cost of the workshop will be \$100.00 and limited to 20 places. Attendance is by booking only. Registration forms are available by contacting CASA House on 9347 3066 or go to www.rwh.org.au/casa/
September 8	Talking Point seminar - Mental health screening and intervention in alcohol and other drug services: the psychecheck project. Presented by Dr Nicole Lee. 1-2 pm, 142 Gertrude St, Fitzroy. The seminar is free. All welcome, bookings essential, ring 8413 8413 or email info@turningpoint.org.au < mailto:info@turningpoint.org.au >September 8 -
September 28 – 29	Australasian Amphetamines Conference, 2006 – ANEX Globally amphetamines are the second most popular illicit drug after cannabis.. The first Australasian Amphetamine Conference will focus on these questions and more. For more information about attending or presenting, e conference, visit the conference website http://www.amphetamines.org.au or email conference@amphetamines.org.au

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Current funding approaches within the Department of Human Services don't allow room for innovation and development within alcohol and drug services, or for enhancement of service provision that will ultimately benefit health outcomes for all young people and their families living in remote and regional locations in Victoria and the Nation.

BAYSA and the Barwon South West Youth Alliance would like to encourage full consideration of funding specialist regional and rural outreach throughout rural and regional Victoria.

BAYSA would like to thank all the key services involved to date, young people and communities as we await the outcome of both funding applications with State and Federal Governments and National AOD Awards. The YAP model, as derived from external evaluation and our research, is available to other regions as of July this year. Further information is available from BAYSA Drug Prevention and Treatment Services – dptp@baysa.org.au or telephone 03 52447372