

2003 Annual VAADA Conference

'The long term fix: What is the future of the drug sector in Victoria?'

1st and 2nd December 2003

Rydges Riverwalk Richmond, Melbourne



VICTORIAN ALCOHOL & DRUG ASSOCIATION

Conference Evaluation and Report

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VAADA would like to acknowledge the conference steering committee for guiding the organisation to the 2003 annual conference:

Conference Steering Committee

Major David Brunt (VAADA Board Member)
Salvation Army, Bridge Program

Mr Hugh MacKinnon
Oxford Houses

Ms Jocelyn Snow
Yarra Drug and Health Forum

Ms Janet Farrow (VAADA Board Member)
UnitingCare Moreland Hall

Ms Rose McCrohan
Youth Substance Abuse Service

Ms Elena Tauridsky
Ovens and King Community Health Service

Mr Christopher Foley-Jones
Eastern Collaboration of Alcohol and Drug Agencies

Ms Rebecca Roebuck
Wyndham City Council

Ms Luz Bland
Department of Human Services

VAADA Staff

Ms Carol Bennett
Executive Officer

Ms Litsa Roussakis
Project Officer

Mr Chris McDonnell
Administrative Assistant

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Introduction

VAADA's 2003 Annual Conference, *'The long term fix: what is the future of the drug sector in Victoria?'* was held on Monday the 1st and Tuesday the 2nd December 2003. 165 delegates attended over the two days.

VAADA's 2003 annual conference title reflected a growing sense of uncertainty about the future of the drug sector in Victoria. With a myriad of recent reviews underway and the sector being consulted extensively in recent months, there has been much opportunity for contemplating the future.

Held at Rydges Riverwalk, Richmond, the conference aimed to focus beyond immediate concerns, and consider broader trends in government-non government relations, organisational strategy, and the way other sectors have dealt with similar pressures. These directions were canvassed in the opening presentation by an excellent line up of speakers. The conference aimed to generate discussion and debate on important issues that affect those delivering services to many clients and families in Victoria who benefit from them.

The first day of the conference involved a morning plenary session of four keynote speakers including The Honourable Gavin Jennings (Minister for Aged Care, Aboriginal Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Government (Council)), Ms Cath Smith (Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Social Service, (VCOSS)), Mr Roger Clifton (Managing Director, McCann-Erickson Advertising Agency) and Ms Paula Beauchamp (Social Affairs Reporter, *Herald Sun* Newspaper).

The conference also included consultation on the Service System Review (facilitated by Associate Professor Terry Laidler) and included a summary presentation of the Service System Report, *'Pathways – a review of the Victorian drug treatment service system'* by the review's author, Alison Ritter from Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre.

The opening day also saw the launches of two new publications. The first, a report marking 26 years of Narcotics Anonymous (NA) in Victoria. UnitingCare Moreland Hall also launched their *'Big Book on Party Drugs'*.

Day two of the conference saw the national launch of the workforce development Alcohol, Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF) funded collaboration *'Alcohol and other Drug Workforce Development in Australia: The assessment of needs and the identification of strategies to achieve sustainable change'*.

Present at the launch were AERF Deputy CEO, Ms Tracey Purdam, and AERF Executive Board Director, Mr David Crosbie.

Professor Ann Roche, Director, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), provided an overview of outcomes from the literature review for the project. A brief of jurisdictional outcomes was presented by Ms Carol Bennett, VAADA Executive Officer (Victorian, Tasmanian and South Australian jurisdictions); Mr Larry Pierce, Executive Director, Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA) (New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Queensland jurisdictions); and Ms Jill Rundle, Director, Western Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (WANADA) (Western Australian and Northern Territory jurisdictions).

Both days of the conference also included sector presentations and workshops that focussed on emerging issues and innovative solutions; creative approaches; drugs and the media; effective models; drugs and the community; dual diagnosis; and workforce development.

DAY 1 - Introductory sessions

Mr Neos Zavrou – VAADA President

Neos welcomed conference delegates to VAADA's 2003 Annual Conference, and encouraged delegates to see the conference as an opportunity to express issues, voice opinions and interact with one another on the future of the Victorian alcohol and other drug sector.

Ms Carol Bennett – VAADA Executive Officer

Carol also welcomed delegates to the conference and discussed the strong rationale for a focus on the future of the Victorian sector. Carol noted that the AOD sector has been the subject of various reviews recently. For this reason the sector was focussed on the future of the Victorian AOD sector.

Carol officially launched VAADA's 2004-05 State Budget Submission. She outlined 5 key issues in VAADA's State Budget Submission including:

- 1. Sustainable funding for non government alcohol and drug agencies*
- 2. Intensive drug treatment support for complex clients*
- 3. Investment in the prevention of harm for children of drug users*
- 4. Workforce development for the alcohol and drug sector*
- 5. Translating research into an effective tool for the alcohol and drug workforce.*

VAADA will centre much of its efforts in the coming months on advocating around the recommendations outlined in the submission to governments and the broader community.

Carol introduced the morning's four plenary speakers noting that they would provide an insight into the future directions of government, advertising, media and the Victorian social services sector and implications for the AOD sector.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS – DAY 1

Keynote speakers on day one of the conference provided delegates with an excellent overview of the emerging issues surrounding the future of the drug sector in Victoria.

The Hon, Gavin Jennings – Minister for Aged Care, Aboriginal Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Government (Council)

Minister Gavin Jennings discussed how Governments internationally are exploring new ideas and strategies to reposition community building strategies at the centre of contemporary public policy. Minister Jennings highlighted that these new ideas involve government reorganising planning and delivery through the lens of people and places; exploring new forms of self governance; investing in capacity building - especially around networks and; being concerned with how community infrastructure is maintained and renewed.

Minister Jennings outlined the need for social improvements to be informed by uniform policy communities that can provide sound evidence and succinct policy solutions to government. He highlighted the need for the community not to become complacent about important social issues given that economic growth doesn't necessarily translate into social improvements. The importance of local level partnerships ('people and place') underlined the Minister's message about the need for positive local communities that can generate positive health outcomes.

Ms Cath Smith - Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS)

Cath discussed the changing nature of community services and how alcohol and drug agencies (as part of the community sector) might better negotiate and respond to progressively tight economic environments.

Cath explored the current political environment, the consequences for NGOs, and ways in which NGOs can be more creative in their work with governments. Cath also discussed the importance of effective communication with the community and core constituents, the competition between NGOs, and the need to build a broader agenda for progressive social policy. Cath talked about the need for the NGO sector to consider future sustainability underpinned by local communities and cross sectoral linkages.

Mr Roger Clifton - Managing Director, McCann-Erickson Advertising

Roger's lively keynote address at VAADA's conference centred on the approach advertising professionals take when advertising for clients and focussed on how advertising professionals address perceived barriers in that endeavour. Roger outlined the realities of working in an industry driven by awards, creativity and successful work.

Community attitudes in relation to alcohol advertising were outlined, and Roger gave an insight into how the alcohol and drug sector can best utilise advertising agencies and the media to promote sector interests and portray alcohol and drug messages within the broader community.

Ms Paula Beauchamp - Social Affairs Reporter, Herald Sun Newspaper

Paula discussed the changing trends in media reporting on social issues. As part of this discussion, Paula highlighted the extent to which the AOD sector has been instrumental in changing social attitudes in the past. Paula urged the sector to recognise that media is ultimately a business, not a 'community newsletter' and outlined ways that the alcohol and drug sector can more effectively target its messages to ensure that they are media friendly, 'get a run' and build community empathy.

While acknowledging that the media isn't always perfect in the way it presents sensitive social issues, Paula challenged the sector to use the media to its best advantage as a powerful tool to generate debate and change social opinion.

Service System Review report presented by Dr Alison Ritter, Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre

Dr Alison Ritter from Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre and author of the Service System Review, presented an overview of major findings from the research conducted on the Victorian Service System titled '*Pathways: a review of the Victorian Drug Treatment Service System*'.

Dr Ritter highlighted the need for such a review, noting that the last review was conducted 10 years ago. Dr Ritter noted that in this time, the Victorian system had transversed major policy developments and received a large injection of funding, hence the need to review the current system and its effectiveness.

Illustrating the key components of the Service System Review, Dr Ritter highlighted:

- Demand for treatment
- Current treatment services and systems
- Efficacy and effectiveness of treatment types
- Client preferences, treatment-seeking and needs
- Goals of treatment
- System elements
- Structural considerations
- Financial considerations.

Dr Ritter also detailed a number of core concepts considered in the review including defining treatment and service elements; access systems; continuity of care and; inter-sectoral linkages.

Audience Discussion facilitated by Associate Professor Terry Laidler

Associate Professor Terry Laidler facilitated an audience discussion with Dr Ritter addressing audience questions and comments in a plenary discussion regarding the Service System Review.

The session provided a good opportunity for the sector to have its say about the review, the concerns and possibilities it has raised. The discussion generated was clearly one of the highlights for delegates who expressed the importance of the consultation with VAADA and the need for further discussion regarding the proposed changes to the sector.

Some of the issues and concerns raised included:

- The impact Central Intake Unit's (CIUs) will have on the AOD system
- How CIUs will work and where CIUs will be based
- The need for medium intensity residential units
- Pharmacotherapy dispensing clinics
- The proposed 15% cut to therapeutic communities
- CCCC redefinition
- The need for any system redevelopment to be funded appropriately
- Workforce development resources
- The need for drug treatment to be broadly defined
- The need for more investment into withdrawal units and therapeutic communities to make them work more effectively.

VAADA will incorporate the detailed sector comments into a comprehensive report to DHS in response to the review report.

Concurrent Sessions

Eight concurrent workshop and presentation sessions were held in the afternoon on the first day of the conference, and an additional six on the final day.

All sessions across the two days attracted significant attention from delegates. A brief outline of each session is found below.

Achieving results

The 'achieving results' session was held during the first presentation stream of the conference. This session saw information provided to delegates during a presentation by representatives of Narcotics Anonymous (NA) about results from a recent survey of the current population of Narcotics Anonymous members in Victoria. This followed an earlier launch of the report at the conference.

A paper was presented based on a small exploratory research project that provided an overview of the Oxford Houses Australia (OHA) model as it has developed in Victoria. Possible future positions within the drug treatment and support framework, particularly as a cost effective reintegrative service for people in recovery were also discussed.

Richard Cash presented a paper on Turning Point's Clinical Services who are investigating the effects of various engagement methods on maximising attendance for initial appointments for drug and alcohol treatment. Richard detailed how potential clients are randomised into several conditions – no contact following the booking contact, an additional confirmation call and a letter containing appointment and service details, with resulting attendance outcomes recorded.

Emerging issues and innovative solutions

The emerging issues and innovative solutions presentation stream was aimed at presenting a number of papers on emerging studies or ideas that are surfacing in the Victorian AOD sector.

The WRAD Centre presented a paper on the preliminary results of a research project that has set out to test the validity that it is generally accepted that there is a difference in the educational attainment (particularly with regard to functional literacy) between individuals who access alcohol and other drug treatment agencies, and that of the general population.

Chris McDonnell from VAADA presented his paper on a VAADA discussion paper regarding employment of people with drug problems in the alcohol and other drug sector.

Neos Zavrou from Odyssey House explored the development of employment and training for clients at Odyssey House. This included the types of clients that access these services, the outcomes that have been achieved, challenges faced in providing employment programs to clients and how the agency has gone about 'cobbling' the service together through a range of funding opportunities. In addition, future options for the drug and alcohol service system and challenges this represents to our current way of thinking were explored.

Creative approaches

The 'creative approaches' presentation stream focussed on new and innovative solutions emerging within the Victorian AOD sector. Such approaches included a model and impeccable level of integrity and accountability on triple bottom line accounting and creative and new approaches to group supervision. This was presented by Deborah Homburg from the Buoyancy Foundation of Victoria.

The session also included a presentation from Paul Teusner and Adam Cockerall from Cutting Edge Youth Services that focussed on a three day per week program titled *Renovation for Renewal* for young people who were experiencing issues around substance abuse coupled with problems staying in the education system.

Anxiety management workshop

Tomi Redman from Tranquilliser Recovery and New Existence (TRANX) ran a lively skills-based workshop which focused on how to manage anxiety rather than the policy ideal of holistic treatment. The workshop focussed on changing service responses to include anxiety management.

Communicating drug issues

The 'communicating drug issues' presentation stream aimed to facilitate discussion on drugs and the media and how the Victorian AOD sector can best forge relationships with the media along with examples of such relationships.

Whilst the AOD sector is often very critical of the manner in which issues relating to the use of alcohol and other drugs are reported in the Australian media, Cameron Duff (ADF) presented on an instance in which adverse media coverage was instrumental in the creation of a new community alliance for harm reduction.

David Murray (YSAS) and Litsa Roussakis (VAADA) discussed the impact that the media can often have on the sector and the importance of involving the media and forging partnerships to enhance the sector's agenda.

Developing effective models

This presentation session focussed on the development of new and innovative models in the sector including a presentation on the evaluation of a youth residential withdrawal service presented by UnitingCare Moreland Hall which included development issues that will be faced in the future.

Belinda Maloney and Helen Kalpakoff from the Australian Community Support Organisation – Community Offender Advice and Treatment Services (ACSO-COATS) presented information on a forensic monitoring model to support treatment services in managing referrals to National Illicit Drug Strategy (NIDS) funded positions. The role of this position was discussed along with the impact this has had on agency recording and subsequent reporting to DHS.

Stefan Gruenert (Odyssey House Victoria) emphasised that the future for children with drug-dependent parents may depend on our efforts. Stefan expressed the hope that the AOD sector in the future will have obtained the required resources and made the necessary changes to routinely address children's needs when parents access drug treatment. He further emphasised the likely consequences of inaction.

A presentation by Denise Abadee and Marnie Engelder from the C.R.E.D.I.T. program demonstrated how the effectiveness of criminal justice diversion programs such as C.R.E.D.I.T., based within Magistrates' Courts throughout Victoria, contributes to positive treatment outcomes and enhanced cost effectiveness.

Mobilising the community for cultural change

This workshop, presented by Geoff Munro from the Australian Drug Foundation, focussed on ways in which the alcohol and other drugs field can lead the community to modify the Australian tradition of binge drinking. This workshop discussed how the Community Alcohol Action Network (CAAN) is supporting community action to reduce the power of social and environmental factors that encourage on-going alcohol misuse. CAAN employs "top down" and "bottom up" processes to maximise the impact of community concern.

This interactive workshop outlined the role of the Community Alcohol Action Network, identified means and opportunities for engaging the community in changing social norms that promote high-risk use of alcohol, and considered how changes in social norms might be sustained over time.

Youth Dual Diagnosis – Meeting the Challenge

Presented by Northern Nexus, the Senior Youth Clinical Advisor discussed 'Integrated Treatment Models' and how they are integral to optimal treatment for dual diagnosis (the co-occurrence of mental health problems and problematic substance use).

Workshop presenters discussed how the current system in Victoria has developed in such a way that service sectors operate in independent silos with little collaboration between service types.

The presentation considered the long-term solutions for services that work with a youth population.

AERF Workforce Development project: State reports

Presented by the three peak bodies undertaking the AERF funded workforce development consultations, Carol Bennett (VAADA), Larry Pierce (NADA) and Jill Rundle (WANADA), discussed with delegates the key findings from the 8 consultations held with AOD NGOs Australia wide. The session was a workshop format that focussed on the key barriers affecting the sector and presented possible strategies to help combat the intense workforce issues facing the AOD sector Australia-wide.

Drugs and the Community

Local government and sector representatives discussed a number of issues and concerns about drugs in the community and how the sector can best deal with these growing concerns. Local government and Drug Action Committee representatives focussed on the implementation of Local Drug Strategies and how the effectiveness of the development of community partnerships has impacted on the results.

Paul Weight presented information about the Barwon South West Youth Alliance which was formed between a number of services in Victoria and provides an integrated service response to young people affected by problematic drug use delivering a number of services to the communities in the Barwon South West area.

Understanding the Family Dance

Miranda Manning and John Bamberg from the Odyssey Institute of Studies presented a workshop designed to increase understanding of systems, theory and family dynamics relevant to substance abuse. The workshop covered family interaction patterns, a notion of the function of drug use on family systems and tips for practice. The seminar successfully aimed to match theory and practice with opportunity for experiential learning.

Dealing with Dual Diagnosis

Kathleen Ryan from Northern Nexus presented a paper focused on the fact that the future of the drug sector in Victoria depends on the realisation that dual diagnosis is the norm. Kathleen noted that the literature states that the majority of people with a mental illness also have an alcohol and/or other drug problem. The presentation explored the debates concerning aetiology, definitions and the existence of separate service systems.

In recognition that many drug users are not being offered access to mental health services, Nich Rogers from the Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS), discussed a new project aimed at improving the assessment and management of depression in young drug users directly from a drug treatment site. Nich's presentation reported on early project findings identifying current best practice in working with dually diagnosed adolescents, and discussed the formative development of an enhanced and integrated service model.

Leigh Skewes from UnitingCare Ballarat presented a paper on new energy therapies available to treat commonly diagnosed illnesses in a new and alternative way.

Workforce Development

This presentation stream aimed to discuss workforce development and innovative ways of dealing with workforce issues. Presenters discussed supervision and varying alternatives to traditional supervision. The needs of both employees and the employer were also discussed along with a presentation by clinical staff who reflected on the process and experience of participating in the re-accreditation process at Uniting Care Moreland Hall.

Changing the Future of Drug policy in Victoria

This workshop facilitated by Melissa Dent from Western Region AIDS & Hepatitis Prevention (WRAP) explored the options available to workers in the alcohol and other drug sector and others, to influence, expedite, and create changes in Victoria's drug policy. The workshop briefly looked at why change is desirable, and a discussion was facilitated on the action that can be taken to create change in current policies in Victoria. Various methods of social action were discussed and opinions about the most effective strategies canvassed.

A motion was later created and presented to the Board during the 'On the Spot' discussion with the sector. A copy of this motion is found at Appendix 5.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS – DAY 2

The AERF national collaborative project on workforce development *'Alcohol and other Drug Workforce Development in Australia: The assessment of needs and the identification of strategies to achieve sustainable change'* was launched on the final day of the VAADA conference. Speakers included AERF Deputy CEO Ms Tracey Purdam, Executive Board Director, Mr David Crosbie (AERF) and partners from the project team including Professor Ann Roche (NCETA), Ms Carol Bennett (VAADA), Mr Larry Pierce (NADA) and Ms Jill Rundle (WANADA).

VAADA Executive Officer, Carol Bennett, welcomed the panel of presenters for the morning plenary of the second day, highlighting the importance of the project and the conclusions and findings that emanated from it. Carol welcomed peak group representatives to the launch to provide delegates with an overview of the key findings and the barriers and strategies identified during the consultations held in all Australian jurisdictions.

Ms Tracey Purdam – Deputy Chief Executive Officer, AERF and Mr David Crosbie, Executive Board Director, AERF

Tracey and David opened the second day of the VAADA conference with the launch of the literature and jurisdictional reports for the AERF funded workforce development collaboration. The importance of workforce development in the Australian alcohol and other drug sector was discussed and they welcomed the outcomes of the jurisdiction reports and literature review, noting the importance of this issue for the sector.

Tracey and David discussed the positive impact that the funded collaboration was having on the sector and highlighted that the project is a collaboration between national and state bodies that will inform jurisdictional and national policy making processes.

Professor Ann Roche – Director, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

Professor Ann Roche outlined findings from the literature review noting that the focus of this literature review was on the key workforce development issues of particular importance and relevance to the NGO sector. Ann emphasised that the literature review does not contain a comprehensive review of every workforce development issue and strategy relevant to the AOD field as a whole but rather focuses on a selection of workforce development issues, strategies and outcomes of particular significance and applicability to the NGO sector.

The review contains three chapters focused on:

1. a systems perspective
2. organisational development and
3. the development of a skilled AOD workforce

Ann highlighted that the emphasis throughout the review is on the range of systemic, organisational and individual factors that contribute to effective workforce development.

A copy of the literature review is available from NCETA.

Brief of Jurisdictional Outcomes:

Ms Carol Bennett – Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA)

Carol Bennett presented findings from the consultations conducted by VAADA with the Tasmanian, Victorian and South Australian AOD NGO sectors. Larry Pierce presented findings from consultations conducted with the New South Wales, Queensland and Australian Capital Territory AOD sectors. Jill Rundle provided an overview of the consultations WANADA held with the Western Australian and the Northern Territory AOD sectors.

Carol provided delegates with a brief introduction detailing the need for such a project and why workforce development is an issue that needs to be addressed. Carol noted that studies of treatment outcomes have shown that the efficacy of treatment is dependent upon the quality of interaction between the provider and the client, adding that there is little doubt that providing quality services to people with AOD problems requires quality staff. Carol emphasised that if the AOD sector in Australia is serious about developing effective services, then the development and support of staff is necessary.

Carol outlined a number of key concerns common to all states including:

Salary, terms and conditions

One of the major issues to emerge from the consultations has been the difficulty of agencies to attract and retain qualified staff. Carol noted that the very limited resources of agencies also mean that terms and conditions of employment don't compensate for limited salary. The lack of parity between the government and non-government sector compound the difficulties for agencies and mean that even the most committed staff can find similar employment in other areas and receive greater salary packages.

Carol highlighted concerns that annual funding often leads to a lack of security of tenure beyond one year.

Carol indicated that the consultations highlighted the need for:

- A broad ranging strategy and action plan for workforce development in Victoria that recognises metropolitan and regional differences and variation in the needs across a range of services
- Benchmark qualifications, competency levels and pay parity through award arrangements
- Salary sacrificing and packaging to make conditions more attractive.

Training and professional development

Training and professional development were highlighted as barriers due to the fact that new and emerging areas of client need are often not the areas that training is available in. Carol noted that the lack of flexible options make it difficult to access training, the cost for already resource poor organisations limits staff training budgets, there are a lack of incentives for both clients and employers and backfill is a problem, particularly for small or rural agencies who do not have replacement staff and people reluctant to take more than a week off work.

Supervision and support

All consultations raised concerns that limited resources lead to limited quality when activities that can enhance the quality of service can't be undertaken, such as reflective practice, clinical supervision, mentoring and debriefing.

Professional and career development

Carol noted that recognition of prior learning/competencies is considered by the sector to be a good step, but needs to be adequately funded. Consultations highlighted that professional standards within the sector are varied eg nurses, teachers, youth workers and psychologists and there is a lack of room to move and inflexibility to develop roles which makes retention a problem. Carol noted that accreditation needs to be resourced on an ongoing basis as it is resource intensive, even if funded.

Complexity of roles

Carol highlighted that clients in the AOD sector have demanding needs that go well beyond drug treatment, citing as an example, supported accommodation. Carol noted that people are often juggling various roles due to a lack of management and administration funding. People who enter the field usually do so due to a commitment to working with clients but they often end up with a large administrative burden or in management positions. Carol emphasised that the complexity of the work requires a high level of skill in other areas for referral and support to clients.

Evaluation

Carol noted that evaluation was a barrier raised during the consultations including the need to demonstrate the value of drug treatment and implement quality improvement systems.

Carol emphasised that services are not currently funded to undertake research that demonstrates service efficacy. While services are in the best position to undertake research in their own right based on their own experience of the client group and service model, they are not funded to collect data that could inform policy and practice.

Onerous reporting requirements are often varied across funders, taking time away from service provision. This is a source of significant frustration when the data being collected doesn't seem to reflect the type of work undertaken or the client outcomes.

Public profile of the AOD sector

Lack of significance of the AOD sector was seen as a limitation on the sector's capacity to attract and retain quality staff. Many participants noted that there is a perception that alcohol and drug clients are often not seen as deserving by the broader community.

Carol noted that there is limited understanding about the efficacy of this work which limits its recognition and explained concerns raised that having worked in the alcohol and other drug sector does not necessarily provide a career opportunity for the future

Ms Jill Rundle – Western Australian Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (WANADA)

Jill Rundle discussed the immense participant interest in the workforce development consultations WANADA conducted in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Jill provided delegates with real life examples of the concerns and issues raised during the consultations. Jill noted that a large number of people who attended the consultations were representatives from a range of rural services but particularly those from indigenous services. Jill discussed the resource constraints services face highlighting the greater difficulties faced by those working in rural settings.

Mr Larry Pierce – Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA)

Larry Pierce discussed the key areas that NADA focussed on during its consultations with the New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Queensland AOD sectors. Larry explained the large differences in the service system structure particularly between Queensland and New South Wales and the varying issues faced by each state and territory.

Summary of workforce development consultation outcomes

Carol noted that areas of difference reflected specific state policies such as unit costing in Victoria.

All consultations raised a number of questions about the way forward for the AOD sector in developing and maintaining quality services for people with alcohol and drug problems.

It was highlighted that fundamentally, the major barrier is resourcing and commitment of governments. The challenge is to find ways that governments can demonstrate the value to the community of investing in workforce development activities (there are some good models for this in teaching and policing). The premise of this is that when governments are accountable to the community for particular activities, they are more likely to invest in them.

DAY 2 – ‘On the Spot’

The final afternoon of the conference focused on key issues raised at the conference and addressing future directions of the sector. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions of the VAADA board members present on the panel (Neos Zavrou, Stephen Mihaly, Janet Farrow, Rodger Brough and Trevor King).

Comment/Question from Delegate: What are the future priorities for the Board?

Response from VAADA Board: Janet noted that after listening to The Honourable Gavin Jennings speak on the first day of the conference it seems that local government will be the key unit for planning and budget holding. We need to establish further links with local government and work better together in the future.

Rodger noted that VAADA also needs to focus on the service system review and workforce development. VAADA needs to be more involved in worker conditions, career opportunities and workforce development in general. Government are rightly saying that they will not be driving salary, terms and conditions so it is VAADA's role to drive the issue.

Trevor emphasised that if the sector wants VAADA to advance messages, then the sector must assist VAADA by being prepared to express all issues and concerns to government with confidence. VAADA must focus on its relationship with the department and establish ways of working together in the future.

Stephen stated that there are some areas of policy that the AOD sector once dealt with, but no longer has control over ie tobacco. These industries provide substantial resources to the sector and VAADA should focus on covering some of these issues.

Comment/Question from Delegate: We talked about the AOD field and lobbying and advocacy regarding funding. VAADA is assertive but needs to be more assertive. Can VAADA do this while it is funded solely by DHS? Can VAADA explore other independent funding?

Response from VAADA Board: Janet noted that the Board believes VAADA should conduct more practice based research and look at other peak bodies that are successful such as the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria (CWAV). Neos stated that VAADA has been a strong voice this year which has led to some strained relationships with DHS. VAADA is ultimately responsible to the membership and not the department. The staff do an extraordinary amount of work and it is very difficult to diversify funding. If the sector wants a stronger voice then the VAADA membership needs to be unified and fearless.

Rodger noted that VAADA has made significant advances in expanding its funding throughout the year i.e. the AERF workforce development project. The difficulties being faced is that this is not recurrent funding so VAADA cannot expand. Inevitably the sector will need to support VAADA financially through VAADA appealing to a wider range of people and not just the specialist AOD sector.

The more independent VAADA can be, the broader VAADA's membership and the more effective VAADA can be.

Comment/Question from Delegate: I look at the work that VAADA is trying to do and I compare it with my sector (pharmacy). Pharmacy entered into 5 year federal agreements which meant a commitment for Government to work with us. If Minister Pike is not the right person to deal with, VAADA needs to determine who the right person is and target them. It has worked well for the Pharmacy sector.

Response from VAADA Board: Neos responded emphasising that the Board believes that it is crucial to work with governments and VAADA must create platforms that are based on strong evidence.

Comment/Question from Delegate: I facilitated a workshop at the conference this afternoon. Those who attended (and I) developed the following motion for the VAADA Board: *'We motion that the VAADA Board take note of these desired objectives, based on evidence based practice, and approach the state government for funding to further these objectives.'*

I will be forwarding this motion and ideas on behalf of the workshop delegates for the VAADA Board in the coming days.

Response from VAADA Board: Neos responded noting that the Board appreciates such feedback and it again highlights the point that VAADA requires its members to tell us what agendas they would like to advance.

Comment/Question from Delegate: Comment/Question from Delegate: I believe that VAADA needs to use campaigns to educate the client group. VAADA must approach backbenchers and approach politicians to meet the sectors needs. I would have liked for the conference to deal with the cultural diversity of the community more.

Response from VAADA Board: Neos noted that VAADA needs to lobby government in a very powerful way. Neos highlighted the disability sector that stood firm on the productivity cuts and received an additional \$4 million dollars in funding.

Janet noted that there is no reason that VAADA can not make cultural diversity a focus of next year's conference or a major stream at the conference.

Comment/Question from Delegate: Have there been any alliances with organisations like the Australian Hotels Association who want to be perceived as better community organisations? I suggest that pharmaceutical companies are another area to focus on for external funding. You can not always bite the hand that feeds you, but you need to be fearless.

Response from VAADA Board: Neos noted that the VAADA Board has never had discussions about partnerships to the degree suggested and we definitely need to begin to look at such options.

Comment/Question from Delegate: What is your stand on local government and local drug strategies and what is your future direction in this area? Local government is a valuable ally.

Response from VAADA Board: Neos noted that VAADA is very supportive of local government however, this also needs to be balanced with issues such as the service system review for example. VAADA and local government definitely need to work together and have a strategic partnership.

Trevor highlighted that local government is poised to do some very exciting work in the AOD sector. At the moment at the community level there are some great things happening but local governments are struggling to do good work due to limited funding.

Conference Summary and Close

Neos Zavrou, VAADA President, closed the final session of the 2003 VAADA Conference. Neos noted that the conference has been heartening in reaffirming the directions that VAADA has undertaken and reinforced the importance of projecting clear messages and the power of the media in getting the sector's messages across.

Neos noted that there were very clear messages emanating from the plenary sessions and throughout the 2003 conference. Minister Gavin Jennings emphasised the importance of a sector that can speak with a unified voice. Minister Jennings noted that the AOD sector can not afford to be complacent and discussed a new governance model based on 'place and people' – something that the AOD sector does very well.

Neos summarised Cath Smith's presentation where Cath acknowledged the tight constraints of the sector, highlighted the need for sustainability, the need for partnerships and collaboration, and how the AOD sector can better position its messages in the broader community.

Roger Clifton informed delegates of the need for a consistent message and the realities of getting a message across to the targeted audience.

Neos outlined Paula Beauchamp's presentation highlighting Paula's key points regarding how the AOD sector can utilise the media to advance agendas. It was a wake up call for the sector to remember that media is a business and not a community newsletter. Her message to the sector to talk to the media, and more often was welcomed by the sector.

Neos highlighted that VAADA is a member based organisation responsible to its members noting that, for this reason, VAADA wants to continue to listen to what the sector is saying.

In closing, Neos thanked the VAADA staff, and sponsors: VicHealth, the City of Greater Dandenong, Haigh's Chocolates, Angleton's Stationery and Kazen Japanese Restaurant. Neos also thanked the conference steering committee for their help in organising the conference, the organisations who provided displays, all the presenters, session convenors and all delegates who attended the conference.

APPENDIX 1 - Conference Evaluation Results

Nine overall conference evaluation forms were received at the completion of the conference. This is a very limited response rate of approximately 5.5% of the 165 participants. VAADA will need to review this for next year's conference.

Overall, evaluation forms for the conference were very positive, demonstrating that the conference content and style were appropriate to delegates and their interests. Delegates clearly welcomed the opportunity to express their views and hear from experts on the future direction of the Victorian alcohol and other drug sector.

Terry Laidler's facilitation of the plenary discussion was received very positively with 75% reporting it as extremely or very worthwhile. Of the presenters, Alison Ritter rated very highly (88% very or extremely worthwhile). Paul Beauchamp rated 44% very or extremely worthwhile, Roger Clifton 44.5% very or extremely worthwhile, Cath Smith 55% very or extremely worthwhile and Gavin Jennings 66.5% moderately to extremely worthwhile.

Figure 1: Overall, did you find the conference worthwhile?

	n.	%
Not at all	0	0
Sometimes worthwhile	0	0
Moderately worthwhile	2	22
Very worthwhile	5	56
Extremely worthwhile	2	22
n/a	0	0
Total	9	100

Overall, the majority of participants (56%) rated the conference as very worthwhile with 22% rating it as extremely worthwhile.

Figure 2: Would you like to attend VAADA's 2004 conference?

	n.	%
Yes	9	100
No	0	0
Undecided	0	0
Total	9	100

All respondents indicated that they would like to attend VAADA's 2004 conference.

Figure 3: How do you rate the conference centre?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	n/a
Venue	89%	11%	0	0	0	0
Food	89%	0	11%	0	0	0
Location	89%	11%	0	0	0	0
Facilities	89%	11%	0	0	0	0

The conference venue rated highly in all categories.

Positive feedback

Delegates were asked to nominate the most positive or useful part of the conference. Most of the positive comments related to the content of the conference, in particular the keynote presentations held on the first day of the conference.

Many conference delegates felt that presentations by Paula Beauchamp and Cath Smith were highly beneficial and insightful into the workings of the media and the future directions of the community services sectors.

Delegates also noted on the conference evaluation forms that a key part of the conference was the opportunities to meet and network with peers from the sector. This provided delegates with the opportunity to have access to information and people from other organisations to help acquire an overall view of the workings of other services.

Much positive feedback received centred on the presentation by Alison Ritter on the Service System Review and the facilitated audience discussion that took place following her presentation. Delegates felt that this session provided them with ample time to raise concerns or discuss the review and gain a better understanding for some of the recommendations.

In addition, there was much positive feedback related to the conference venue and facilities provided at the conference. Delegates were impressed with Rydges Richmond, in particular its location and the free parking available for delegates.

Negative Feedback

Much of the negative feedback provided in the evaluations related to time restrictions on both the keynote presentations and workshops. Many delegates noted that they would have liked to continue the discussion in the sessions, some noting that they 'could have continued all day'. Delegates noted that they would like more time to be allocated for robust discussion and debate after each session and indicated that, at times, presenters were too rushed due to these time restrictions.

Some delegates also recommended that Victorian Opposition party representatives present at the conference to provide delegates with their perception of the changes being made by the Victorian Government.

Delegates also felt that presenters' providing an overview of reports was time consuming when many felt that they could have read the reports themselves.

Future VAADA conferences

In relation to further suggestions for VAADA's future conferences the feedback received included a range of issues:

- A focus on the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Tobacco use across the sector
- More intense focus on the media and how the sector can work closely with it
- The inclusion of a map of the rooms in conference packs
- The use of skilled facilitators in each stream to promote discussion and debate
- More time allocation for questions
- Sessions targeted directly to managers as opposed to clinicians, and
- For VAADA to hold the conference at the conference venue again in 2004.

APPENDIX 2 – Summary results of workshops and presentations

Session title	Not at all satisfied (%)	Sometimes satisfied (%)	Moderately satisfied (%)	Very satisfied (%)	Extremely satisfied (%)	n/a (%)
Achieving Results	0	0	20	30	37	13
Emerging Issues and Innovative Solutions	1	1	35	43	20	0
Creative Approaches	0	15	21	28	36	0
Tranquilliser Recovery and New Existence - Workshop	0	0	0	10	55	35
Communicating Drug Issues	0	17	21	26	30	6
Developing Effective Models	8	17	22	23	30	0
Mobilising the Community for Cultural Change - Workshop	0	0	29	29	42	0
Youth Dual Diagnosis – Meeting the Challenge	0	0	33	0	67	0
*AERF Workforce Development Project: State Reports	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100
Drugs and the Community	4	4	37	30	25	0
Understanding the Family Dance - Workshop	0	0	6	32	32	30
Dealing with Dual Diagnosis	0	0	22	51	23	4
Workforce Development	0	8	31	53	8	0
Changing the future of drug policy in Victoria - Workshop	7	0	13	27	20	33
Total Average	2	5	18	28	31	16

* No evaluations received

APPENDIX 3 - Workshop and presentation evaluation

PRESENTER 1

Presentation Stream _____

Presenter/s _____

Satisfaction with the content of the presentation

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
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Satisfaction with the quality of the

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
----------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------

Did you think that the session facilitator was effective?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you find the presentation interesting?

Not at all interesting	Mildly interesting	Moderately Interesting	Very interesting	Extremely interesting
------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	------------------	-----------------------

Was the presentation relevant to your work?

Not at all relevant	Mildly relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant
---------------------	-----------------	----------	---------------	--------------------

Do you have any further comments about this presentation? _____

Please rate the presentation from 1 to 5
1 = poor – 5 = excellent

PRESENTER 2

Presentation Stream _____

Presenter/s _____

Satisfaction with the content of the presentation

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
----------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------

Satisfaction with the quality of the

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
----------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------

Did you think that the session facilitator was effective?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you find the presentation interesting?

Not at all interesting	Mildly interesting	Moderately Interesting	Very interesting	Extremely interesting
------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	------------------	-----------------------

Was the presentation relevant to your work?

Not at all relevant	Mildly relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant
---------------------	-----------------	----------	---------------	--------------------

Do you have any further comments about this presentation? _____

Please rate the presentation from 1 to 5
1 = poor – 5 = excellent

PRESENTER 3

Presentation Stream _____

Presenter/s _____

Satisfaction with the content of the presentation presentation

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
----------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------

Satisfaction with the quality of the

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
----------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------

Did you think that the session facilitator was effective?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you find the presentation interesting?

Not at all interesting	Mildly interesting	Moderately Interesting	Very interesting	Extremely interesting
------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	------------------	-----------------------

Was the presentation relevant to your work?

Not at all relevant	Mildly relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant
---------------------	-----------------	----------	---------------	--------------------

Do you have any further comments about this presentation? _____

Please rate the presentation from 1 to 5
1 = poor – 5 = excellent

PRESENTER 4

Presentation Stream _____

Presenter/s _____

Satisfaction with the content of the presentation presentation

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
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Satisfaction with the quality of the

Not at all Satisfied	Mildly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
----------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------	---------------------

Did you think that the session facilitator was effective?

Yes	No
-----	----

Did you find the presentation interesting?

Not at all interesting	Mildly interesting	Moderately Interesting	Very interesting	Extremely interesting
------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	------------------	-----------------------

Was the presentation relevant to your work?

Not at all relevant	Mildly relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Extremely relevant
---------------------	-----------------	----------	---------------	--------------------

Do you have any further comments about this presentation? _____

Please rate the presentation from 1 to 5
1 = poor – 5 = excellent

APPENDIX 4 - Conference evaluation

Please rate each Keynote presentation from 1 to 5 (1 = poor – 5 = excellent)

The Hon. Gavin Jennings
Minister for Aged Care and
Aboriginal Affairs

Ms Cath Smith
CEO
Victorian Council of Social Service

Mr Roger Clifton
Managing Director
McCann Erickson

Ms Paula Beauchamp
Social Affairs Reporter
Herald Sun Newspaper

Dr Alison Ritter
**Turning Point Alcohol and
Drug Centre**

Associate Prof Terry Laidler
Plenary Facilitator

1. Overall, did you find the conference worthwhile?

Please circle

Not at all Worthwhile	Sometimes Worthwhile	Moderately Worthwhile	Very Worthwhile	Extremely Worthwhile
----------------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------------

2. What did you find to be the most positive or useful part of the conference?

3. What did you find to be the least positive or useful part of the conference?

4. Was the location of the conference suitable?

5. Do you have any suggestions to make about future VAADA conferences?

6. Would you like to attend VAADA's 2004 conference?

Yes No

7. How do you rate the conference centre?

Please tick

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Venue					
Food					
Location					
Facilities					

APPENDIX 5 - Outcomes and motion from the 'Changing the future of drug policy in Victoria' workshop

Workshop Summary/Abstract:

This workshop will explore the options available to workers in the alcohol and other drug sector, and others, to influence, expedite and create changes in Victoria's drug policy. It will look briefly at why change is desirable, and then facilitate a discussion as to how change is best achieved.

Process:

There was a brief discussion on: the impact of various laws on uptake, continuation and cessation of drug use; the current situation with regard to funding; the limitations of some areas of drug policy. The aims of the workshop were first to come up with a range of ideas for policy change, from the micro to the macro, to highlight all the areas where change is thought to be desirable, and second to explore ideas on how people thought these changes could be achieved. To achieve this, the following questions were put to the workshop.

1. What change would you like to see?
2. How can these changes be achieved?

The changes that the group would like to see were termed our objectives. The ways in which change could be achieved were termed strategies.

Objectives

- Clearer understanding in the Community of harm reduction and what it is in relation to harm minimisation.
- Greater emphasis on services that are harm reduction oriented, e.g. NSP in prisons.
- Government funding for Pharmacotherapies: for the provision of the dispensing service not just the drug as currently; and for the daily supply of all psychotropic drugs.
- Promote what funding there is available for pharmacotherapies (i.e. the funding available for clients aged 18 years and under, and for juvenile justice clients) to both dispensing pharmacies and clients/potential recipients.
- National illicit drug pharmacy project: funding and 'political will' to fund co-ordinators (e.g. at least 3 for Victoria). Better promotion of this project to key stakeholders and all those who may benefit (e.g. making sure relevant Pharmacy Associations and Guilds are informed should be a priority as they are in a position to inform Pharmacists/Pharmacies who may benefit).
- More government funding for relevant, effective, evidence-based education, appropriately evaluated and properly funded, so that this can be achieved. Evaluation should be written into all education projects from the start.
- Increased emphasis on peer education.
- Need more workers appropriate for education in schools.

- Needs to be more discussion on what constitutes our community in order to better acknowledge ethnic diversity. This will enable us to utilise this diversity effectively to engage various sections of the community, or various communities, in community development, education and prevention efforts.
- Acknowledgement of cultural diversity at conferences and within the drug and alcohol sector as a whole.
- State strategy on how to tackle issues relating to cultural and linguistic diversity, and diversity generally.
- Act on current knowledge and recommendations. There has been really good quality investigations and reports into what is needed in D&A policy, resulting in some fantastic recommendations that could make significant positive differences to the lives of people who use drugs, however these recommendations have not been implemented for political or ideological reasons, rather than scientific or medical reasons. There is not a lack of evidence for change; there is a lack of action, political will and funding.
- Sustainable strategies and programs should be a goal.
- We need a better definition of treatment. E.g. What does it constitute? Who gets access?
- Evaluation of projects should always be embedded in the original funding.
- There should be a greater focus on Hepatitis C and the needs of NSPs in trying to prevent transmission, e.g. full funding for all NSP consumables such as spoons and water, winged infusion sets, disposable tourniquets etc.
- 'Addictive behaviours' – need to become a core part of health strategy.
- The pros and cons of returning Tobacco/smoking services to alcohol and other drug (AOD) services should be investigated with the view to normalising and de-stigmatising other drugs and AOD services. This would need to be balanced against the possibility of deterring Tobacco users from seeking help because they did not feel comfortable accessing AOD services.
- Secondary Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP) should be funded.
- Medically Supervised Injecting Facilities should be trialled in Victoria as soon as possible, as recommended in various reports and investigations into illicit drug use in Victoria (e.g. Drug Policy Expert Committee 2000).
- A Heroin trial should be conducted in Victoria. It should take into consideration lessons learnt from such programs overseas in its design as well as conducting appropriate consultation with affected stakeholders in order to maximise the chance of successful outcomes for both the drug users involved in the trial and the wider community.
- A 'return on investment' study for AOD services is needed, in order for the value of these services to be better acknowledged and understood.

Strategies for achieving these objectives:

- Look at the successes of previous campaigns and learn from them. E.g. NSPs and HIV/AIDS.
 - The National HIV/AIDS strategy is a good example of a successful campaign. Lessons that can be learnt from the strategies used in campaigning for HIV/AIDS funding and services should be drawn from this and applied wherever possible
 - How did they achieve successful outcomes?
- Develop guidelines for dealing with the media (e.g. look at AFAO media guidelines book, and the Hepatitis C Council guidelines for media also.) Dealing more effectively with the media is the key to better representations of drug users and AOD services within the media.
- Informed media support. How?
 - Develop relationships with sympathetic journalists
 - Develop effective press releases
- Develop a strategic media approach to deal with the media and then lobby government (e.g. Royal Children's Hospital).
- Respond consistently to negative stories.
- In CBD, use free papers to get across your side of the story e.g. MX etc.
- In Rural Communities, develop and maintain good relationships with local journalists (e.g. include the journalist in local drug action plan group).
- Use information technology (IT), web pages, email.
- Postcards, IT, short films are good ways to reach young people.
- Use peak bodies for centralised lobbying across industry e.g. VAADA.
- Local areas form alliances to lobby around local and other issues of importance to the local community.
- Involve both the community/communities and families in proposed changes.
- Need a two-tiered approach to lobbying e.g. State and Federal Governments.
- Community Capacity building so they can decide own needs and be skilled up to lobby for and/or address them.

THREE MAJOR THEMES:

Evidence based policy & practice:

- All initiatives, current and new, should be evidence-based
- Current policy should be put under the same evidence tests as any new proposals would be, and changed if not proven to be effective.

Increased funding:

- More funding is needed in a variety of areas and programs across the sector.

Evaluation built in:

- Evaluation needs to be built in to all programs at the time of funding so that evidence-based practice can be continually enforced through programs successes/results being tested.
- Allows continual improvement in successful programs and saves wastage on less successful ones.

TWO BIGGEST ISSUES:

Hepatitis C & Cultural Diversity

- Big priorities for the whole group
- Want to see better outcomes in both areas
- Want to see these on the agenda more
- Strategies need to be developed for inclusion of cultural diversity in:
 - all aspects of VAADA Conference programs and;
 - all aspects of AOD policy and practice.
- Hepatitis C needs to be addresses more effectively through:
 - More funding
 - Better and more appropriate resources
 - More education (appropriate, effective, peer based)

MOTION:

The workshop came up with the following motion, for which there was consensus:

That the VAADA Board take note of these desired objectives, based on evidence based practice, and approach the state government for funding to further these objectives.

The above motion was presented to the VAADA Board and conference attendees