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## PRESS RELEASE

[Starts]

### **Rejection of Cannabis Bill perpetuates poorly utilised law and order resourcing**

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) is disappointed that the Victorian Government has rejected recommendations relating to the decriminalisation of cannabis following the Inquiry into the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Regulation of Personal Adult Use of Cannabis) Bill 2023.

Cannabis law reform enjoys popular support, with over eight in 10 Victorians supporting change, with broad support from health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) experts.

The backdrop to the rejection of this bill is the continuing focus on law and order. Victorians should be concerned that valuable police resources will continue to be directed towards policing the personal consumption of cannabis.

Chris Christoforou, CEO of VAADA, says, 'decriminalisation is a modest and sensible step to reducing unnecessary interaction between the community and scarce and expensive police resources.'

'The 1 in 10 Victorians who have consumed cannabis in the last year should not face the risk of being charged and dragged into the overburdened justice system just because of laws that are no longer in line with community expectations.'

'We would encourage the Victorian Government to reconsider the report findings and set a timeline for progressing this sensible reform.'

**For more information or to arrange an interview, contact David Taylor on 0413 914 206.**

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Media stories on alcohol and other drugs may be traumatic for some people. Support is available, and we ask that media agencies consider publishing the details below:

*If this story has raised issues about your own or others' drug and alcohol use, please contact the national hotline for confidential counselling and referral on 1800 250 015*

VAADA is the peak body that represents over 80 Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. Daily, these services are dealing with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.

