



Lived and Living Experience AOD Workforce Snapshot

Victorian Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce Survey Report 2025

In 2025 the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) conducted its second biennial Victorian Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Workforce Survey. This document presents the 2025 snapshot focused on **lived and living experience** within the AOD workforce. All findings relate to the survey sample of 486 responses and should be interpreted within this context.

The Victorian AOD workforce includes a high proportion of people with lived and living experience, representing a significant source of practice knowledge and sector expertise.

Workforce Profile

In 2025, 93.4% of respondents identified having a lived and living experience (LLE) of AOD, either through personal experience or through a family member or partner. This represents **an increase of 8.4% since 2023**.

- 50% reported personal experience of AOD use
 - ▶ 38% lived experience
 - ▶ 12% living experience
- 44% reported a family member or partner (past or present) with AOD use

Among respondents with LLE, 6% were employed in designated peer worker roles.

Notably 97% of respondents in leadership roles reported having lived or living experience (personal or family member).

Workers with personal experience of AOD use were more likely to:

- Identify as LGBTQA+
- Report living with a long term health condition, impairment or disability affecting daily activities
- Be employed in fixed term or contract roles

Retention

Workers with personal lived experience were more likely to report lower intention to leave the AOD sector. They were also more likely to identify the core values and philosophy of the AOD sector, and working directly with clients, as key reasons for remaining in the workforce.

Capability

Workers with LLE were more likely to report:

- Strong knowledge of the effects of commonly used drugs and their interactions
- Knowledge of pharmacotherapy used in the treatment of AOD dependence and withdrawal
- Knowledge and application of harm reduction strategies
- Consulting with other workers with LLE in their practice

Wellbeing

Workers with personal experience were more likely to report that the work they do is “very important” to them. They were also more likely to report their mental health as ‘fair’.

Recommendation 3:

Expand and support designated Lived and Living Experience roles

Despite the high proportion of workers with lived and living experience across the AOD workforce, only a small percentage are employed in designated peer roles. Expanding and strengthening formal LLE positions within the Victorian AOD service system would recognise and formalise this depth of expertise while also reducing the cultural load for existing designated roles.

Read the seven recommendations and access the full report [here](#)