

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Royal Commission highlights much needed reform

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) welcomed the release of the Royal Commission into Family Violence report yesterday, stating “the release of the report is an historic moment for Victoria as family violence is brought into focus.”

“The report is staggering in its scale and detail and provides a long-term and inclusive framework for responding to family violence and making meaningful change,” said Mr Biondo, VAADA Executive Officer.

The report includes 227 recommendations detailing a raft of changes and priorities for reform to reduce the risk of family violence and improve responses for those experiencing violence.

The report clearly highlights the need to enhance capacity of specialist family violence services, as well as interconnected service systems, including mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, to respond to family violence.

“VAADA broadly welcomes the findings and recommendations contained within the report. As the peak body for alcohol and other drug services, we are pleased the Royal Commission recognised the complex interplay of AOD misuse and family violence and the important role of AOD services in identifying and responding to family violence,” said Sam Biondo.

The Commission’s recommendations related to AOD services include a call for the implementation of whole-of-workforce training for AOD services to guide identification, risk assessment and risk management practice. “But any additional demands on the AOD workforce must recognise the complex and specialist work our services already do to reduce AOD related-harm and the capacity issues that exist within the AOD system”, Mr Biondo warned.

VAADA’s submission to the Royal Commission called for the resourcing of a cross-sector capacity building and we welcome recommendations related to building cross-sector workforce capacity across AOD, men’s behaviour change, mental health and forensic services and the adoption of practice models that build coordinated interventions. Also welcome are recommendations related to enhanced collaboration between mental health, AOD and family violence services, including resourcing to deliver shared casework models.

Mr Biondo adds, ‘however, enhanced collaboration should not come at the cost of reduced capacity within the AOD sector to address overall AOD related harms, with the AOD sector already stretched to capacity’.

VAADA will be running a series of cross-sector forums in April and May to bring together key stakeholders from AOD services, Family Violence and Men’s Behaviour Change Programs to discuss how services and sectors can work together to improve outcomes for our shared clients. This will be the beginning of important work into the future.

Mr Biondo concludes, ‘we look forward to working with government and associated stakeholders in progressing the many vital recommendations contained therein.’

*VAADA is the peak body that represents Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. On a daily basis these services are dealing with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.*

**For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Sam Biondo on 0414 974 121 for comment or if unavailable, David Taylor on 0413 914 206.**