

MEDIA RELEASE
Sunday, 6 DECEMBER, 2015

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Ice taskforce report: move in the right direction



The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) welcomes the release of *the Final Report of the National Ice Taskforce* which has been submitted to the Australian Government.

The report contains a wide range of largely encouraging recommendations, which, if implemented, will demonstrate a strong commitment from government to address the harms associated with methamphetamine and other substances.

Mr Sam Biondo, Executive Officer of VAADA, says, 'we are supportive of the general direction of this report and welcome the various announcements from the Australian Government made today which will greatly assist in enhancing the overall accessibility to the alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment sector. Of course, regarding the report in its entirety, we await further details from government with regard to the specifics of their response.'

The report notes the adverse impact associated with the disruption of funding to the consumers of treatment services through impeding consistent service delivery.

Mr Biondo continues, 'recent processes in the provision of federal funding for AOD related activity have been problematic. This report importantly recognises this issue and urges the government to administer a more stable process of funding.'

Importantly, the report acknowledges the challenges in rural and regional AOD treatment provision and provides for a means of enhancing service access and delivery in these areas. The report also recommends the yet to be completely established Primary Healthcare Networks (PHN) will be integral in the distribution of these funds.

Mr Biondo says, 'VAADA awaits further details on the process for distributing these funds and the necessary processes for PHN's to engage with the AOD sector.'

Specifically, we welcome the need for public credible messaging on media campaigns focussed on methamphetamine, and note that in a number of jurisdictions, some of the messaging employed has been problematic. The emphasis on evidence is key to the integrity of the report and aligned with this, the notion that supply reduction measures cannot solely address these issues.

Mr Biondo concludes, 'reflecting on the evidence is a paramount consideration which ensures the best response to this issue.'

VAADA is the peak body that represents over 80 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.