

MEDIA RELEASE
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Government announcement on Recommissioning of the Victorian AOD System



VAADA acknowledges the announcement by the Victorian Government late on Friday 6 June on the outcomes of the Victorian alcohol and other drug (AOD) tender process.

VAADA congratulates those agencies who have been successful, and acknowledges the efforts of those agencies and their dedicated staff who have not fared well.

These reforms provide the opportunity to address the range of system issues which have long been known to the sector. However ongoing support will be necessary to address service gaps and respond to emerging needs and complexities.

VAADA Executive Officer Mr Sam Biondo says, "The trick will be to ensure that the transformation of the Victorian AOD system actually improves access and integration of services for adults seeking treatment, and that all the challenges of transforming the existing system is worth it."

Further Mr Biondo adds, "this process has elicited the development of consortia and partnerships within a lead agency model, and although this has been undertaken to streamline the provision of services, many service users will have to begin engaging with a new service provider, with numerous AOD treatment staff required to find new employment."

The government will be providing some funding to support agencies and service users through this process, as well as various employment and transition support platforms. However the need for this type of assistance is longer term to ensure that agencies can continue to provide optimal services while working through future stages of reform.

Whilst acknowledging that the start date was delayed by a month to September 1, the time frames for commencing the new arrangements are still very tight. Going forward, there are a number of challenges which need to be addressed:

- The difficulties for rural and regional services in re-deploying some staff and re-establishing services under the new arrangements
- Responding to emerging social problems such as pharmaceuticals and methamphetamines whilst in the process of reform and ensuring that agencies are provided with the means to pilot innovative treatment programs
- The capacity of both successful and unsuccessful agencies to manage expectations of service users
- The impact of staff departures and re-deployment and its impact for a seamless transition to new treatment types, with potentially new providers.

It is vital that the transformation and transition of these essential programs into a new and effective delivery system succeeds in the period ahead. The espoused objectives for the transformation will become the test against which success or otherwise will be compared.

VAADA is the peak body that represents over 100 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.