

MEDIA RELEASE

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New system, new era

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) acknowledges the commencement on 1 September of the new Victorian Adult non residential alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment sector. It follows on the heels of the reforms undertaken in the Community based mental health system which in combination has resulted in a significant transformation of both sectors.

As the peak for the Victorian AOD sector, we pay our respect to the many agencies and staff who may have been impacted through the recent recommissioning process.

Sam Biondo, EO of VAADA, says, 'transformation of any sector is difficult; and the loss of accumulated knowledge and skills will take time to be re-established.'

The new system establishes a range of measures seeking to address a number of long standing issues which have plagued the sector for many years. There is a catchment-based intake and assessment system allowing for referral into the service system. At the service delivery end, a range of significant changes will see the creation of new roles and processes aimed at creating better throughput of clients with complex issues.

Mr Biondo says, 'when the sector settles into these new arrangements, there is the potential for enhancing more appropriate access to the correct type of service provision for service seekers, thus creating a reduced churn across the system.'

For those clients with less complex issues, measures are being developed to enhance online and telephone support.

Obviously in a reform of such magnitude, involving over 1300 staff and a statewide system of over 80 services, there will be a period of time required for the dust to settle. It will be a challenging period, though there needs to be a focus on making the system work to ensure that the needs of consumers are met.

It was initially intended that the reforms will move to a second stage focusing on the residential rehabilitation services and youth focused services and we await determination from government on when this may occur. In combination, these reforms will be the most significant impacting any Australian state or territory AOD service system and certainly in Victoria, the most significant reform undertaken since the 1990s.

We look forward, as the Victorian peak, in working with the successful agencies seeking to establish their processes and systems in the years ahead. We also look forward to working with government in advocating for continued and necessary enhancement of this vital sector to meet community demand.

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.

