

VAADA election statement – summary

May 2022

More Victorians in crisis are waiting for longer to access alcohol and other drug treatment

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports that closed treatment episodes in Victoria have **increased by 87.5% between 2014/15 to 2019/20**
 VAADA’s waitlist surveys have revealed a reported **71.4% increase in the number of people waiting for treatment in the 15 months from September 2020 to December 2021**
 Only between 26.8% and 56.4% of those in need of treatment access it. This translates to a **demand gap of 43.6 to 73.2%, or 180,000 to 553,000 people nationally.**
 Over the past decade, every day **107 Victorians have required an ambulance and 123 Victorians attended a hospital for alcohol and other drug issues**

Number of people waiting for AOD treatment each day during the survey-reporting period

Survey reporting period	DAILY wait list	% change from September 2020	71.4% increase in people waiting for treatment during the pandemic
September 2020	2385	0	
December 2020	2427	1.7% ↑	
July 2021	3599	50.9% ↑	
December 2021	4088	71.4% ↑	

Treatment works, reducing ambulance and hospital attendances and saves the tax payer money

AOD treatment **provides an \$8 return for every \$1** of investment
 AOD treatment **reduces the frequency of ambulance attendances and hospitalisation** for the following year
 Residential rehabilitation is more cost effective than prisons, saving over \$200,000 per person
 AOD reduces the duration of heroin dependence by up to 45%
 The Drug Court achieves significant reductions in recidivism and save the government \$1.2M per year in prison expenditure

Australians expect quick access to treatment

- VAADA commissioned a survey of 526 people of which 59.3% were of the view that wait times for treatment should not surpass a week

‘How long should someone experiencing harmful AOD dependency wait for treatment?’

	Frequency	Percent
1 day	123	23.4
Not more than 1 week	189	35.9
Not more than 1 month	62	11.8
Not more than 3 months	18	3.4
3 months plus	23	4.4
Don't know	111	21.1
Total	526	100.0

6 in 10
Australians
believe AOD
treatment wait
times should
not surpass 1
week

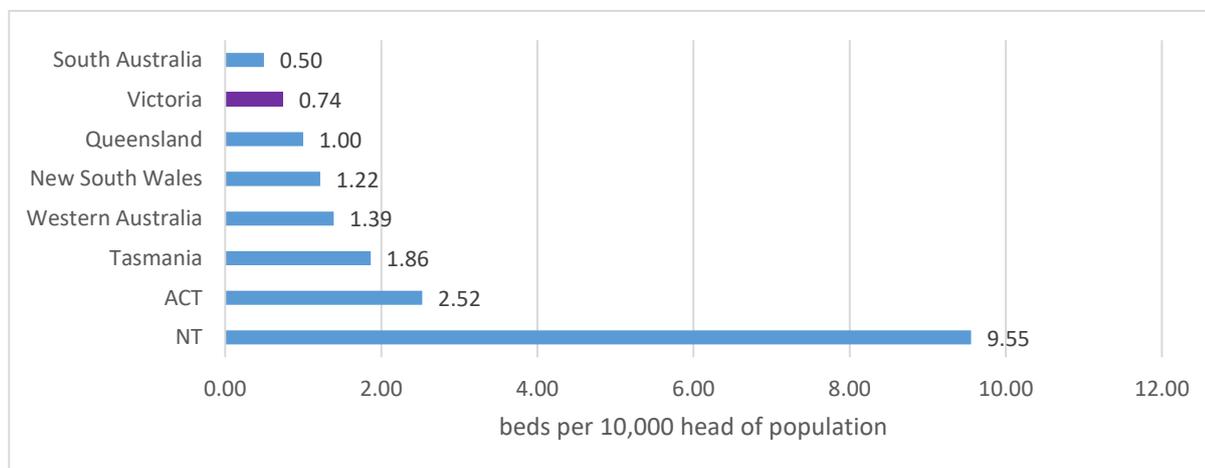
Victoria needs another 250 full time alcohol and other drug clinicians to meet current demand

The alcohol and other drug treatment sector has reported that state-wide, there is a need for an **additional 242.8 EFT of capacity to meet current demand**
 VAADA’s sector priorities survey revealed that **56.82% of AOD agencies have reported a reduction in capacity to meet demand during 2020/21**
 Similar to other disasters evidence indicates that **the pandemic will result in increased substance use and new, more harmful patterns of consumption** (such as consuming more alcohol, more frequently, in isolation, in the home).
 In Victoria, more than **nine in 10 alcohol and other drug treatment agencies have reported an increase in demand relating to mental health**
 70% of alcohol and other drug treatment agencies have reported an **increase in the prevalence and severity of alcohol related presentations**

Victoria needs more residential rehabilitation and residential detoxification beds

Victoria has the second lowest rate per head of population of residential rehabilitation beds
 Victoria has almost 15 times more prison beds than residential rehabilitation beds

Residential rehabilitation beds per 10,000 head of population (2021)



Prison bed and residential rehabilitation bed per 10,000 head of population (2021)

	number of beds	bed rate per 10,000 head of population
residential rehabilitation	492	0.74
prison	7257	10.92

Victorians deserve an alcohol and other drug treatment workforce that is highly skilled, capable of supporting people with a range of issues and stable. That means that remuneration and conditions must be competitive with similar industries

Recommendations

Recommendation 1	The 100EFT of AOD workers is extended
Recommendation 2	To ensure that all Victorians can access AOD treatment when they need it, increase the capacity of the sector by 250 EFT over the next two years
Recommendation 3	The capacity of Victoria’s residential rehabilitation system is increased to provide for a minimum of 1 bed per 10,000 head of population and ensure that there are accessible residential rehabilitation and detoxification beds in all regions of Victoria.
Recommendation 4	Invest \$1.5M to extend the activity of VAADA’s Elevate! program to better coordinate training, streamline student placements and enhance the attraction of staff to Victoria’s AOD sector. This entity would progress options for micro-credentialing, course development and opportunities to upskill new and existing AOD workers. A central co-ordinating team of at least two additional staff would support the Elevate! program.
Recommendation 5	Invest \$2M to develop a broad ‘industry plan’ for the AOD sector which undertakes an assessment of the core elements of the Victorian AOD system, current and future demand as well as forecasting future workforce and infrastructure need and resource the progression of that plan.
Recommendation 6	Improve industrial and wellbeing conditions of the AOD workforce in alignment to similar changes in the mental health workforce to improve workforce attraction and retention.