

MEDIA RELEASE

6/10/2022

[starts]

Auditor-General identifies necessary changes to drug treatment data system

The damning findings from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) report into *Victoria's Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Data* will surprise no one in the alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment sector.

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) welcomes this report which illustrates broad failings into the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Collection (VADC) Government's data system for AOD treatment services.

The report found that:

- That the VADC is not achieving its intended benefits
- There was insufficient consultation with the sector in developing the VADC
- The data specifications were too complex for service providers
- The VADC data did not always reflect treatment providers activities
- Treatment providers have incurred a substantial cost in maintaining the VADC
- The Department of Health is making efforts to improve the system

Mr Sam Biondo, executive Officer of VAADA, says, 'AOD treatment agencies have for a number of years been laboring under a deficient data system. It has been riddled with errors, is overly complex, does not provide for service planning and comes at a significant human and financial cost to treatment providers. This results in scarce funding being shifted to adhere to the data specifications rather than addressing the surging waitlists for AOD treatment which have grown throughout the pandemic'.

'The community would expect that treatment agencies be able to allocate all resources to supporting community members, rather than such flawed compliance.'

VAGO notes that the Department of Health is making some inroads to improve the system.

'VAADA looks forward to continuing to work with the Department to ensure that the VADC is fit for purpose. We also look forward to further improvements leading to a better data system.'

[ends]

Media stories on alcohol and other drugs may be traumatic for some people. Support is available and we ask that media agencies consider publishing the details below:

If this story has raised issues about your own or others drug and alcohol use, please contact the national hotline for confidential counselling and referral on 1800 250 015

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, EO of VAADA, on 0414 974 121 for comment or if unavailable, David Taylor on 0413 914 206.