

## PRESS RELEASE

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[starts]

### Greens announcement for additional AOD capacity and drug law reform most welcome

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) welcomes the AOD policies announced by the Greens on 10 October.

These policies will lead to:

- The initial decriminalisation of all drugs (1 January 2023);
- The regulation of cannabis (1 January 2024);
- An additional 200 residential rehabilitation and detoxification beds

Mr Sam Biondo, EO of VAADA, says, 'while we await specific details, these policies will create a shift with people who are using drugs kept out of the justice system and provided with support if required.'

'Drug law reform, such as that proposed by the Greens and others are becoming more mainstream, with a greater number of states and international jurisdictions adopting pragmatic policies which minimise unnecessary interaction with an expensive and harmful justice system.'

'VAADA welcomes the notion of hypothecation of a portion of the profits achieved through the regulation of cannabis to fund additional AOD treatment, prevention and harm reduction capacity. We would be keen to contribute in discussions on this should it progress.'

'There is an increasing awareness among elected officials of the scarcity of AOD treatment services amidst surging waitlists, with the Greens the second party to announce an uplift in residential capacity this year. With surging waitlists for treatment, which increased by 71% over the pandemic, an increasing number of Victorians are locked out of the sector'.

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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.**