



Years in the sector **snapshot**

In 2023 VAADA received nearly 400 responses in its biennial Victorian Alcohol and other Drugs Workforce Development survey. A detailed report was produced exploring the high-level findings and offering a handful of recommendations on workforce capacity, capability and wellbeing. This is document forms part of a series of snapshots which focus exclusively on a segment of that data.

Demographics

391 survey participants answered, “**how many years have you been working in the AOD sector,**” selecting: less than 1 year, 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, 10-19 years, or 20+ total years.

- A new variable was created exploring participants who have **worked in the sector for less or more than 3 years**. **134 survey participants** were identified as working in the sector for **less than 3 years**, comprising just over a third of the total workforce.
- Nearly **83%** of those **working less than 3 years** chose “**direct client services**” as their main work function.
- Those that have worked in the sector for **more than 3 years** were more likely to be **employed full-time** (58% of the cohort, compared to 45% of those who worked less than 3 years).
- There were differences in the **qualifications** of the two groups. Specifically, **73% of employees with more than 3 years of experience** have completed **at least an undergraduate degree**, whereas this figure is 58% for those with less experience.

Capacity

- Those with **more than 3 years of experience** reported that only **38% never work extra hours or overtime**. In contrast, among those with less than three years of experience, 53% reported the same. This suggests that a **higher percentage of less experienced workers are able to avoid working beyond their regular hours**.
- **Less experienced workers** are more likely to want training in, “**specific interventions or therapies,**” and **basic AOD training**. **More experienced workers** are more likely to want “**advanced clinical skills,**” “**clinical supervision,**” and “**leadership and management.**”
- **Less experienced workers** were more likely to **agree** that there were **sufficient opportunities for professional development**, and that they were **supported to participate** in professional development opportunities. **More experienced workers** were more likely to report **challenges/barriers accessing professional development activities**, and that there were **issues with recruiting and retaining staff**.
- **More experienced workers** are more likely to think about **leaving the AOD sector**, and more likely to say that AOD professionals leave the sector due to **low salary/employment benefits**.
- **Less experienced workers** are more likely to say that “**career opportunities**” keep them working in the AOD sector.

Capability

- As might be expected, **more experienced workers scored higher on most capability measures**. However, no significant differences were found on measures relating to cultural capability (e.g. working effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, CALD, LGBTQIA+ or clients with disabilities).

Wellbeing

- **Less experienced workers** scored **lower** on measures of **physical and mental health**, when compared to more experienced workers
- **Less experienced workers** were **more likely to be satisfied with their job**, and had **manageable workloads**. 79% of those with less than 3 years of experience agreed or strongly agreed that their “**workload is manageable,**” compared with 61% of those with more experience.