

14 November 2025

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Building a sustainable, accessible and person-centred AOD System for Victoria

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) is pleased to release its 2026 State Budget Submission.

The submission identifies 10 key priorities to address both enduring and emerging issues that impede access to alcohol and other drug (AOD) support and challenge the delivery of effective person-centred care.

The importance of releasing Victoria's 10 year AOD Strategy, supported by a funded implementation plan, cannot be understated.

The release of VAADA's 2025 Sector Demand Survey results, which found that 4550 people were waiting for treatment on any given day in September, including 1858 awaiting admission through the intake and assessment system and 415 young people waiting to access support, is unacceptable.

VAADA CEO, Chris Christofrou, says, 'The urgency to address long-standing challenges is becoming more pressing. The 584 Victorians who fatally overdosed in 2024, the thousands in opioid pharmacotherapy relying on only a handful of GPs and the threat of potent synthetic opioids adulterating illicit drug supplies mean that the Victorian Government cannot be complacent.

'Our sector is placing a lot of hope in Victoria's 10 year AOD Strategy, to create a comprehensive approach to the way we address the harms of alcohol and other drug use in the Victorian community. This submission provides important guidance on what needs to be prioritised for action through the upcoming State Budget.

The submission calls for the reform of the AOD treatment funding model, which has long failed to adequately resource agencies to meet client need. It also calls for the continuation of Victoria's key harm reduction programs, including the Public Intoxication Response and the Victorian Pill Testing Service and investment to support the AOD sector to prepare to support the goals of Treaty.

'AOD support for Victorians has never been more important. VAADA's budget submission provides an essential set of actions to maximise positive health outcomes for all Victorians.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact David Taylor on 0413 914 206.

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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 or others' drug and alcohol use, 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. Daily, these services deal with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption