

A photograph of the Melbourne skyline at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm golden glow over the city. Several tall skyscrapers are visible, including the Eureka Tower. In the foreground, a stone bridge with ornate railings spans a river. People are walking on the bridge, and some cars are blurred in motion. The overall scene is a vibrant and scenic representation of Melbourne.

Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association Annual Report 2025

Acknowledgements

VAADA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our work is undertaken. Our office stands on the country of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present and acknowledge their continuing and ongoing connection to land, waters and sky.

VAADA also acknowledges and celebrates people and their families and supporters who have a lived and living experience of alcohol, medication and other drug use. We value your courage, wisdom and experience, and recognise the important contribution that you make to the AOD sector in Victoria.



Our Vision

A Victorian community in which alcohol and other drug (AOD)-related harms are reduced and well-being is promoted to support people to reach their potential.

Our Purpose

VAADA leads AOD policy, workforce development, and public discussion across membership, related sectors and the community to prevent and reduce AOD harms in Victoria.

Our Values

Collaborative
Professional
Rights-based
Progressive
Evidence-informed

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Membership

VAADA's Organisational membership comprises AOD-specific organisations, hospitals, community health, primary health, general youth services, forensic, legal and more.



Membership



MELI



Odyssey Victoria



PRIMARY CARE CONNECT



sharc

**ST MARY'S
HOUSE OF
WELCOME**



**The Loop
Australia**



**thorneharbour
health***

Turning Point
TREATMENT · RESEARCH · EDUCATION

Uniting



Western Health



WINDANA
Life. Changing.

your 
COMMUNITY HEALTH



**youth
projects**

VAADA Board Members



Tamsin Short

President, Board Member since 2018

Dr Tamsin Short is Executive Lead, Mental Health and Wellbeing at Access Health and Community. A clinical and forensic psychologist with over 15 years' experience, she has led innovative AOD service development, including Victoria's first specialist program for medication misuse, and champions strong leadership and advocacy across the sector.



Clare Davies

Vice President, Board Member since 2022

Clare is the CEO of the Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC), a peer-led organisation supporting those affected by alcohol, drugs, and gambling. With over 15 years in non-profit leadership, she joined SHARC in 2022. Clare holds qualifications in social work, psychology, and AOD. She is a Harvard Fellow.



Dom Ennis

Treasurer, Board Member since 2021

Dom Ennis is the Victorian State Director at Key Assets Australia, with over 25 years in the AOD field. He has managed various community-based, residential and online programs. Passionate about the Youth AOD sector, he advocates for collaborative responses to meet the needs of young people and their families.



Jose Taylor

Board Member since 2021

Jose Taylor is Director of Youth, Housing and South West Services at Meli in Geelong. With over 30 years' experience in youth and family services, she champions place-based, person-centred care in rural and regional communities, focusing on early intervention, reducing stigma, and strengthening families through collaborative, holistic approaches to AOD support.

VAADA Board Members



Dale Hardy

Board Member since 2022

Dale Hardy is Executive Leader, Community Partnerships & Integration at Bendigo Community Health Services, leading work in equity, inclusion, and regional service development. With 30 years' experience across AOD, housing, youth justice and mental health, he transitioned from London finance to community leadership, driven by a passion for social justice.



Cath Peake

Board Member since 2023

Dr Cath Peake is Manager, Mental Health/AOD Integration at Barwon Health. She previously led its Drug and Alcohol Service for 13 years and has managed specialist mental health programs. With a Doctorate in Forensic Psychology, Cath champions harm reduction, evidence-informed practice, workforce wellbeing, and reducing stigma and discrimination.



Richie Goonan

Board Member since 2023

Richie Goonan is the Executive Manager of Community Health at Youth Projects, leading AOD Youth Outreach and Specialist Primary Health services for the homeless. With 30 years in the community sector, he focuses on policy and service delivery in various areas, advocating for lived experience and driving positive change against inequality.



Stefan Gruenert

Board Member since 2023

Dr Stefan Gruenert is a psychologist and CEO of Odyssey Victoria with over 25 years' experience in clinical, research and leadership roles. Stefan is a VCOSS Board member, and has shaped AOD policy nationally and internationally, championing family-inclusive practice, lived experience, and a strong, independent AOD sector across Victoria.

VAADA Board Members



Adrian Webber

Board Member since 2023

Adrian Webber is General Manager, AOD, Mental Health, Carer Services, Tasmania at Uniting Vic.Tas. With leadership experience across NSW and Victoria, he advocates for evidence-based, human rights-focused drug law reform. Adrian holds graduate qualifications in psychology, counselling, commerce and management, and has extensive experience across youth and adult AOD services.



Craig Holloway

Board Member since 2024

Craig Holloway is a proud Yorta Yorta man with 30 years' experience in Victoria's AOD sector. A Senior Project Manager at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, and co-chair of VAADA's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Craig champions Aboriginal voices, inclusion and cultural safety across the AOD sector.



Kent Burgess

Board Member since 2024

Kent Burgess is a values-driven health leader with experience across AOD, mental health, primary care and LGBTIQ+ health. A former CEO of Your Community Health and Windana, he is currently Interim CEO at Thorne Harbour Health and holds a Master of Public Health and GAICD. Kent advocates for equitable, evidence-informed, person-centred and rights-based approaches to healthcare.



Dan Lubman AM

Board Member since 2024

Professor Dan Lubman AM is a Psychiatrist and Addiction Medicine Specialist, Executive Clinical Director of Turning Point, and Director of the Monash Addiction Research Centre. With over 500 publications, he has an advanced understanding of addiction and mental health led innovative interventions and has shaped national policy and public awareness in Australia.

2024 Life Member

Sam Biondo



The VAADA Life Member Award is awarded annually to a person who has provided outstanding service to support the aims and objectives of VAADA or who has more broadly contributed in a significant manner to the fields of the prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, harm reduction or research related to alcohol or drug dependence.

Sam Biondo was awarded the inaugural VAADA Life Membership in 2024. He served as VAADA's Executive Officer for 17 years, before retiring in 2023. Over this time Sam was a fearless advocate for the AOD sector and for people who use its services. With a background in social work and criminology, he advanced equity, transparency and collaboration across the sector, drawing on earlier experiences at Fitzroy Legal Service and a lifelong commitment to social justice in Victoria.

VAADA Staff

Chris Christoforou
Chief Executive Officer

Chris McDonnell
Corporate Services Manager

Scott Drummond
Head of Policy and Practice

Gillian Clark
AOD Strategy and Reform
Manager

Dave Taylor
Advocacy and Media Manager

Caitlyn Wilson
Communications and
Membership Manager

Jane Moreton
Practice Lead, Sector
Development

Dr James Petty
Senior Policy and Research
Officer

Meg Bagnall
Lead, AOD & Family Violence

Trudi Jordan
Communications and Events
Coordinator

Anushka Ananth
Workforce Development
Coordinator

Esther Toomey
Project Coordinator

Hannah Fordham
Business Support Coordinator

Sarah O'Donnell
Executive Assistant

We sincerely thank our former staff member Libby O'Connell for their dedication and contribution. Your hard work has helped shape VAADA, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

CEO Report

I'm delighted to share with you VAADA's 2025 Annual Report. The report captures the breadth of work led by the VAADA team in the last financial year. At VAADA, we are a small but mighty team, and it's a genuine privilege to work with colleagues who are so committed to having a positive impact in reducing alcohol and other drug harms in the Victorian community. Our staff are the cornerstone of our results, and I thank them all for their hard work, commitment and contribution over the last 12 months.

VAADA moved office for the first time in 17 years in October 2024. Our new office in Abbotsford has given us the ability to host events, meetings, training programs, roundtables and consultations. It has been a game changer for us. It was a real honour to have Dr Jill Gallagher AO open our new office and for Uncle Colin Hunter Jr to conduct a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country on the balcony overlooking Yarra Falls. The boomerang Aunty Jill gave VAADA as a housewarming present, reminds me why we need to keep showing up each day to do this work.

The commencement of the Victorian Pill Testing Service in December was a big win for evidence-based drug harm reduction. Alongside the enhanced early warning system it now supports, we are better prepared to respond to potent substances. VAADA's collaboration with Harm Reduction Victoria in calling for emergency preparedness in response to Potent Synthetic Opioids was nation-leading work, while the establishment of the Potent Synthetic Opioids Group by experts from health, emergency services and justice has been one of the best examples of how people in the field of alcohol and other drugs work together to keep the community safe.

The appointment of Dr Paul McCartney as our first Chief Addiction Medicine Adviser was an important step forward in enhancing clinical governance for AOD in Victoria. We hope that the position continues to be strengthened for the future. The role will undoubtedly be critical as part of the rollout of the Victorian Government's 10-year AOD Strategy. Implementation of this work cannot commence soon enough, as treatment gaps and extensive wait times, unacceptable rates of fatal overdose, and challenges to service sustainability continue to undermine how we deal with AOD issues in Victoria.

The 2025 VAADA Conference saw 1100 people attend over two days in February at the Grand Hyatt Melbourne. The Conference showcased not only how strong the Victorian AOD sector is, but also the strength of VAADA's connection with the AOD sector. It's not something we take for granted. I thank all delegates, presenters and volunteers for making the time to support the VAADA Conference. I'd also like to thank all the organisations that supported the Conference as sponsors and exhibitors. Such an event would not be successful without the generous support of so many.

Finally, I thank VAADA members for the work that you continue to do every day in keeping our communities safe, well and connected. I'm proud to have the opportunity to be CEO of an AOD peak body that is focused on honouring your work and the communities you serve. Part of the privilege of being a member elected peak is having a fabulous Board made up of people who are passionate about AOD. The VAADA Board gives so much of its time and wisdom to support the strategic work of VAADA. It may not be visible on the surface, but it is in the substance of all that we do.

Chris Christoforou

Chief Executive Officer



President's Report

As President of the Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association (VAADA), it gives me great pleasure to present you VAADA's 2025 Annual Report. On behalf of all Board Directors and our Members, I would like to thank the VAADA team for their outstanding work over the last twelve months in continuing to strengthen the role of alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and support services as part of Victoria's health system.

The VAADA Board has been an integral part of this work, and I thank all Directors for the time they have given over the course of the year to ensure that our peak body is well governed and supported. During this time, we welcomed two new Directors, Kent Burgess who was re-elected to the Board, and Professor Dan Lubman AM, who we appointed to support VAADA at a critical juncture in our strategic environment. Kent and Dan have brought incredible sector knowledge and leadership experience to the VAADA Board.

The governance program led by the Board during the last year has been big and bold, with a strong focus on ensuring the Board is a strong, diverse and representative group of member organisations across the AOD sector. We completed a major review of our Rules of Association and held a Special General Meeting to pass amendments to the Constitution, supporting the diversity and stability of our member-elected Board. We also created a new membership category of Life Member, and it was my honour to bestow the inaugural Life Membership Award on former VAADA Executive Officer Sam Biondo at our 2024 Annual General Meeting. The Life Membership Award is one way that VAADA will continue to honour the contributions of those individuals who have made profound and lasting impacts on our community through the Victorian AOD sector.

Whilst the financial and operating environment remains challenging across the sector, the Board is committed to ensuring that the right resources are available at our peak body to deliver the necessary outcomes. This has included investing early in priority areas such as AOD Strategy development, which has helped to inform the Victorian Government in developing a 10 year AOD Strategy. Similarly, VAADA's work in highlighting the co-occurrence of mental health presentations in the AOD sector has refocused attention on the need for better integration between mental health reform and the new AOD Strategy. The impact of the VAADA team over the last 12 months in informing a better service system for all Victorians cannot be understated.

I'd like to thank Vice President Clare Davies, Treasurer Dom Ennis and Directors Cath Peake and Jose Taylor for chairing Board Subcommittees over the last year, and to all Board Members for the time they have given in participating on these Committees. As we embark on a process to develop VAADA's next Strategic Plan, there is a genuine opportunity to build on our historic legacy with an eye to the future. I encourage our members to continue to engage with VAADA - your voice is essential to inform how we best respond to ongoing challenges and emerging AOD needs in the Victorian community.

Dr Tamsin Short

Board President



Partners

VAADA thanks the following partners for their support:



Australian Government



An Australian Government Initiative

KING & WOOD
MALLESONS
金杜律师事务所



Driving Sector Improvement

Key Achievements

Conducted a comprehensive review of the Adult AOD Intake System

Developed the VICC Tool – adapted and contextualised from Minkoff and Cline’s Compass-EZ Tool, for the Victorian AOD sector

Led efforts that secured the development of Victoria’s first comprehensive AOD strategy

Championed the successful implementation of Victoria’s first pill testing pilot, including the establishment of a fixed-site service.

Held the hugely successful VAADA Biennial Conference in early 2025

Moved into our new office in Abbotsford

Delivered the AOD Leadership Accelerator Program in partnership with RMIT

Supported the achievement of AOD-related recommendations from the Rapid Review into enhancing responses to family violence

Hosted a Victorian Federal Election Candidates Forum for VAADA members

Established the Potent Synthetic Opioids Group

Capacity Building

Elevate reached 2,700+ subscribers and ran 26 professional development activities to 640 attendees

Participated in the development of National Comorbidity Practice Standards

Led statewide coordination of the Specialist Family Violence Advisor program in AOD services

Delivered AOD in the workplace training to the disability sector

Piloted a warm referral trial to strengthen referral pathways from Child Protection into AOD treatment settings

Hosted “A Spotlight on Women's Issues and Perspectives with Substance Use” Symposium

Facilitated in partnership with GV Health and Turning Point, the AOD Collaborative ECHO series (ACECHO)

Sector Support

Facilitated a range of Communities of Practice to build cross-sector learning

Victorian AOD Service Providers Conference

Ongoing training across AOD on non-fatal strangulation and its health implications

Delivery of key capacity-building events, including the Murray Service Providers Forums

Sector roundtable with MP Tim Richardson about Men’s Behaviour Change Programs

AOD State and Territory Peak bodies meetings in Canberra to facilitate national leadership and governance



Driving Sector Improvement

Publications

VAADA State Budget Analysis 2025/26

Developing an AOD Strategy for Victoria

Sector Demand Survey

Care and Complexity: Towards a re-designed Victorian AOD Service System

Your Respiratory Health Matters

Keeping Victorians Safe: We need a Potent Synthetic Opioids Plan

Press Releases

Victorian Budget will not reduce wait times for alcohol and other drug treatment

Drug adulteration from potent synthetic opioids remains a nationwide risk

VAADA supports cannabis law reform for Victoria

Fixing the foundation of Victoria's drug treatment system

VAADA endorses the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pill Testing) Bill 2024

Pragmatic Reforms Required to Curb Victoria's Soaring Overdose Toll

We drive sector improvement by sharing evidence, insights and advocacy to shape a stronger and more effective AOD sector in Victoria.

Submissions

2025 State Budget Submission

Fair Work Commission: Gender based undervaluation – priority awards review

Infrastructure Victoria: Draft 30-year infrastructure strategy 2025-2055

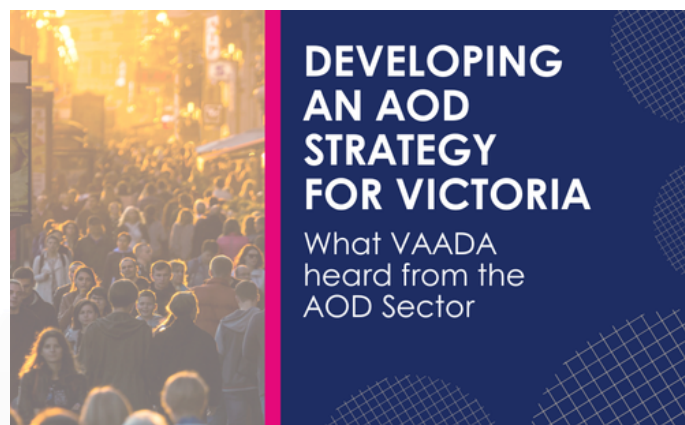
Social and Legal Issues Standing Committee: Review of the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Regulation of Personal Adult Use of Cannabis) Bill 2023

Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport: Inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia.

Reports

Mental Health Presentations in the AOD Sector

VAADA Annual Report 2024



Committee Participation

VAADA staff represent the sector on many advisory committees, panels, network groups and more.

- Association of Participating Service Users | [Advisory Member](#)
- Australian Alcohol and Other Drugs Council | [Member Council](#) | [State & Territory AOD Peaks Network](#) | [Policy Network](#)
- Australian Council of Social Service | [Director](#)
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation | [AOD Training and Scholarship Project](#)
- Birth for Humankind | [Pregnancy and Homeless Coalition](#)
- Churchill Fellowship | [Community Services Panel Victoria](#)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | [Client Incident Management System Community of Practice](#) | [Serious Offenders Coordination Team](#)
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria | [Policy Advisory Committee on Health and Wellbeing](#)
- Gippsland Primary Health Network | [Gippsland Alcohol and Drug Services Providers Alliance](#)
- Harm Reduction Victoria | [Victorian Harm Reduction Advocacy Working Group](#)
- Harm Reduction Victoria and Department of Health | [Opioid Dependency Treatment Advisory Committee](#)
- La Trobe University | [Centre for Alcohol Policy Research Advisory Board](#) | [Research Advisory Panel - Understanding the Role of Trauma in AOD-Related Problems to Improve Policy and Services](#) | [Victorian Primary and Community Health Network](#)
- Monash University | [Monash Addiction Research Centre Advisory Board](#) | [Public Intoxication Reform Justice Evaluation Advisory Committee](#)
- Monash University / Turning Point | [Course Advisory Committee for the Masters Program in Addictive Behaviours](#)
- North West Melbourne PHN | [AOD Expert Advisory Group](#)
- Odyssey Victoria | [North West South West Managers Meeting](#)
- RMIT | [Industry Advisory Committee for Community Services Programs](#)
- Turning Point | [Alcohol Change Victoria](#)
- Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association and The Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine | [Potent Synthetic Opioids Group](#)
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation | [Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnerships Cultural Safety Working Group](#)
- Victorian Council of Social Service | [Board of Directors](#) | [Finance Audit and Risk Committee](#) | [Climate Change Group](#) | [Compliance and Operations Network](#) | [Human Services and Health Partnership Implementation Committee](#)
- Victorian Department of Health | [Healthcare That Counts Review](#) | [Department of Health & VAADA Managers Group Meeting](#) | [Performance and Commissioning NGO Forum](#)
- Victorian Department of Health | [Mental Health Ministerial Advisory Committee](#)
- Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet | [Anti-Racism Taskforce](#)
- Victorian Skills Authority | [Early Educators, Health and Human Services, Sport and Recreation Industry Advisory Group](#)
- VicHealth | [Harmful Industries Roundtable](#)
- What Can Be Done | [What Can Be Done Committee](#)
- Yarra Networks | [Yarra Mental Health Alliance](#)

Media Hits



152 Total Media Articles

Campaigns

Represented systemic barriers for pregnant people and children through the Pregnancy and Homelessness Coalition

Provided clinical AOD and family violence information sharing expertise into post-Coronial review processes, supporting improved judicial responses and cross sector accountability

Delivered evidence at public hearings, including the Inquiry into the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment

Contributed to the Port Phillip Community Safety Roundtables, offering insights and advice to Council on improving community safety and local amenity.

Promoted and presented at RACGP Congress on Non Fatal Strangulation, substance use risks, and systemic stigma

Supported the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education's call for urgent reforms to the online sale and delivery of alcohol

Signatories and supporters of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Bail Saves Lives campaign

Using our social media platforms to promote and support 16 Days of Activism, raising awareness and encouraging collective action to prevent gender-based violence

Impact Metrics

30

Events hosted over
2024-2025

2,000

Attendees at
events

4.5 ★

Average satisfaction
rating at events

640

People trained over
26 sessions

87%

Average training
satisfaction rating

10,000

plus AOD Prompt
Cards sent out

11,533

Facebook visitors
reached

1,277

New LinkedIn
followers

6.4K

Viewers on AOD TV
and YouTube

548

Survey participants to
support the AOD
sector

231

ENEWS
campaigns sent to
2821 subscribers

200+

Jobs promoted
on the VAADA
jobs board



Events

VAADA Biennial Conference	1,100+ attendees
Service Providers Conference	300+ attendees
AOD Nurses Tool Kit Top Up	100+ attendees
Accelerator Graduation	40+ attendees
Murray PHN Regional Service Providers Forums	200+ attendees across regional Victoria
Network Meetings 500+ attendees	500+ attendees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Residential Withdrawal Nurses network • Sex, Sexuality and Gender Diverse network • Emergency Department Clinical Liaison Addiction Network • Family Violence networks and CoPs • Leadership Accelerator Program CoP 	
Federal Election Forum	
Opening of the VAADA Abbotsford Office	

VAADA coordinated a series of sector network meetings and communities of practice designed to facilitate linkages between organisations, share information and provide AOD staff with professional development opportunities.

Our regional reach included Bendigo, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Bairnsdale, Morwell, Sale, Horsham, Geelong and Ballarat.



AOD Leadership Accelerator Program

In 2024-25, VAADA delivered the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Leadership Accelerator Pilot Program in partnership with RMIT University, funded through a Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) Skills Solutions Partnership grant. This initiative was developed in direct response to sector consultation and workforce surveys, which consistently highlighted a lack of accessible, contextualised leadership development opportunities for emerging leaders in the AOD sector. The program was co-designed with sector leaders and AOD subject matter experts, ensuring integrity, cultural safety and relevance. The program embedded sector-specific content that reflected AOD service delivery, including trauma-informed leadership, lived and living experience perspectives, AOD program design and development, First Nations perspectives and AOD workforce wellbeing.

Over six months, 30 emerging leaders from across Victoria participated in six intensive two-day workshops and seven online communities of practice to build their leadership skills.

“Participating in this program... it feels like I have the whole picture now.”

– Training participant

“I think this is one of the best programs I have done since entering the field. I would [love] to see this program be fully funded for more people to access in the future.”

– Training participant

An independent evaluation by RMIT’s Workforce Innovation and Development Institute found:

- Confidence in fulfilling leadership responsibilities increased from 75% at commencement to 100% at completion
- Several participants advanced into leadership roles during the program
- 91% of participants would recommend the program to others
- Self-reported increases in knowledge and skill rose from 90% at baseline to 100% at program conclusion

The collaborative model between VAADA and RMIT proved highly effective, setting a benchmark for future initiatives. The program has also created a strong foundation for scaling the training package across the broader social services sector.



From Challenges to Solutions VAADA Conference 2025

In February 2025, the VAADA Conference returned to the Grand Hyatt Melbourne, bringing together more than 1100 attendees for two days of learning, inspiration, and collaboration.

With the theme *From Challenges to Solutions: Responding to a Changing World*, the program showcased the breadth and depth of the AOD sector. Across seven streams and more than 120 presentations, delegates explored new research, shared practice innovations, and heard lived and living experience voices that grounded discussions in real-world impact.

The conference was opened by the Hon. Ingrid Stitt, Minister for Mental Health, and a Welcome to Country from Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Tony Garvey. Keynotes featured global and local leaders — including Professor Dato' Adeeba Kamarulzaman, Emeritus Professor Doug Sellman, Dr James Martin, Dr Jenn Schumann and Dr Paul McCartney — whose presentations challenged and inspired delegates to think boldly about harm reduction, advocacy, and the future of drug policy.

A standout was the panel on vaping, which brought together diverse voices from academia, medicine and public policy. The conversation highlighted the health and regulatory challenges of vapes and e-cigarettes, sparking thoughtful discussion about evidence, harm reduction and enforcement. Breakout sessions further reflected sector diversity — from nurse-led models of care and digital innovations to forensic responses and culturally centred approaches.

The conference's success was only possible through the commitment of the Conference Committee and the generous support of sponsors and partners. Together, they created a space that delegates described as “well organised, phenomenal and inspiring” — a true celebration of resilience, collaboration and shared purpose.

76% rated the location Excellent

7 program streams with 120+ presentations

Overall conference rating 4.4 ★ out of 5

Strong delegate feedback: 85% rated the program Excellent or Very Good

657 delegates from across Victoria and beyond



Potent Synthetic Opioids Group

Since July 2024, VAADA has supported the establishment of the Potent Synthetic Opioids Group (PSOG) by serving as the Secretariat and providing coordination to the group. PSOG is a sector-led, collaborative network chaired by Associate Professor Jennifer Schumann, Head of the Drug Intelligence Unit at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine.

The group meets fortnightly and includes sector experts, frontline workers, harm reduction leaders, academics, and people with lived and living experience. Together, they have access to key data sources on emerging and harmful substances, as well as strong connections with at-risk communities.

PSOG has played a critical role in responding to community concerns in rural and regional Victoria about potent and unexpected substances in circulation.

To strengthen coordination and early warning, PSOG has established a secure online network where Victorian sector leads can share emerging signals and provide rapid advice. This allows for real-time responses, including swift triangulation of relevant data sources.

PSOG has also developed a confidential reporting form that enables community members and frontline workers to share concerns about potentially harmful substances.

Born from a shared recognition of the risks posed by adulterated substances such as nitazenes, PSOG represents a sector-developed, sector-led initiative that strengthens Victoria's collective ability to respond quickly and effectively to emerging drug-related harms.

Compass EZ Tool

In January 2025, the Hamilton Centre engaged VAADA to review and adapt the Compass-EZ tool for the Victorian context. Developed in the United States by Dr Ken Minkoff and Dr Christie Cline as part of the Comprehensive Continuous Integrated System of Care, the Compass-EZ is a self-assessment tool that benchmarks a program's capacity to deliver integrated alcohol and other drug (AOD) and mental health (MH) care, while embedding quality improvement processes across all levels of an organisation. Although the Compass-EZ has been successfully used in Australia, some of its terminology (e.g. "sobriety") lacks relevance to the local context.

VAADA convened a broad working group that included senior representatives from the AOD and MH sectors, experienced consultants, First Nations representatives, and people with lived and living experience.

The group redrafted the tool, renamed it the Victorian Integrated Care Compass (VICC), and added a glossary to support consistent interpretation of terms.

Four services tested the VICC for usability, inclusivity and clarity including an area mental health service, a mental health and wellbeing local and both an AOD team and a wellbeing connect team within a service. Ongoing consultation with Dr Minkoff and Dr Cline throughout the redrafting process ensured the tools validity and integrity were maintained.

The Hamilton Centre will make the VICC available to Victorian AOD and MH organisations. Recommendations have also been made to the Victorian Department of Health to support its rollout. The project strengthened the partnership between VAADA and the Hamilton Centre, enabling more coordinated and effective engagement across both the AOD and MH sectors.

Supporters, Partnerships and Collaborators

VAADA works with a range of organisations and networks in various capacities to help meet its mission and vision



ADUnion
 Alcohol and Drug Foundation
 Alcohol Change Victoria
 Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT
 Association of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies NT
 Australian Government
 Australian Alcohol and Other Drugs Council
 Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Victoria
 Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
 Australian Services Union
 Bendigo Health
 Bendigo Kangan Institute
 Better Health Network
 Beyond the Fruit Bowl
 Camurus
 Centre for Mental Health Learning
 cohealth
 Collaborative Centre
 Department of Health
 Department of Health Lived and Living Experience Branch
 Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Commission
 Family Drug Support
 Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education
 Goulburn Valley Health
 Hamilton Centre
 Harm Reduction Victoria
 Health and Community Services Union
 Hesta
 Indivior
 King & Wood Mallesons
 Language Loop
 Latitude Network
 La Trobe Community Health Service
 La Trobe University
 Lucy Demant
 Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect North East
 Mental Health Victoria
 Monash University
 Murray Primary Health Network

Nas Recovery Centre
 Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies
 Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation
 North West Melbourne Primary Health Network
 Odyssey Victoria
 Old Church on the Hill
 Past Futures
 Queensland Health
 Queensland Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies
 RMIT University
 Salvation Army
 Self Help Addiction Resource Centre
 South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services
 Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence
 Tandem
 The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
 Thorne Harbour Health
 Uniting Vic Tas
 University of Wollongong
 VicHealth
 Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
 Victoria Police
 Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
 Victorian Council of Social Service
 Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council
 Victorian Oral Health Alliance
 Victorian Skills Authority
 Victorian State Government
 Windana
 Western Australia Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies
 Yarra City Council
 Yarra Drug & Health Forum
 Yarra Mental Health Alliance
 Youth Projects
 Youth Support + Advocacy Services

Treasurer's Report

For the year end 30 June 2025

I share with you VAADA's financial result for the year ended 30 June 2025. The funding environment in Victoria remains difficult and continues to pose challenges for VAADA and the AOD sector. While it was a challenging year financially, VAADA was able to provide a wide range of services that strengthened the sector.

The Board forecast a total comprehensive deficit of \$154,000 in 2024-25, with VAADA recording a final comprehensive deficit of \$163,591 – close to budget. This result comprises an operating deficit of \$326,484 and Other Comprehensive Income of \$162,893 from investment returns. At 30 June 2025, VAADA's liquid financial resources totalled \$3.89m (cash \$2.41m; managed funds \$1.48m), with current liabilities of \$2.16m. VAADA has total net equity of \$1,961,664.

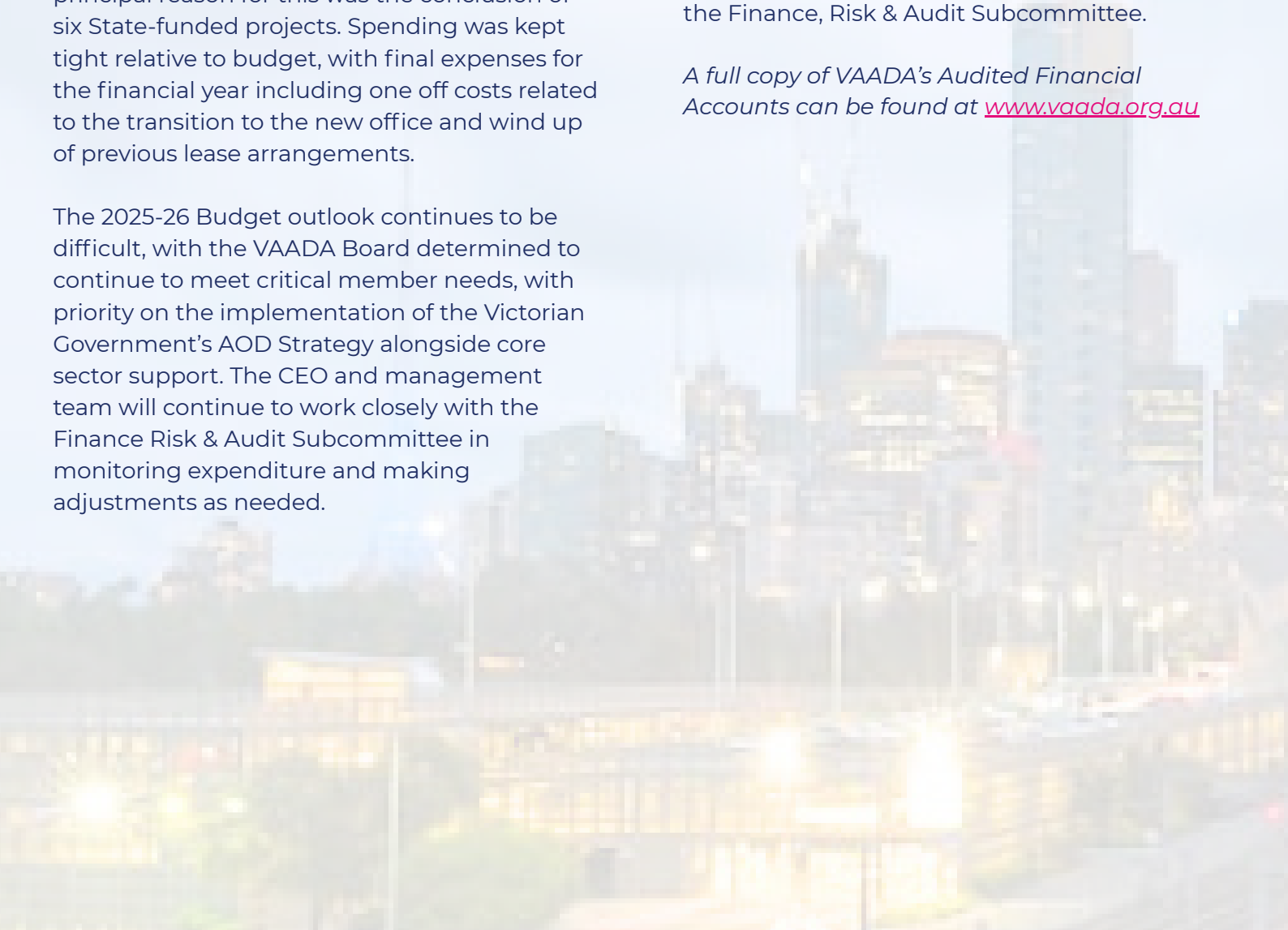
Total revenue in 2024-25 was lower than the previous year, despite the inclusion of \$415,808 in income from the Biennial Conference. The principal reason for this was the conclusion of six State-funded projects. Spending was kept tight relative to budget, with final expenses for the financial year including one off costs related to the transition to the new office and wind up of previous lease arrangements.

The 2025-26 Budget outlook continues to be difficult, with the VAADA Board determined to continue to meet critical member needs, with priority on the implementation of the Victorian Government's AOD Strategy alongside core sector support. The CEO and management team will continue to work closely with the Finance Risk & Audit Subcommittee in monitoring expenditure and making adjustments as needed.

I acknowledge the support of our key funders, the State Government of Victoria and Commonwealth Government of Australia. My thanks to Ruth Watson & Associates and our auditors, LD Assurance, for their professional support.

Thank you also to Chris our CEO and Chris McDonnell, VAADA's Corporate Services Manager and indeed the VAADA team, for their incredible commitment across the year, and willingness to undertake a huge program of work. I also thank my Board colleagues Dale Hardy and Richie Goonan for their hard work, discipline and guidance as members of the Finance, Risk & Audit Subcommittee.

A full copy of VAADA's Audited Financial Accounts can be found at www.vaada.org.au



Financial Statement

Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association Inc. ABN 19 039 293 679

Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income (For the year Ended 30 June 2024)

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Revenue		
Grant Revenue - Commonwealth	482,573	452,996
Grant Revenue - State	1,537,312	2,092,981
Biennial Conference Income	415,808	-
Interest Income	88,187	138,637
Membership Fees	38,818	32,636
Other Events	57,830	23,862
Other Income	26,134	678
Total Revenue	2,646,662	2,741,790
Expenses		
Employee Benefits	(1,719,439)	(1,424,667)
Amortisation	(68,781)	(46,611)
Depreciation - motor vehicles	(18,083)	(13,562)
Computer Expenses	(86,865)	(77,808)
Accounting and Audit Fees	(21,920)	(15,480)
Finance Expenses	(20,155)	(6,320)
Meeting Expenses	(251,263)	(161,175)
ADRIA Research Grant	(165,123)	(693,622)
Administration Expenses	(419,692)	(109,822)
Consulting Fees	(33,911)	(121,882)
Occupancy Expenses	9,443	(68,540)
Other Expenses	(30,197)	954
Board Governance Expenses	(30,090)	(28,929)
Professional Development	(117,070)	(57,065)
Total Expenses	(2,973,146)	(2,824,529)
Profit / (Loss) for the Year	(326,484)	(82,739)
Other Comprehensive Income	162,893	155,570
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	(163,591)	72,831
Total Equity	1,961,664	2,086,204