

4 December 2025

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Victorian AOD Strategy a welcome opportunity to address enduring substance-related harm in the community

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) welcomes the release of the Victorian Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Strategy 2025-2035 as a landmark moment that has the potential to usher in significant benefits for all Victorians.

The Strategy fills a long-standing void in AOD policy by providing a roadmap of objectives and actions, creating a plan for reform to strengthen our service system over the next decade.

The new Victorian AOD Strategy seeks to address long-term limitations in treatment capacity and enduring challenges in community access to support pathways, all this amidst increasing rates of demand for help and drug-related harm in the community.

Chris Christoforou, CEO of VAADA, says, 'prioritising access to information and support, partnering with lived and living experience communities and seeking to draw together government departments to respond to AOD harms in a coordinated fashion are among a range of actions that we welcome.'

'VAADA similarly acknowledges the commitment of the Victorian Government to address the fragility of Victoria's opioid pharmacotherapy system as well as enhance our drug monitoring systems. However, in light of the continuing fatal overdose crisis in Victoria, there is a need to further expand harm reduction programs beyond those currently listed in the *Statewide Action Plan*.'

'The focus on evidence and innovation is critical, but it must be matched by investment to achieve meaningful change. It is essential that we see additional expenditure on the AOD service system in the upcoming Victorian State Budget if we are serious about shifting the dial over the next 10 years.'

The Victorian AOD Strategy importantly responds to the issue of stigma by approaching substance use as a health issue, rather than relying on narratives that demonise people who use alcohol and other drugs to drive policy.'

VAADA looks forward to working with the Victorian Government to progress this strategy.

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.