

Strategic Plan

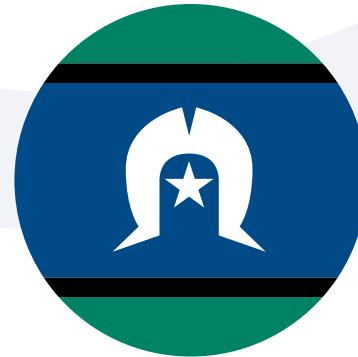
2026 - 2030



VICTORIAN ALCOHOL AND DRUG ASSOCIATION

Acknowledgement of Country

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.



VISION

Everyone in Victoria has equitable access to a quality AOD system of care, when, where and how they want it

Purpose

VAADA strengthens, champions and amplifies the voice of AOD services, advocating for policy, funding and system improvement

Aboriginal Self Determination

Partner with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support Aboriginal leadership of a culturally safe system

AOD Lived and Living Experience

Ensure people, families and communities with lived and living experience shape policy, practice and sector development

Our Strategic Directions

1. Accessible person centred AOD **services**

- **Support AOD services to** deliver high-quality, person-centred care by using data, evidence and lived experience to improve outcomes
- **Shift narratives and stigma** by promoting AOD services & the sector, so people feel safe to seek and access AOD services

2. Coordinated and effective **system** of care

- **Partner and collaborate with stakeholders** to improve the system of AOD care in Victoria
- **Advocate for and influence system design** so AOD care works seamlessly across services and sectors with a focus on ACCOs, health, mental health, justice, family violence and homelessness

3. Thriving AOD **workforce**

- **Build a highly capable, engaged and connected AOD workforce** equipped to meet the changing needs of Victorian communities
- **Advocate for AOD workforce conditions** that attract, retain, support and fairly remunerate AOD professionals

4. Strong and effective **Peak**

- **Facilitate leadership capability** within the AOD sector to influence policy, funding and system improvement
- **Strengthen engagement** with stakeholders and amongst members

We are Collaborative – We are Rights-Based – We are Courageous – We are Evidence-Informed

Positioning VAADA for the Future

Our Foundations

VAADA has a long and proud history as Victoria's peak body for alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, representing the interests of organisations, workers and communities across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria. Established in 1980, VAADA aims to ensure that people experiencing AOD-related harms, and the services that support them, are well represented in policy, program development and public discussion.



VAADA has consistently played a central role in shaping a more coordinated, evidence-informed and compassionate system of care in Victoria.

Over the decades, VAADA has brought together a diverse and at times fragmented sector, strengthening collaboration across health and human services and elevating the role of lived and living experience in shaping responses to AOD use.



Through sustained advocacy, sector leadership and partnership, VAADA has influenced major reforms and initiatives, from advancing harm reduction approaches to securing investment in pharmacotherapy and workforce development, contributing to a stronger, more connected AOD system across Victoria.

As VAADA looks ahead to its 50th anniversary in 2030, it does so from a position of strength. In recent years, stronger governance, clearer strategic focus, and a more confident public voice have positioned the organisation as a trusted and influential partner to government, members and the broader community. This includes

playing a key role in shaping and responding to Victoria's first dedicated AOD Strategy in decades. This foundation enables VAADA today to move beyond internal consolidation toward greater external impact.

Our Context

VAADA operates within a complex, rapidly evolving environment where alcohol and other drug use intersects with broader social, health and economic challenges. Demand for AOD services continues to grow, influenced by factors such as mental health, family violence and housing insecurity, while also being shaped by emerging drug trends, including risks posed from evolving patterns of substance use and new substances. These pressures are uniquely experienced in regional and rural communities where access to AOD services are limited. The system itself is under pressure, with workforce shortages, funding constraints and increasing expectations for quality person-centred care.

The release of the Victorian AOD Strategy marks a significant moment for the sector, creating renewed opportunity to align

effort, investment and reform over the coming decade. However, it also brings heightened expectations and the need for clear leadership to ensure the strategy translates into meaningful system change. Broader reforms across mental health, family violence and justice continue to reshape service delivery, often embedding AOD within wider systems. While this creates opportunities for integration, it also risks diluting the expertise of the specialist AOD sector, if it is not clearly articulated and championed.

At the same time, there is growing recognition of the importance of human rights, lived and living experience, and culturally safe responses, particularly for Aboriginal communities. Public discourse is also shifting, with increased attention to stigma, drug law reform and harm reduction approaches.



In this context, VAADA has a critical role to bring clarity, alignment and influence, ensuring the AOD sector is visible, valued and positioned to meet current and future need.

Our Identity

Our Vision

(what we want to see)

Everyone in Victoria has equitable access to a quality AOD system of care, when, where and how they want it.

Our Purpose

(why we exist)

VAADA strengthens, champions and amplifies the voice of AOD services, advocating for policy, funding and system improvement.

Our Values

(how we work)

- We are Collaborative
- We are Rights-Based
- We are Courageous
- We are Evidence-Informed

Our Cross-Cutting Commitments

(influencing all we do)

Our cross-cutting commitments reflect what must be true across everything we do if we are to achieve meaningful and lasting change. Aboriginal self-determination and lived and living experience are not standalone priorities, they are essential to building a system that is equitable, effective and grounded in the realities of community.

These commitments ensure that leadership, decision making and system design are informed by those most impacted, strengthening cultural safety, improving outcomes and keeping the sector accountable to the people it exists to serve.

Aboriginal Self Determination

Partner with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support Aboriginal leadership of a culturally safe system.

AOD Lived and Living Experience

Ensure people, families and communities with lived and living experience shape policy, practice and sector development.



Our Strategic Directions & Actions

(focus areas)

1. Accessible person centred AOD services

- **Support AOD services** to deliver high-quality, person-centred care by using data, evidence and lived experience to improve outcomes.
- **Shift narratives and stigma** by promoting AOD services & the sector, so people feel safe to seek and access AOD services.

2. Coordinated and effective system of care

- **Partner and collaborate** with stakeholders to improve the system of AOD care in Victoria.
- **Advocate for and influence system** design so AOD care works seamlessly across services and sectors with a focus on ACCOs, health, mental health, justice, family violence and homelessness.

3. Thriving AOD workforce

- **Build a highly capable, engaged and connected AOD workforce** equipped to meet the changing needs of Victorian communities.
- **Advocate for AOD workforce conditions** that attract, retain, support and fairly remunerate AOD professionals.

4. Strong and effective Peak

- **Facilitate leadership capability** within the AOD sector to influence policy, funding and system improvement.
- **Strengthen engagement** with stakeholders and amongst members.

Our Engagement Process

This strategy has been shaped through a deliberate and inclusive process, reflecting VAADA's commitment to collaboration and sector leadership. Drawing on extensive consultation, the process engaged members, staff, the Board, government stakeholders, cross-sector partners, and people with lived and living experience, alongside Aboriginal community voices. This included interviews, focus groups, workshops and analysis of existing data and sector insights to ensure a comprehensive understanding of VAADA's current position and future opportunities.

Importantly, the strategy builds on the collective wisdom of the sector itself. Insights from stakeholder surveys, member engagement, Board planning sessions and broader sector consultation have informed both the priorities and the choices within this plan. This process has ensured that the strategy is not only clear and focused, but grounded in the realities, strengths and aspirations of the AOD sector. It reflects a shared ambition to strengthen impact, amplify the sector's voice, and improve outcomes for the Victorian community.

We thank everyone who has contributed to its development.



Acknowledgement of Lived and Living Experience

VAADA acknowledges and celebrates people, 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.



Level 6 222 Hoddle St, Abbotsford VIC 3067 Phone (03) 9412 5600
www.vaada.org.au