

Submission

To Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia

Topic Draft South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Workforce Development Framework 2024-2032 Consultation

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Acknowledgement of Country

Uniting Communities respects the enduring spiritual relationship First Nations people have with land and sea and the importance of this relationship to the wellbeing of First Nations people, including their languages and customs.

By seeking reconciliation and working in partnership with Aboriginal communities, Uniting Communities will move towards healing, justice, self-determination, and empowerment for Aboriginal people.

About Uniting Communities

We are an inclusive not-for-profit organisation working alongside more than 80,000 South Australians each year and have been creating positive change for South Australian communities for more than 120 years. We utilise this expertise to advocate for systemic change across diverse social justice issues to shape public and social policy that delivers better outcomes for marginalised communities.

We support those in need to find the courage to move forward through enriching their lives and uniting the communities in which they live. By tackling the deep-seated challenges that affect people's lives, we work to create systemic change and brighter futures for all South Australians. We provide support services across a range of different areas including legal services, aged care, family and domestic violence counselling, alcohol and other drugs, disability, homelessness, mental health, and child protection.

We have a long history of supporting people who want to change their use of alcohol and/or other drugs (AOD) and have been providing AOD support services for over 120 years. We currently provide several services that respond to the needs of people seeking AOD associated assistance including;

New ROADS

Our New ROADS program supports clients, over the age of 18, on the path to recovery from AOD use. New ROADS provides a range of support options including counselling, home detox, day programs and rehabilitation in shared houses (residential program). The residential service operates within a stepped care model, ranging from lower to higher intensity supports depending on the clients' needs. We are also a contracted provider of the Police Drug Diversion Initiative.

Aboriginal Community Connect

Aboriginal Community Connect is a 'one-stop' service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples seeking support with their drug and alcohol use, isolation, poverty, and other social issues. Our service works with individuals and families with a cultural and community wellbeing focus and our services are available in north-western Adelaide, Murray Mallee, Riverland, and Limestone Coast.

Streetlink Youth Health Service

Streetlink is a service aimed to support young people (and their families) aged between 10 and 25 with health support and counselling about alcohol and other drugs. Our service combines a medical clinic and AOD counselling and targets young people who are not connected with mainstream medical services or education.

Submission to Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia's (DASSA's) consultation on the DRAFT South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Workforce Development Framework 2024-2032

We welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on DASSA's draft South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Workforce Development Framework 2024-2032.

Our key recommendations:

- Uniting Communities (UC) acknowledge SANDAS as the AOD Peak Body and thank them for their ongoing commitment to enhancing community wellbeing and reducing the harms associated with alcohol and drug use
- We agree with the proposed SAAOD sector workforce priorities and objectives that include:
 1. Securing new workforce for the future
 2. Developing a capable, skilled, and collaborative workforce
 3. Supporting workers who provide AOD treatment
 4. Promoting a digitally and technologically enabled workforce
 5. Promoting a culturally safe and competent workforce
- A key challenge identified by UC staff was the lack of available specialised AOD specific training and qualifications across Australia. This is at all levels, from introductory short courses for workers in the Community Services sector to VET or postgraduate courses for those who would like to specialise. The lack of training available is one deterrent to people wanting to specialise in this area, as they do not see the opportunity to gain formal qualifications to substantiate their expertise. This, in turn, can lead to this part of the community services workforce feeling undervalued.
- We strongly support Objective 1.2 to "Improve career entry points including training and education pathways" and believe it is imperative that exposure to AOD content in key undergraduate degrees is increased.
- However, we also see the need for the development and creation of dedicated standalone AOD VET and undergraduate courses, emphasising the specialist skills required to effectively engage with people that access support from the AOD sector.
- We strongly support Objective 2.1 to "Determine training and credentialing needs for AOD workers that promotes access and consistency" or in the least that formal minimum qualification standards or scope of practice is adopted and enforced in specialist programs.
- We strongly support Objective 2.2 to "Develop the peer (lived and living experience) AOD workforce" and we are keen to work collaboratively with the AOD sector to strengthen the support of the AOD peer workforce. We note there are currently some significant misconceptions about the peer workforce from funders; for example, it is rarely acknowledged that the peer workforce requires additional supervision and support from managers. As such, AOD services require additional resources to be able to support the same number of clients.

Additional comments

Measurements of Success

We recommend that the “framework” is reviewed every 2 years by DASSA to ensure that progress in achieving the identified objectives is occurring and that the results of these reviews are made public and are published widely across the AOD sector workforce.

We support the recommendation that a South Australian AOD Sector Workforce Reference Group is established and suggest that membership of this group is extended to include key stakeholders from relevant universities, Registered Training Organisations, the Jobs and Skills Council and the State Training Authority. This will be an important mechanism to bring together key stakeholders who currently do not have any responsibility to support and develop the AOD workforce. We recommend that this group regularly reviews the progress of the objectives and works closely with DASSA to monitor the outcomes of the framework.

Finally, it is recommended that the End of Cycle Review (2032), detailed on page 28 of the draft framework, commences in early 2031. This will ensure that there is sufficient time allowed for a collaboratively developed, refreshed, and updated framework that will continue to support the future needs of the AOD Sector Workforce past 2032.

Conclusion

We are thankful for the opportunity to provide feedback to DASSA's consultation on the DRAFT South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Workforce Development Framework 2024-2032. We look forward to continuing our work with DASSA to progress this strategy and to meaningfully engage with the framework in the years to come.