



Western Australian Network of
Alcohol & other Drug Agencies

WANADA Response to Parliamentary Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence

WANADA welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.

About WANADA

The Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) is the peak body for the specialist alcohol and other drug education, prevention, treatment and support sector in Western Australia. WANADA is an independent, membership-driven, not-for-profit association.

WANADA is driven by the passion and hard work of its member organisations, which include community alcohol and other drug counselling; therapeutic communities; residential rehabilitation; intoxication management; harm reduction; peer based; prevention; and community development services.

WANADA's Position

WANADA recognises that gender is an organising structure in society, and gender inequality is the central factor behind domestic, family and sexual violence. Alcohol and other drug use may exacerbate existing domestic, family and sexual violence but is not a cause. WANADA recognises that harmful alcohol and other drug use intersects with domestic, family and sexual violence in gendered ways¹. Due to high prevalence of co-occurring domestic, family and sexual violence and harmful alcohol and other drug use, WANADA strongly advocates for the consideration of this intersection in an effective response to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Recognising the Role of the Specialist Alcohol and other Drug Service Sector

The specialist alcohol and other drug sector provides services to both perpetrators and victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence, making it a critical partner in an effective, systemic response to addressing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Worldwide, between 34-39% of men receiving treatment for alcohol and other drug dependence report recent physical violence toward an intimate partner or ex-partner, compared with 5-21% of men in the general population². Despite strong evidence demonstrating that alcohol and other drug use increases the frequency and severity of domestic and family violence incidents, men's behaviour change programs do not consistently and effectively integrate alcohol and other drug treatment³.

There is good evidence, from the USA, demonstrating that integrated alcohol and other drug and domestic violence perpetrator counselling results in: greater levels of engagement than is usual for men's behaviour

¹ Yates, Sophie. 2019. "An exercise in careful diplomacy": talking about alcohol, drugs and family violence". *Policy Design and Practice*. 2(3):258-274. DOI: 10.1080/25741292.2019.1638697

² Gilchrist, Gail, Fay Dennis, Polly Radcliffe, Juliet Henderson, Louise M. Howard, and David Gadd. 2019. "The interplay between substance use and intimate partner violence perpetration: A meta-ethnography". *International Journal of Drug Policy*. 65: 8-23. DOI: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2018.12.009

³ Yates, Sophie. 2019.

change programs; better alcohol and other drug outcomes than alcohol and other drug counselling alone; and more sustained perpetrator behaviour change than alcohol and other drug counselling alone⁴.

Women with alcohol and other drug dependence are exposed to disproportionately high levels of male violence. Women victim-survivors of domestic and family violence who use alcohol and other drugs are at a higher risk of experiencing more frequent and more severe violence, and rates of perpetrator conviction for violent offences are lower if the victim-survivor uses alcohol and other drugs⁵. A recent Swedish study found that women with illicit drug dependence were found to be at greater risk of male violence perpetrated by a friend or acquaintance (rather than only perpetrated by a family member, an intimate partner, or former intimate partner) than women with alcohol dependence, making this demographic particularly vulnerable. The same study identified a strong correlation between women's exposure to male violence during childhood and subsequent harmful use of alcohol and other drugs in adulthood⁶. Lifetime experience of violence is a significant risk factor for harmful use of illicit drugs⁷, however many domestic and family violence refuges will not admit women who are actively using alcohol and other drugs⁸.

WANADA believes the specialist alcohol and other drug sector is well-placed to identify domestic, family and sexual violence and contribute to prevention, perpetrator rehabilitation, victim-survivor recovery, and care coordination. WANADA acknowledges the skill and expertise of the specialist domestic and family violence sector, and advocates for workforce development and collaboration between both specialist service sectors.

WANADA's position on workforce development is that it is only effective when applied across the individual, organisational, and systems levels.

- At the individual level this includes: training to enhance the capability of both sectors' staff (including to effectively use screening tools).
- At the organisational level, development enables: leadership to drive an expanded vision for their service; and embeds appropriate staff support.
- Systems level development includes: establishing strong and enduring partnerships; relevant and consistent data collection (e.g. the Alcohol and Other Drugs National Minimum Data Set could include screening tool results); and strategies to address stigma associated with both areas of concern, removing barriers to early intervention, treatment, and support.

WANADA Recommends:

Resourcing is prioritised for evidence-informed workforce development, across both the specialist alcohol and other drug sector and the specialist domestic and family violence sector, to more effectively work at the complex intersection of harmful co-occurring concerns.

⁴ Easton, Caroline J., Cory A. Crane, and Dolores Mandel. 2017. "A Randomized Controlled Trial Assessing the Efficacy of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Substance-Dependent Domestic Violence Offenders: An Integrated Substance Abuse-Domestic Violence Treatment Approach (SADV)". *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*. 44(3): 483-498. DOI: 10.1111/jmft.12260

⁵ Yates, Sophie. 2019.

⁶ Beijer, Ulla, Christina Scheffel Birath, Valerie DeMartinis, and Britt af Klinteberg. 2018. "Facets of Male Violence Against Women With Substance Abuse Problems: Women With a Residence and Homeless Women". *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 33(9):1391-1411. DOI: 10.1177/0886260515618211

⁷ Coomber, Kerri, Richelle Mayshak, Paul Liknaitzky, Ashlee Curtis, Arlene Walker, Shannon Hyder, and Peter Miller. 2019. "The Role of Illicit Drug Use in Family and Domestic Violence in Australia" *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*: 1-21. DOI: 10.1177/088620519843288

⁸ Yates, Sophie, 2019.