



Putting People First

AGENCY DRUG AND ALCOHOL ACTION PLAN

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2003 - 2005

Foreword

The Western Australian Community Drug Summit held during 2001 focused attention upon the impact of drug and alcohol use in the community. This was particularly the case in relation to the impact of drug and alcohol use upon children and young people, grandparents and other relatives caring for children full time as a result of family crisis, and the community generally.

Putting People First The Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002-2005 was developed following the Community Drug Summit. The Department for Community Development Drug and Alcohol Action Plan 2003-2005 provides a high level summary of the Department's contribution to the Strategy.

The Department does not have a drug treatment role per se, however, it contributes to the Drug and Alcohol Strategy in a number of ways.

Drug and alcohol use does not occur in isolation. More often, it occurs along with, and exacerbates, other interrelated problems such as family and domestic violence, child maltreatment, poverty, including homelessness, and mental illness. However, the impact of even low levels of drug use on the individuals concerned, their families and the community can be profound.

At the community level the Department is implementing a community development approach based upon the principles of engagement, inclusiveness, coordination and capacity building. The aim of this is to develop strategies which address local issues in ways which build on the strengths of stakeholders and increase their ability to respond to these and other community needs.

The Drug and Alcohol Plan outlines a number of examples of the Department's work in this area. These include working with communities to support families with young children, improving developmental opportunities for children and young people and promoting the participation and inclusion of young people in public space.

There is a need to promote greater community participation in policy development and Departmental units with responsibility for women, seniors and volunteers, children and young people and family and domestic violence play an important role in this regard.

The Offices for Women's Policy, Children and Young People's Policy, Seniors Interests and Volunteering and the Family and Domestic Violence Unit focus upon policy development, coordination and community engagement for these target populations. An important aspect of the role of the offices involves community education to promote positive images and to address negative stereotypes.

The Drug and Alcohol Strategy emphasises the importance of coordinated support for those with drug and alcohol problems or vulnerable because of drug and alcohol use in their families.

Individuals and families with drug and alcohol problems often have high and complex needs which cannot be met by one agency and require collaborative responses with other service providers in the government and community sectors.

At a case practice level the Department works to support and assist children and young people, carers and families to deal with the impact of drug and alcohol problems. Developing collaborative relationships and ensuring that services are coordinated more effectively are important aspects of this work.

To this end the Department also participates in the implementation of a number of whole of government strategies which complement the Drug and Alcohol Strategy. These include the implementation of the Government Action Plan for Addressing Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities and the Government response to the findings of the WA State Homelessness Taskforce. Departmental initiatives contained in these strategies feature prominently in this Action Plan.

The Department for Community Development Drug and Alcohol Action Plan is a summary of the Department's contribution to the Drug and Alcohol Strategy. The Plan will be updated annually to incorporate Departmental activities in support of the Drug and Alcohol Area Plans currently being developed by the Drug and Alcohol Office.

Jane Brazier
DIRECTOR GENERAL

April 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department for Community Development was established on 1 July 2001 to work towards the following objectives:

- strengthened local communities where people are re-engaged in the business of government and connected to a shared vision for the State.
- enhanced capacity of individuals, families, communities and service providers, including providers outside government.
- world standard delivery of the traditional functions of residual and safety net services intended mainly for children, young people and families.
- improved coordination of whole of government and inter-sectoral policy, planning, development and review.

In doing so the Department is guided by four key principles:

- Engagement – encouraging and facilitating more active participation at all levels of the community
- Inclusiveness – including stakeholders at an early stage in policy and program development
- Collaboration – promoting greater coordination of services to promote efficiency and improve service access
- Capacity building – facilitating the growth and development of individuals, families and communities in ways which build a more caring society based on mutual trust and reciprocity

The Department's key strategic policy directions, as outlined below, reflect the growing impact that drug and alcohol use has upon individuals and families. These are:

- The number of children in care has increased in recent years and there is a need for the Department to build partnerships with organisations in the drug and alcohol and community sectors, and with communities, to address issues which give rise to this trend.
- A continuing and strong focus upon ensuring that policies and services are relevant and accessible to individuals, families and communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The provision of services to families with children in the early years which are responsive to the needs of parents and communities promotes child health and wellbeing.
- Fragmentation of services for those with complex needs is a significant issue and there is a need to develop the Departmental and sector capacity to work holistically with families effected by alcohol and drug use, particularly in a preventative sense.

PRIORITY AREAS

Further details regarding these initiatives is available under Priority Actions on pages 15-22.

It is important to note that the Departmental initiatives listed under Treatment and Support Services do not operate under a treatment framework but are grouped under this heading for the purposes of this Action Plan.

Prevention and Early Intervention

The Department will:

- coordinate the development of an across Government Early Years Strategy
- implement Family Strength initiatives with funding of \$10 million over 5 years, commencing 2001/02.
- work with the Children and Young People in Care Advisory Committee and other stakeholders to reduce the rate at which children and young people enter out of home care as a result of parental drug and alcohol use.
- launch a grants program and handbook in recognition of the needs of young people for public space in regional areas.
- promote participation and inclusion of young people in public spaces through support and expansion of the Hillarys Youth Project Enquiry.
- promote greater involvement of children and young people in policy development through funding to the Create Foundation to advocate and represent the concerns of children and young people and continue to support the Youth Advisory Network.
- undertake and support research which builds the capacity of service providers to work with children and young people through participation in the National Steering Committee of the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme.

Treatment and Support Services

The Department will:

- work with other agencies to implement the State Government's response to the recommendations of the Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities.
- support grandparents and other relatives caring for children full time as a result of family crisis such as parental drug and alcohol use by providing \$100,000 funding over three years for a grandparents support service.
- work with other agencies to implement the State Government's response to the recommendations of the State Homelessness Taskforce.
- review and update the service delivery protocol developed between the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program and drug and alcohol services.
- continue to work with local services including the Local Drug Action Groups to improve service collaboration for families effected by drug and alcohol use.

Other Initiatives

The Department will:

- undertake further research into the impact of parental drug and alcohol abuse upon Care and Protection Applications and outcomes for children and young people in care as a result..
- develop a range of workforce development initiatives to build the skills of Departmental and community sector staff, particularly in relation to drug and alcohol awareness and working collaboratively with other agencies.
- improve its capacity to identify and manage cases involving drug and alcohol use by introducing new information technology through the ASSIST project.
- update the Department's Drug and Alcohol policy in collaboration with other stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The development of the Department for Community Development Drug and Alcohol Action Plan represents a significant step towards a more integrated response to drug and alcohol issues in this State. A Key State Government commitment to 'Deliver a Better Government' has underpinned the implementation of more cohesive and integrated Government policy, enabling greater coordination and integration of services. This commitment has also been embraced by the Western Australian community through the WA Community Drug Summit, which has demanded more than a 'siloed' response from Government.

The response to the Summit, called 'Putting People First', reflected an ideological shift in responding to drug and alcohol related problems by primarily treating them as a health and social issue, rather than a criminal or justice issue. Furthermore, Government recognised the importance of a more seamless system of care for those in need, and a more coordinated response from the many agencies and individuals involved. This approach was spearheaded by the development of *'Putting People First' The Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategy, 2002 - 2005*.

The WA Drug and Alcohol Strategy provides a framework for all key stakeholders. It builds on the priorities of the WA Community Drug Summit, and provides a clear commitment to target attention towards the unmet needs of a number of priority groups in our community, namely children and young people, families, Indigenous people and communities, people from regional, rural and remote communities, and people with co-occurring mental health and drug use problems.

The approach outlined in the WA Drug and Alcohol Strategy is hinged on pragmatism and is consistent with the directions of the National Drug Strategy. The priority areas for action, which are based on the National Framework and the WA Community Drug Summit, include Prevention and Early Intervention, Treatment and Support, and Law, Justice and Enforcement.

Two key features of this new approach are the development of both *Agency* Drug and Alcohol Action Plans, and *Area* Drug and Alcohol Plans. Agency plans provide the basis for development of specific agency and sectorial contribution to drug response, for the first time clearly outlining the contribution and directions of key Government Departments in overall drug and alcohol strategy. Area Planning is both an important process of community engagement, and a means of targeting action to local need. While Area Plans are necessarily broader in scope than the activities of Government, the resultant documents should support and complement each other, and therefore should be read in parallel. Put simply, Agency Plans provide, a basis and mechanism for Area Plans through 'top-down' support of the central authority, and Area Plans provide a vehicle for Agency action at the local level.

Links to Broad Social Policy

The impact of drug and alcohol use on the human service sector is well documented. The Police and Justice sectors have reported figures that up to 80% of their work is drug and alcohol related. The Health sector reports that up to 30% of hospital admissions, and up to two-thirds of mental health conditions are also closely associated with drug and alcohol use.

The Department for Community Development reports that approximately 70% of Care and Protection Applications made to the Children's Court during 2000 involved parental drug and alcohol use in combination with factors such as family violence, mental illness and poverty, including homelessness.

Other figures suggest that up to around 50% of marital breakdown is related to drug and alcohol use. Clearly, all human sector agencies have an investment in ensuring effective responses to drug and alcohol harm.

Yet drug and alcohol use and associated harms do not occur in isolation. New research clearly shows that drug and alcohol-related risk and harm share common causal pathways with a range of other social problems, including crime, welfare dependency, physical and mental ill-health, and even school and work performance and participation. Drug and alcohol use and related harm is but one part of the complexity of the human condition, not the root cause of all social ills. But when present, drug and alcohol use problems can exacerbate and complicate these other issues, such that an effective and combined response to drug use becomes essential, and can achieve solid improvements and gains. Drug use treatment and prevention has been shown to achieve up to an \$8 return on every \$1 invested.

Drug and alcohol issues affect the entire community and have significant health, social and economic impacts on all West Australians. The annual cost of alcohol and other drugs to the Australian community has been estimated for 1998/99 at \$34.4 billion (includes tobacco at a total cost of \$21.1 billion) by Collins and Lapsley¹.

The need now is to develop cross-sectoral responses that can capture the depth of people and their needs.

This is illustrated by a number of recent Government inquiries into serious health, social and economic problems in Western Australia that have all identified common themes. The inquiries and major themes include:

1. The State Government 'Response to the findings of the Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities' (Gordon Inquiry):
 - *Significantly the Report found that violence and child abuse are grave social problems that are endemic in many Aboriginal communities.*
 - *The report recommended the need to shift from planning within individual agencies to planning that is sector wide and responds to each community's need for integrated service provision.*

¹ Collins, D., & Lapsley, H. (2003). *New estimates of the social costs of drug abuse in Australia*. Paper presented to the *International Research Symposium – Preventing substance use, risky use and harm: What is evidence-based policy?* National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology, Fremantle 24-27 February, 2003.

2. The Government's Response to the Report of the Homelessness Taskforce 'Putting People First' May 2002:
 - *The combined resources of the social sector, together with the continuing input of the community, are essential in tackling this social issue.*
 - *The social, economic and health issues associated with the risk of being homeless include, but are not limited to; family conflict, mental illness, family violence, and problematic alcohol and other drug use.*

3. The Early Years Taskforce: The Government established the Early Years Taskforce to develop an 'early years strategy' aimed at improving the wellbeing of young children aged 0-8:
 - *The Strategy is to be based on strong cooperation between State and Local Government service agencies and non-government service providers and a high degree of consultation and engagement with local communities.*
 - *In keeping with the social determinants model, the Early Years Strategy aims to improve outcomes for children.*

4. The Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship between the Government of Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians:
 - *The agreement commits the parties to work together to build a new and just relationship between the Aboriginal people of WA and the government of WA.*
 - *The shared objective is to negotiate a new approach in Aboriginal affairs policy and administration in WA based on regional agreements.*
 - *The partnership framework aims to enhance negotiated outcomes that protect and respect the inherent rights of Aboriginal people and to significantly improve the health, education, living standards, and wealth of Aboriginal people.*

The WA Community Drug Summit held in August 2001 and the recently released Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002-2005, provide the broad State Government framework for the Department's response to drug and alcohol issues.

Significant themes in the State Government response to the recommendations of the Community Drug Summit include:

- the critical role prevention and early intervention initiatives play in reducing the likelihood that a range of developmental and social problems, including drug and alcohol use, emerge and develop into more complex problems as children grow.
- the need to prevent children entering out of home care as a result of parental drug and alcohol use, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are over represented among children in care.
- holistic responses involving government and non government agencies
- the importance of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to develop policies and services.

Other significant policy developments which overlap or have a bearing on the Department's activities in this area include the development of the Family and Domestic Violence State Strategic Plan, the Women's Progress Report, the proposed youth crime prevention strategy and overarching plans for children in care, the early years and child protection are in the process of being developed

Links to Area Drug and Alcohol Plans

Department for Community Development staff have participated in area drug and alcohol planning consultations which are being coordinated by the Drug and Alcohol Office. The primary outcome of this process will be development to a series of Area Drug and Alcohol Plans which address locally determined priorities and strategies. Local Departmental activities will be reflected in the Area Plans.

The Department's Drug and Alcohol Action Plan will be updated annually. Updates will incorporate Departmental Area Plan activities.

AGENCY CONTEXT

Agency Overview

In response to the recommendations of the Report of the Taskforce Established to Review the Machinery of Western Australia's Government, the Department for Community Development was established on 1 July 2001 to work towards the following objectives:

- strengthened local communities where people are re-engaged in the business of government and connected to a shared vision for the State.
- enhanced capacity of individuals, families, communities and service providers, including providers outside government.
- world standard delivery of the traditional functions of residual and safety net services intended mainly for children, young people and families.
- improved coordination of whole of government and inter-sectoral policy, planning, development and review.

Creation of the Department has been accompanied by an emphasis on a community development approach to assist families and communities develop strengths and capacities to address issues which are local priorities. Development of collaborative responses involving all levels of government and with the community agencies, clients and other stakeholders is a high priority.

Separate policy units with responsibilities for children and young people, women, seniors and volunteers and family and domestic violence also focus upon policy development and coordination and community engagement for these target populations.

In pursuing these objectives the Department is guided by four key principles:

- Engagement – encouraging and facilitating more active participation at all levels of the community
- Inclusiveness – including stakeholders at an early stage in policy and program development
- Collaboration – promoting greater coordination of services to promote efficiency and improve service access
- Capacity building – facilitating the growth and development of individuals, families and communities in ways which build a more caring society based on mutual trust and reciprocity

BROAD POLICY DIRECTIONS

An interdisciplinary, multi-dimensional approach will be required in framing Departmental policy responses which address the range of issues involved in reducing the impact of drugs and alcohol in the community.

The Department's key strategic policy directions, as outlined below, reflect the growing impact drugs and alcohol have in the community and upon families. Specific initiatives which reflect these policy directions are identified in the 'Priority Actions' section. In addition, a number of emerging policy issues are also identified.

The number of children in care has increased in recent years and there is a need for the Department to build partnerships with organisations in the drug and alcohol and community sectors, and with communities, to address issues which give rise to this trend.

Important considerations are:

- There has been a significant rise in the number of children in care in recent years, particularly since 1998.
- This trend is a result of both children staying longer in care and growth in the numbers entering care.
- At 30 June 2002 there were 1772 children in care compared to 1633 at 30 June 2001, an increase of 8.5%.
- Children who enter care at an early age and do not return home within 6 months are likely to stay in care for considerable periods. As of January 2002, 51% of children who had been in care for 6 years or more entered care when they were two years or younger.
- There are strong indications that complex cases involving parental drug and alcohol use in combination with factors such as family and domestic violence, mental illness and poverty including homelessness are major contributing factors in the growing numbers of children in out of home care.
- Unpublished Departmental research² indicates that in the year 2000, parental drug and alcohol use was a factor in approximately 70% of Care and Protection Applications that year, in combination with the other factors noted above.
- While the number of children who have entered care as a result of physical abuse declined between 1999/00 and 2001/02, substantiated cases of sexual abuse remained at the same level and the number of cases of neglect increased by 18%. The increase in cases of neglect is strongly suggestive of parental drug and alcohol use.
- This is also consistent with research from the USA where the doubling of the rate of child abuse in the decade to 1997 was closely linked to drug and alcohol use.
- Areas in which further services are required, or where there are gaps in the range of services for children in care and their families include services which are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal families and services capable of working holistically to address drug and alcohol treatment issues and child protection issues.

² Department for Community Development, Prevalence of Substance Abuse in Care and Protection Applications, A Western Australian Study, July 2001.

A continuing and strong focus upon ensuring that policies and services are relevant and accessible to individuals, families and communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Important considerations are:

- Western Australia's diverse population comprises many different cultural groups. About two thirds or 68% are Australian born, a proportion which has changed little since the 1991 census.
- Women, Aboriginal people and country residents are over represented among the Department's customers compared with their respective backgrounds in the State population; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were under represented. During 2001/02, an estimated 61% of customers were women, 45% were country residents and 5% were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Western Australians increased by 15% between the 1996 and 2001 censuses (compared to a 7% increase for the total State population overall).
- Nearly 40% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are under 15 years of age, almost double the proportion in the total population.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are over represented in a range of Government and Departmental services including Care and Protection Applications taken out by the Department and children and young people in out of home care. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are over represented in care by more than 7.5:1 in comparison to the general population.
- The Gordon Inquiry concluded that family and domestic violence and child abuse are grave social problems endemic in many Aboriginal communities. There is an urgent need to strengthen responses to incidents of child use and family violence while at the same time increasing support for vulnerable children and adults at risk.
- The Department has an important role in the process of building community capacity for a safer environment for adults and children, and in reducing use and violence.
- There is a significant gap in research data regarding the impact of drug and alcohol use and other issues in culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities.

The provision of services to families with children in the early years which are responsive to the needs of parents and communities promotes child health and wellbeing.

Important considerations are:

- The Department's three key areas of work; strengthening the wellbeing of children through the early years, protecting children from harm and abuse and ensuring that children unable to live at home receive quality care, are inextricably linked.
- High quality early childhood services support parents and provide positive developmental opportunities for children. These services reduce the likelihood that more complex, harmful and resource intensive problems will develop during adolescence and young adulthood.
- Studies have found clusters of factors which strengthen a child's development and the family's ability to promote this, including:
 - child factors such as good social skills, including sociability and self control and good cognitive functioning

- family factors include the development of a positive parent and child relationship, family harmony, more than two years gap between siblings and supportive family relationships
- social and community factors including access to support services and links to the community.
- Both the Community Drug Summit and the Gordon Inquiry identified the importance of supporting families in their parenting roles as a way of building the capacity of communities.

Fragmentation of services for those with complex needs is a significant issue and there is a need to develop the Departmental and sector capacity to work holistically with families effected by alcohol and drug use, particularly in a preventative sense.

Important considerations are:

- The number of children entering out of home care can be reduced by services with the capacity to both support parents with drug and alcohol problems at risk of having their children apprehended, and providing parenting and family support. There is a need for interagency coordination and community engagement to raise awareness of this issue and develop innovative service responses.
- Service providers within the Commonwealth State Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) report a range of issues associated with drug and alcohol problems:
 - SAAP clients with alcohol and drug problems have high and complex needs which challenge agency staff who do not have the specialist skills to work holistically with these clients.
 - Research undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services in 1999³ on this issue concluded that high needs clients have a greater range of needs than others, the interaction between these needs is more complex, the intensity of support required is higher and the support is required for longer periods.
 - The provision of services to clients with alcohol and drug problems can present problems to clients and staff. SAAP agency staff have also expressed concerns that some clients with substance use problems are vulnerable to exploitation by others.

Initiatives which address these policy issues are identified in the following section.

³ Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, Appropriate responses for homeless people whose needs require a high level and complexity of services provision, Summary, page 6.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Key Strategy Area: Prevention and Early Intervention

The Department for Community Development is taking a strong leadership role in community development and capacity building at a State and local level. The supporting initiatives range from new structural arrangements and work force development to new ways of working with individuals, families and communities.

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders ⁴	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
Early intervention and parenting skills development	Children Parents Communities	The Department will coordinate development of an across government Early Years Strategy by working with local communities in metropolitan and regional WA to develop a comprehensive response to the needs of parents and children aged 0-8 years.	DoH, DIA, DSC, DET, DLGRD, DHW, Local government bodies, local communities	Local communities	Interagency forums have been held in 6 localities to explore the potential for local engagement processes
	Children and young people Families Aboriginal people and communities People in regional, rural and remote communities	The Department will implement Family Strength initiatives with funding of \$10 million over 5 years commencing 2001/02. Initiatives include: Establish new Best Beginnings home visiting services in the North West Metro area, Armadale Kelmscott and the Goldfields. Establish Aboriginal early years services to be located in the Goldfields, North West Metro area and Armadale Kelmscott Establish a Men's Resource Service	DoH Local communities	Specific metropolitan and rural areas	These services have commenced. A service will commence in the near future at Armadale North West Metro and Armadale Kelmscott. This service has commenced.

⁴ Department of Health (DoH), Department for Indigenous Affairs (DIA), Disability Services Commission (DSC), Western Australia Police Service (Police), Department of Justice (DoJ), Department of Local Government and Regional Development (DLGRD), Office for Children and Young People's Policy (OCYPP), Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering (OSIV), Office for Women's Policy (OWP), Family and Domestic Violence Unit (FDVU), Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO), Children Youth and Families Agencies Association (CYFAA), Children and Young People in Care Advisory Committee (CYPCAC), Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation (ATSIC), Office of the Auditor General (OAG), Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS)

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
Early Intervention and parenting skills development (cont'd)		The Department will work with the CYPAC and other stakeholders to develop strategies to reduce the rate at which children enter out of home care as a result of parental drug and alcohol use.	CREATE, Wanslea, CYFAA, Mofflyn, CYPAC DAO, DoH and others	-	2002/03
Community capacity building	Children Young People Metropolitan and rural communities	The Department will launch a grants program and handbook in recognition of the needs of young people for public space in regional areas by the end of 2002/03.		Statewide	To be launched by late 2002/03
	Children Young People Women Seniors Communities	The OCYPP, the OWP and the OSIV are the lead Government agencies promoting the interests of children and young people and women. Their role includes development and implementation of initiatives which promote positive images of target populations to counter negative stereotypes. Further initiatives are identified separately.	State and Commonwealth Government agencies, community agencies, businesses, community groups.	Statewide	Varies with nature of project.
	Young people Businesses Local communities	The Department will promote collaboration between young people and the WA Police Service, local government and businesses and the participation and inclusion of young people in public spaces through support and expansion of the Hillarys Youth Project Enquiry (HYPE)	Police	Metropolitan and rural locations	Implementation underway

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
Community Capacity Building (cont'd)	Children and young people	<p>The Department will promote greater involvement of children and young people in the development and delivery of policies and services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding the CREATE Foundation with \$90,000 over 3 years to advocate and represent the concerns of children and young people in care • The Office for Children and Young People's Policy will support the Youth Advisory Network (YAN) 	-	Statewide	Implementation underway
	Children and young people	<p>The Department will undertake and support research which builds the capacity of service providers to work with children and young people by participating in the: National Steering Committee of the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme research into barriers to youth participation.</p>	-	Statewide	Projects are identified annually

Key Strategy Area: Treatment and Support

The initiatives below do not operate within a 'treatment' framework. The Department considers that support/counselling is a more appropriate description for many of the initiatives identified below. In addition, these initiatives have a strong community development and capacity building focus.

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
Targeting high needs groups, particularly in remote areas	<p>Children and young people</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents</p> <p>Families with multiple and complex needs</p> <p>Communities</p>	<p>The Department will work with other agencies to implement the State Government's response to the recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry and take the lead on the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ 14 Aboriginal support workers to be co-located within existing child and youth focused services to provide support and counselling for Aboriginal children exhibiting at risk behaviours. Employ an additional 25 child protection workers, totalling \$12 million in additional expenditure. Fifteen workers will be located in rural areas. The Strong Families initiative will be expanded to provide an interagency collaborative case management approach to children and families at risk through the allocation of an additional \$1.963 million across the State to employ a total of 12 coordinators. The program will be expanded incrementally with 4 new coordinators employed by late 2002/03. 	DPC, ATSIIC, DoH, DIA, Police Service	Statewide although some initiatives are specific to particular regions	<p>Implementation underway</p> <p>Implementation underway</p> <p>Four new coordinators will be employed by late 2002/03 with the remaining 8 positions filled during 2003/04</p>

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
Targeting high needs groups, particularly in remote areas (cont'd)	Children and young people Grandparents and other relatives caring for children full time	<p>The Department, through the OSIV will build supports around young people isolated from their families and support families in their caring role by providing funding of \$100,000 over 3 years to establish a grandparents support service to support relatives caring for children full time as a result of family crises such as parental drug and alcohol use.</p> <p>The Department is currently reviewing its role in relation to the supports it provides to relative carers.</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse agencies and communities.</p> <p>State and Commonwealth Government Departments, Community agencies.</p>	Statewide	<p>Wanslea Family Services received funding to provide the Grandparents Support Service and the service commenced in September 2002</p> <p>A draft policy statement and consultation process is currently being developed as a priority</p>
	People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	<p>The Department will work with other agencies to implement the State Government's response to the recommendations of the State Homelessness Taskforce to prevent homelessness and to and take the lead on the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional funding to enhance the capacity of the 52 financial counselling services through the State to assist families to avoid eviction. • Establish a new financial counselling service to provide specialist counselling to assist young people with financial problems. • Allocate \$250,000 annually to the Wesley Mission Perth to fast track people who are newly homeless or about to become homeless into alternative accommodation. 	<p>DHW, DoH, WACOSS, DoJ, DPC, OAG, DIA</p>	Statewide	<p>52 financial counselling services have received a 15% increase in funding and a new service for young people will be established in 2003</p> <p>The service is expected to commence late 2002/03</p> <p>This service has commenced</p>

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
Targeting high needs groups, particularly in remote areas (cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide \$350,000 annually to Communicare in Calista to provide supported accommodation and support services to men after an incident of domestic violence. • Provide \$600,000 funding for 3 new leaving care services to assist young people leaving care to develop the living skills to manage the transition to independent living. • Enhance the capacity of 5 existing youth supported accommodation services to work with young people who are parents through the provision of \$200,000 annually • Provide \$400,000 annually for services to assist dependent children in homeless families in the metropolitan area from 1 July 2003. • Develop practical in home support services to assist people to gain the skills to manage in a home; \$150,000 annually for 2 services for Aboriginal families. • Collaborate with the Department of Health to co-locate three new drug workers in youth supported accommodation services, taking to five the number of drug staff located in these services. 			<p>The service will commence in the near future</p> <p>The new services have been advertised and are expected to commence by mid 2003.</p> <p>Funds have been offered on a pro rata basis to 5 existing agencies that provide supported accommodation to young parent</p> <p>Work is underway to develop a service model</p> <p>Planning discussions are underway and an EOI process is to commence shortly for 1 metropolitan and 1 rural service</p> <p>New drug workers have commenced in services at Spearwood and Rockingham. An additional worker is to be located at Armadale. DAO has also funded a drug worker located with a services in Victoria Park.</p>

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department is supporting the National Supported Accommodation Assistance Program research study to develop a common assessment tool for early identification and referral of people with high and complex needs. Support the new youth supported accommodation service in the Fremantle area. <p>Review the service delivery protocol developed between SAAP and drug and alcohol services.</p>			<p>A consultation process is underway</p> <p>The service opened in January in premises in Spearwood</p> <p>The protocol is currently being reviewed</p>
Targeting high needs groups, particularly in remote areas	People impacted by family and domestic violence	Implement strategies arising from the Family and Domestic Violence Strategic Plan identifying linkages between family and domestic violence and drug and alcohol use.	Other Government and community agencies	Statewide	Commencing 2004
Working collaboratively	Families with multiple and complex needs, particularly drug and alcohol and child protection issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department will continue to work with local services including Local Drug Action Groups to improve service collaboration for families effected by drug and alcohol use (also see Workforce Development) 	Community development and other drug and alcohol agencies	Statewide	Ongoing

Key Strategy Area: Other initiatives

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Area (Statewide or specific region?)	Implementation Timeline
Policy development and research	-	The Department will undertake a follow-up to a study undertaken during 2000 of the impact of parental drug and alcohol use upon trends in Care and Protection Applications. Gender analysis will be used as a policy/research tool in identifying problems and issues in drug and alcohol use and to guide the department's policy response.	-	-	2003/04
	-	Update the Department's drug and alcohol use policy in collaboration with other stakeholders.	-	-	2003/04
Workforce development	Departmental and community agency staff	The Department will develop a range of workforce development initiatives to build the skills of Departmental and community agency staff particularly in relation to awareness of drug and alcohol issues and working collaboratively with other agencies.	DAO, drug and alcohol and mental health agencies	-	2003/04
Departmental data collection	-	As part of a business process reform and restructure initiative the Department will introduce new information technology through the ASSIST project. This will allow for improved identification and management of cases involving alcohol and drug use. Contingent upon progress implementing change, Treasury has given in principal agreement to provide \$10 million over two years commencing 2005/06 subject to final sign off by the ERC in February 2004	-	-	Discussions are continuing with Treasury

EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

There are a number of emerging policy issues associated with drug and alcohol use which require collaboration across Commonwealth and State jurisdictions and with a range of other stakeholders. These are:

Improved support to relatives caring for children full time as a result of neglect of children due to parental alcohol and drug use

This is an emerging area in which there is very little data available. The Department has provided \$100,000 over 3 years to Wanslea Family Services to establish a service to support grandparents and relative carers.

In addition, the Department is reviewing the supports its field staff provide to relative carers with a view to improving service coordination and access for these clients.

Linking with, and assisting and supporting culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities to address a range of social issues including drug and alcohol use.

The Department is strengthening its capacity to work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities through the appointment of senior officers with responsibility for raising staff awareness about these issues, to provide specialist expertise regarding case practice and other matters and to develop policies and procedures to ensure that Departmental procedures are culturally appropriate.

There is a need to develop partnerships and evidence based strategies for work with culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities.

An emerging issue for SAAP emergency accommodation and other non government services concerns the need for accommodation services which are capable of supporting people who continue to use drugs.

Through the Department of Health, three new drug workers are located in youth supported accommodation services taking to five the number of drug staff located in these services. There remains a need for further linkages with SAAP and other services requiring this type of specialist input and for access to mental health consultation and treatment services.

Within the population of children in care, it appears that a number of children and young people exhibit disturbed behaviour because of, or in addition to, their own alcohol and drug use.

The complex needs of these children challenge residential staff and carers who require additional training and the assistance of mental health and drug and alcohol professionals to meet their needs while in care or making the transition to independent living.

There remains a need to improve the coordination of services and information to the client groups identified in the emerging issues identified above in collaboration with agencies such as Centrelink, the Family Court of Australia, the Mental Health Division of the Department of Health and others.

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