



Putting People First

AGENCY DRUG AND ALCOHOL ACTION PLAN

DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

2003 - 2005

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FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Core Business

The key role for Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) is to create opportunities for the resources of Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies to combine into partnerships with Indigenous people through arrangements based on engagement, negotiation, planning and co-ordination of services.

This role requires DIA to provide advice to Government on the directions for Indigenous Affairs, monitor management systems, policy frameworks and service delivery, and assist Indigenous people to engage with Government and other stakeholders to achieve sustainable social and economic outcomes.

Land is central to achieving sustainable economic and cultural outcomes. The DIA works with Indigenous people and other stakeholders to address land issues through the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) land transfer and management program.

The protection, management and promotion of heritage and culture are also key responsibilities of DIA. This is achieved through the effective and efficient administration of legislative responsibilities and working in partnership with Indigenous people to manage their heritage.

Legislation

The DIA is responsible for administering the following legislation:

The *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (AAPA Act) has principal functions related to consultation, planning and co-ordination of services to Indigenous people, and the adequacy of those services. The AAPA Act also establishes the ALT which has operational functions related to land.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (AHA) details specific responsibilities related to the management and protection of heritage sites.

The *Aboriginal Communities Act 1979* (ACA) enables Indigenous people to establish by-laws that govern conduct and access on community lands.

Key Initiative Linked to Commonwealth

In November 2002 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to make a difference in the lives of Indigenous people by addressing sources of social and economic disadvantage, and agreed on a reconciliation plan based on three priority areas for government actions:

- Investing in community leadership and governance initiatives;
- Reviewing and re-engineering programs and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people. The COAG also agreed that Governments should look at measures for addressing family violence, drug and alcohol dependency and symptoms of community dysfunction; and
- Forging greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.

Indicators

The COAG agreed to measure the impact of policy settings and service delivery and provide a concrete way to measure the effect of the Council's commitment to Reconciliation through a jointly agreed set of indicators.

There is a two-tier set of indicators established by COAG, which emphasise "headline indicators" of the higher order outcomes and strategic areas for policy action. These emphasise the need for joint action within and across Governments. These are as follows:

- ***The First Tier: Headline Indicators***

The headline indicators are intended to provide a snapshot of the state of social and economic Indigenous disadvantage, given the overall priorities that COAG had identified. They sit within four areas of well being as follows:

- Individual capacities
- Material/economy
- Spiritual/cultural
- Family and community

These headline indicators are higher order outcomes that reflect the longer-term more targeted policy actions at the second tier.

- ***The Second tier: Strategic Areas for Action***

Eight strategic areas for action have been identified. For each of these strategic areas, key indicators have been developed with their potential sensitivity to Government policies and programs. The strategic areas for action have been chosen on the evidence that action in these areas is likely to have a significant, lasting impact in reducing Indigenous disadvantage. One of these areas is: *Breaking the Substance abuse cycle.*

DIA's role will be to link the initiatives outlined above in the major COAG priorities for addressing Indigenous disadvantage, the National indicator frameworks and the Department's statutory obligations regarding coordination to planning across Government, including in relation to drug and alcohol planning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A key objective for Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) will be to ensure a coordinated approach by government and non-government agencies to policy and service delivery for the engagement of Indigenous community.

▪ PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROJECTS/ STRATEGIES

Capacity Building

In Western Australia, the DIA sees Capacity Building as a part of a holistic approach to Indigenous advancement and therefore has endorsed a two-pronged approach. DIA sees the need for:

- Building the capacity of the Indigenous community to determine and manage positive change;
- Capacity building in government that sees them engaging with the Indigenous community, in partnership approaches, to achieve agreed outcomes.

There is a focus on a community driven development approach to Capacity Building, with neither of the above being achieved in isolation from the other. This focus hinges on effective engagement and participation of Indigenous people in all decision making that affects their lives.

Patrols

Funding is currently provided to twenty-one (21) community patrols throughout Western Australia (WA). Patrols provide strategies at the community level to deal with and respond to a range of social problems experienced in Aboriginal communities. They aim to reduce contact between Indigenous people and the criminal justice system. Patrols are operated by the community and are supported by DIA and other agencies.

A key role of patrols is to assist people who may be at risk, or who may be a threat to others, as a result of intoxication. Patrols can mediate to defuse conflict and assist by removing people from harmful situations. DIA encourages patrols to develop close working relationships with sobering-up shelters and other community based health and support organisations.

Community By Laws

DIA administers the *Aboriginal Communities Act 1979* (ACA) that enables Indigenous people to establish by-laws that govern conduct and access on community lands. DIA works with other key agencies and stakeholders to support implementation of Community By Laws.

Community By-Laws have been successfully used in communities to control access to alcohol. DIA is actively engaged with communities in the development and improvement of By-Laws and will work with Police, DAO and other stakeholders to ensure By-Laws continue to be used effectively.

- **TREATMENT AND SUPPORT**

DIA does not provide any treatment services but supports Indigenous community to access services.

- **LAW JUSTICE AND ENFORCEMENT**

DIA does not provide any law, justice and enforcement services but supports Indigenous community to access services.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The development of the *Department of Indigenous Affairs Drug and Alcohol 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.*
2. The Government's Response to the Report of the Homelessness Taskforce 'Putting People First' May 2002:

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.

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- *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.*

AGENCY CONTEXT

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Machinery of Government Report (2001) described the objective of the Indigenous Affairs portfolio as '*closing the gap*' between the social and economic well being of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The DIA has a leadership role in achieving this aim through strategic management, co-ordination and by bringing the relevant agencies of Government to work together to meet the needs of Indigenous people.

This role will contribute to the commitment made by the Premier to a new and just relationship with Indigenous people based on trust, respect, equity and inclusiveness.

AGENCY MISSION

To close the gap between the social, cultural and economic well being of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people through strategic leadership of land, heritage and culture, and whole of government coordination of Indigenous issues.

AGENCY OBJECTIVES

DIA's four (4) strategic objectives of effective engagement, functional systems, effective services and agreements based on partnerships, are targeted to achieve DIA's outcome of 'sustainable improvement in social, cultural and economic outcomes for Indigenous people'.

Strategic Objective 1:

Government, community and industry effectively engaged in doing business

This strategic objective recognises the commitment by the Government to a new and just relationship and the need for effective engagement at all levels of Government, the community, industry and the non-government sector, in achieving sustainable improvement. The role of DIA is to broker this engagement, communicate and promote the Government's commitment and to develop relationships and partnerships.

Strategic Objective 2:

Legislation, policies and practices that achieve service equity and justice for Indigenous people

This strategic objective recognises the need for Government systems, whether through legislation, policies, practice or custom, to achieve service equity and justice for Indigenous people. The role of DIA is to promote equitable outcomes from Government systems and services.

Strategic Objective 3:

Well-planned and effective coordination of services to Indigenous people

This strategic objective recognises the need for effective co-ordination of services to Indigenous people and for Government agencies at all levels to take a universal

prevention approach to address social and economic disadvantage. The role of DIA is to promote systemic change and support Indigenous people and families to achieve sustainable benefits.

Strategic Objective 4:

Agreements based on partnerships between the community, Government and industry

This strategic objective recognises the need to negotiate and develop agreements with Indigenous people based on trust, respect, equity and inclusiveness, which reflect agreed priorities and lead to sustainable results. The role of DIA is to facilitate the development of partnerships and relationships that lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.

EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

DIA supports the recognised need for a 'whole of government approach' to managing alcohol and drug related issues in WA with an emphasis on the need for a comprehensive and coordinated response to drug use that involves all layers of government in partnership with non-government agencies and the community.

The *Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship* between the Government of Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians governs the strategic level directions and operations of DIA.

The approach under the *Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002-2005* is consistent with broader strategies that DIA is engaged in related to the implementation of the *Statement of Commitment*. Under the *Statement of Commitment*, Regional Framework Agreements are to be developed with the Indigenous community. This process and joint planning of services at the regional and local level provides significant scope and opportunity to link the Regional Framework Agreement process with the Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO) Area Plans.

The Government's response to the Gordon Inquiry is the first major opportunity to the *Statement of Commitment* into a working partnership. Any strategy to tackle alcohol and drug abuse in Indigenous communities should link to the response to the Gordon Inquiry and be consistent with the *Statement of Commitment*.

A key issue, which has been clearly highlighted in the Gordon Inquiry, is the need for more effective joined-up government. The response of the *Statement of Commitment* has been to tackle this issue on a number levels. At the service delivery level there is commitment to information sharing and coordinated case management. At the program level there is commitment to joint agency planning based on shared data, service mapping and gap analysis.

At the policy level there is commitment to coordinating across Government to enable effective partnership with ATSIC and the Indigenous community on the planning and delivery of programs and services, and on the establishment of benchmarks and indicators, which can drive policy change.

Capacity Building

The need for Capacity Building to enable Government and the Indigenous community to enter into effective partnership is well established as an issue to be addressed. DIA is currently coordinating the development of an integrated state strategy for Capacity Building that aims to promote sustainable environmental health, social and economic outcomes. This is being done through an interagency working group of Commonwealth, State, and local government representatives.

Protocols and Guidelines Project

The consultation and engagement necessary for partnership requires the use of appropriate protocols. DIA is working on the development of protocols and guidelines for consultation and engagement with Indigenous Western Australians. The guidelines can inform Government, industry and key stakeholders of regional and locally

preferred ways of working in partnership to improve outcomes at the community level. The project intends such collaboration will result in improved access to services, facilities, training and skills development.

Governance Training

DIA is coordinating the delivery of training in governance, identifying gaps and overlaps with stakeholder groups and the management of effective use of resources. This directly relates to building the capacity of communities to establish effective governance.

Environmental Health

Another well established policy issue in relation to Indigenous Affairs is the poor quality of infrastructure and resultant health problems in many Indigenous communities. Environmental health issues have significant impact on drug and alcohol problems.

DIA is leading a number of strategic initiatives and policy reforms in order to improve the level of services available to discrete Indigenous communities based on standards applied to comparable mainstream communities.

Universal Prevention

In social policy, an issue relates to the emerging consensus about the importance of the early years of life in determining outcomes for children as they grow up, for families, and communities. There is an increasing awareness that interventions to tackle symptomatic issues like drug and alcohol abuse must be in the context of more holistic family and community based approaches to early intervention and universal prevention.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

KEY STRATEGY AREA: PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Implementation Timeline
CAPACITY BUILDING Community Action Groups (CAG)	Aboriginal Communities	Promote a community development approach to building stronger communities & fostering Indigenous community governance based on a culturally appropriate model.	ATSIC, FACS	Ongoing
Comprehensive Recruitment for Remote Communities	Remote Communities Aboriginal	Establishment of a comprehensive recruitment and workplace relations service for remote Aboriginal communities and government programs and agencies that support the recruitment of staff into remote/discreet Indigenous communities	ATSIC, Dept of Housing and Works; Office of Aboriginal Economic Development, DLGRD, Kimberley Community Management Service.	End 2003
Indigenous Leadership Development	Aboriginal Community	DIA committed to leadership development to build the capacity of communities to build effective governance. Indigenous leaders contributed	WA Centre for Leadership and Community Development, DLGRD, ATSIC, Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre	Ongoing

Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Implementation Timeline
<p>Patrols Patrols provide strategies at the community level to respond to a range of social problems.</p>	<p>21 patrols are operating statewide to service communities.</p>	<p>to the development of recommendations on leadership and development. This was provided the DLGRD WA Leadership Plan.</p>		
<p>Community By Laws DIA administers the <i>Aboriginal Communities Act 1979</i> that enables Indigenous people to establish by-laws that govern conduct and access on community lands.</p>	<p>Aboriginal communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To deal and respond to a range of social problems. ▪ To reduce contact between Indigenous people and the criminal justice system. 	<p>Patrols are operated by the community and are supported by DIA; other agencies and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Ongoing with annual applications for funding.</p>
		<p>To establish by-laws that governs conduct and access on community lands.</p>	<p>DIA works with other key agencies to support the implementation of Community By Laws.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

KEY STRATEGY AREA: TREATMENT AND SUPPORT
Not applicable to DIA

Title Of Project	Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Implementation Timeline

KEY STRATEGY AREA: LAW, JUSTICE AND ENFORCEMENT
Not applicable to DIA

Title Of Project	Action Issue	Target Group/s	Action	Other key stakeholders	Implementation Timeline