



Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015



Government of **Western Australia**
Drug and Alcohol Office

Contents

Context and Focus	4
Goal and Outcomes	5
Principles	6
Key Strategic Areas	7
Implementation and Monitoring	14
Other Supporting Documents	15



Government of **Western Australia**
Drug and Alcohol Office

Tobacco control remains a high priority at a state and national level.
The harm associated with tobacco use necessitates a separate strategy in its own right.
As such, tobacco is not included in this *Framework* but is covered comprehensively elsewhere.
More information on this can be obtained from <http://www.watap.health.wa.gov.au/home/>



> Message from the Minister for Mental Health

I am pleased to present the *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015*.

Problematic alcohol and other drug use impacts on all Western Australians. It contributes to significant health, social and economic costs to the community, including illness, injury, crime, violence, anti-social behaviour, and family and relationship breakdown.

The State Government is committed to reducing the impact of problems associated with alcohol and other drug use in Western Australia. Significant resources have been allocated to the alcohol and other drug sector for the expansion of prevention, treatment and support services. These include the targeting of high needs groups, including those living in the Kimberley and Pilbara, Goldfields and Carnarvon. Particular focus has also been directed towards Aboriginal people and communities, including those located in the metropolitan area.

Priority initiatives include the continued development and implementation of Alcohol Management Plans in high risk regional and remote communities, prevention campaigns to inform and educate the community on key alcohol and other drug related issues, and the expansion of integrated service delivery to improve access and more seamless service provision.

Another State Government priority is the implementation of the *Cannabis Law Reform Act 2010*. Upon proclamation, the possession and cultivation of cannabis will be re-criminalised and a mandatory intervention treatment session for both adult and juvenile minor cannabis offenders will be introduced.

The *Framework* is supported by two core elements: first and foremost a focus on the prevention and early intervention of alcohol and other drug use problems; and secondly on providing those who need support with the assistance and services they require.

Prevention strategy and activities are integral to effective alcohol and other drug policy. This includes preventing drug use and harmful alcohol consumption, preventing supply of illicit drugs, and preventing harms to individuals, families and communities.



Helen Morton MLC

In cases of problematic alcohol and other drug use, providing treatment and support options is also needed for both the individual themselves, and for those affected by someone else's use.

Approaches must include appropriate legal responses and be supported through a range of evidence based strategies including workforce development, monitoring and evaluation, and research. Key government and non government agencies must continue to work in partnership, coordinating their activities to assist in addressing the many complexities relating to alcohol and other drug use.

While the *Framework* is necessarily broad, special attention must be given to those at higher risk of harm, including people with co-occurring mental health and alcohol and other drug problems, Aboriginal people, young people, families, the homeless and offenders.

This *Framework* has been endorsed by State Government departments represented on the Drug and Alcohol Strategic Senior Officers' Group (DASSOG). Its key priorities will form the basis of DASSOG agency annual action plans.

Through the combined efforts of Government, non-government organisations and the community, the *Framework* can guide responses that will positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of all Western Australians.

Hon. Helen Morton MLC
Minister for Mental Health



> Context and Focus

Context

Alcohol and other drug use impacts on all Western Australians. It results in significant health, social and economic costs to the community, such as illness and injury, crime, violence and family relationship breakdown.

The *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015* relates to all Western Australians and encompasses alcohol, illicit drugs and licit drugs that are illegally supplied or inappropriately used.¹

The *Framework* is consistent with national strategy and provides a guide for government sector strategy, development and implementation of alcohol and other drug policy and services in Western Australia. It is aligned with current alcohol and other drug best practice and has been endorsed by senior representatives from key human and social service State Government departments through the *Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategic Senior Officers' Group (DASSOG)*.

The complexities of problems relating to alcohol and other drug use require suitably matched and comprehensive responses that are achieved through across sector and across government responses. This includes universal population based approaches, selected and targeted interventions for those deemed to be at-risk and targeted interventions for those with significant problems. It is through the combined efforts of the DASSOG, the non-government sector and the community that significant gains in reducing the problems relating to alcohol and other drug use may be achieved.

Focus

Some drugs require particular attention as evidence demonstrates that they are associated with more harm and higher use. Based on this, the priority drugs of concern for focus during the next five years are:

- alcohol;
- cannabis;
- amphetamines and amphetamine type substances; and
- heroin and other opioids.

The evidence also demonstrates that some population groups experience greater impacts from alcohol and other drug use than others and therefore require additional support. Priority population groups include:

- Aboriginal people and communities;
- children and young people;
- people with co-occurring mental health and alcohol and other drug problems;
- people in rural and remote areas;
- families, including alcohol and other drug using parents; and
- offenders.

The ever-changing nature of drug use requires the continual development of strategies to address problems as they emerge and to prevent the escalation of potential problems. Vigilance is required to continually monitor use, dependence, intoxication and overdose, and to implement appropriate action.

Other focus areas of this *Framework* include:

- poly drug use;
- use of volatile substances;
- inappropriate use of prescription drugs;
- transmission of blood-borne viruses; and
- engagement of target groups where levels of alcohol and other drug related harm are becoming more apparent, for example elderly people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, homeless people and people who are same sex attracted or gender diverse.

1. The scope of the Interagency Framework includes volatile substance use and the inappropriate use of prescribed medicines.



> Goal and Outcomes

Goal

The goal of this *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015* is to:

Prevent and reduce the adverse impacts of alcohol and other drugs in the Western Australian community.

To achieve this goal, policies, strategies and programs will be developed and implemented that aim to prevent and reduce: drug use; drug related problems; harmful alcohol use; and alcohol related problems in Western Australia.



Outcomes

The *Framework* operates under the national framework of supply, demand and harm reduction. It is underpinned by two core elements: first, the primary focus of prevention: preventing drug use and harmful alcohol consumption; preventing drug supply; and preventing harms to individuals, families and communities; and second, providing support to those who need it.

Prevention first

- Prevent illicit drug use, harmful alcohol consumption and their associated impacts through a range of initiatives targeting individuals, families and communities.



Support for those who need it

- Reduce illicit drug use, licit substances that are inappropriately used and harmful alcohol consumption, and their associated impacts through effective treatment and support strategies.

Central to these outcomes will be improvements in a number of areas including, but not limited to, a reduction in: per capita alcohol consumption; prevalence of drug use; alcohol and other drug related hospitalisations; illness; injury; crime; violence; and family or relationship breakdown.





> Principles

In Western Australia, alcohol and other drug policies, strategies and programs will be supported by the following principles:

- **Applying comprehensive responses to complex issues** – holistic responses need to include a balanced implementation of strategies and activities that aim to prevent and decrease the demand for, supply of, and problems associated with harmful alcohol consumption, inappropriate use of prescribed medicines and use of illicit drugs.
- **Promoting access and equity** – every individual has an equal right to access appropriate services regardless of differences in race, sex, marital status, pregnancy, impairment, religious or political conviction, age, family responsibility, sexual orientation, gender history, criminal history or geographical location. This includes the promotion of substantive equality² and the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programs that are culturally secure.³
- **Supporting evidence based practice and applying innovation** – priority needs to be given to the implementation of prevention and treatment strategies that are effective and supported by research, continuous quality improvement and evaluation. Where gaps in knowledge exist, innovation should be embraced to build the evidence base for effective interventions and approaches applicable to Western Australia.
- **Developing and maintaining effective partnerships** – preventing and dealing with alcohol and other drug problems is complex and often requires multi-agency responses, as well as community and personal support, in order to achieve effective and lasting outcomes. Partnerships need to be maintained and developed between relevant government and non-government agencies and the community. This includes the effective coordination of action at local, regional, state and national levels so that alcohol and other drug policy and strategy is appropriately aligned and coordinated across government.
- **Promoting stakeholder participation** – consumer, community and key stakeholder participation is essential in the development and implementation of policy and strategy to facilitate the ongoing development of appropriate responses.
- **Being responsive to emerging issues** – alcohol and other drug policy and programs must have the flexibility to respond to new and emerging issues, and the changing needs of government, the community and the alcohol and other drugs services sector. This includes monitoring public opinions on current and proposed alcohol and other drug policy and strategy.
- **Promoting sustainable change** – the impact of alcohol and other drug programs needs to achieve longer-term change with planned sustainability that balances current and future demands.

2. Substantive equality recognises that entitlements, opportunities and access are not equally distributed throughout the community and there may be barriers to service provision resulting in unequal outcomes for particular groups. Equal treatment, therefore, is not about treating all people the same; it is about treating people differently in order to cater for different needs.

3. The term 'culturally secure' is a guiding principle that ensures we respect the legitimate cultural rights, values, beliefs and expectations of Aboriginal people and that this approach is central in the development of programs, services, policies and strategies (WADOH n.d.). Aboriginal leadership and community consultation, direction and involvement form an essential part of this process. It is also important to recognise that Aboriginal people have an holistic view of health that focuses on the physical, spiritual, cultural, emotional and social wellbeing of the individual, family and community.



> Key Strategic Areas

The *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015* guides the approach that the Drug and Alcohol Office, other government agencies, non-government agencies and the community may adopt to counter illicit drug use and harmful alcohol consumption. It recognises the need to respond in a flexible and practical way to existing problems.

The *Framework* includes the following five key strategic areas:

- **Focusing on prevention** – educating and encouraging individuals, families and communities to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills to choose healthy lifestyles and promote healthy environments;
- **Intervening before problems become entrenched** – implementing a range of programs and services that identify individuals, families and communities at-risk and intervening before problems become entrenched;
- **Effective law enforcement approaches** – reducing and controlling the availability of alcohol and other drugs and implementing strategies that aim to prevent or break the cycle of offending;
- **Effective treatment and support services** – providing integrated, evidence based treatment and support services that promote positive and healthy lifestyle changes by effectively responding to an individual's use and those affected by someone else's use; and
- **Strategic coordination and capacity building** – providing improved and targeted responses to alcohol and other drug related problems through capacity building, workforce development, collaboration, evidence based practice, monitoring and information dissemination.





> Key Strategic Areas

Focusing on prevention

Key Outcomes	Key Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A community with better knowledge and skills to prevent alcohol and other drug problems and reduce associated harms.• Prevention programs that include the building of resilience and protective factors targeted at children and young people.• A positive culture and supportive environment that is consistent with decreasing illicit drug use and harmful alcohol consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community awareness and public education campaigns that increase knowledge of alcohol and other drug related issues and consequences, and support the development of a safer drinking culture, practices and environments (e.g. alcohol harm related to women, harms related to drink and drug driving and the possible mental health risks associated with cannabis and amphetamine use).• Implement evidence based alcohol strategies such as law enforcement of liquor licensing laws, controlling access and availability, targeting harmful alcohol use (including binge drinking) and responsible marketing, supply and service.• Improve knowledge and recognition of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder to inform prevention strategies and assist affected children and their families.• Consumer, community and key stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of strategies, such as alcohol management plans, particularly in areas where high levels of harm are evident.• Continue to develop and implement an appropriate school curriculum including evidence based school alcohol and other drug education and associated workforce development for teachers.• Provide universal programs within the school health promotion framework, facilitating student engagement, behaviour management and support services for young people and their parents in school settings.• Promote recreational, educational and cultural activities using methods and channels favoured by young people to prevent and delay alcohol and other drug use.



> Key Strategic Areas

Intervening before problems become entrenched

Key Outcomes	Key Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early assessment and brief intervention measures to reduce problems resulting from alcohol and other drug use.• Early intervention treatment opportunities for young offenders with alcohol and other drug related problems.• Consumer, community and stakeholder knowledge and awareness of the alcohol and other drug treatment and support services available in Western Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve access to information, education and brief intervention in settings other than specialist alcohol and other drug services.• Repeal the <i>Cannabis Control Act 2003</i> and amend the <i>Misuse of Drugs Act 1981</i> and the <i>Young Offenders Act 1994</i> to provide mandatory intervention for minor juvenile cannabis offenders.• Support early identification and referral of children of drug using parents who may be identified as at-risk.• Provide treatment and support opportunities for juvenile offenders at all stages of the criminal justice system to address their alcohol and other drug use.• Target priority groups in the development of early intervention strategies such as Aboriginal people, young people, those with co-occurring mental health problems, young women with children, those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and families.• Promote safer prescribing practices by general practitioners to reduce the diversion and misuse of schedule 8 prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs and 'doctor shopping'.• Build and maintain strong family, education, and community connection for young people that includes the development of resilience and protective factors to reduce the likelihood of young people becoming involved in harmful behaviour, including harmful alcohol consumption.



> Key Strategic Areas

Effective law enforcement approaches

Key Outcomes	Key Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible service and supply of alcohol to reduce harm and antisocial behaviour.• Disruption and reduction of the supply of illicit drugs and the diversion of pharmaceuticals.• Appropriate legal responses to decrease the impact of alcohol and other drug related crime.• Safeguarding and protection of children and young people from the suppliers of illicit drugs.• Treatment and support opportunities for offenders at appropriate stages of the criminal justice system to address their alcohol and other drug use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A focus on frontline policing including high visibility in and around licensed outlets, increased compliance with relevant legislation, random breath and saliva testing in relation to drink and drug driving and focusing on drug seizures and the targeting of dealers.• Repeal the <i>Cannabis Control Act 2003</i> implementing a more effective scheme to control cannabis possession and cultivation, including banning drug use paraphernalia specifically designed for illicit drug use.• Safeguard and protect children and young people from the suppliers of illicit drugs that include amendments to the <i>Misuse of Drugs Act 1981</i>, to make exposing children to harm resulting from the manufacture of illicit drugs, or cultivation of hydroponically grown cannabis, an offence.• Continue to develop and implement liquor-licensing initiatives that control access to liquor and provide for the responsible sale and supply of alcohol and reduce harm and antisocial behaviour.• Target clandestine laboratories to reduce the manufacture of illicit drugs.• Provide comprehensive police and court diversion programs, including referrals from specialist courts and diversionary options, particularly for young people and for related areas such as repeat drink driving.• Strengthen and assist local communities to prepare crime prevention responses with a significant focus on reducing alcohol and other drug related harm.• Collaborate with national initiatives relating to the inappropriate use and diversion of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.



> Key Strategic Areas

Effective treatment and support services

Key Outcomes	Key Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A comprehensive range of alcohol and other drug treatment and support services to facilitate access and ensure continuity of care.• Integrated and coordinated services through effective partnerships and collaboration between the alcohol and other drug sector and key stakeholders.• Evidence based treatment that supports services to better meet the needs of clients and improve client outcomes.• Family inclusive alcohol and other drug treatment and support services for individuals and families affected by someone else's alcohol and other drug use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved access to a broad range of alcohol and other drug treatment services that includes provisions for high-risk populations such as youth, Aboriginal people, parents with children (including pregnant women), people with co-occurring mental health and alcohol and other drug problems, and offenders.• Maintain and continue to provide integrated (government and non-government) and coordinated services to meet the needs of consumers.• Trial initiatives to improve engagement with hard to reach groups.• Undertake research and evaluation to determine effectiveness and inform program development and service planning.• Continue to improve linkages between primary health, the alcohol and other drug sector and services such as child protection, mental health, sexual health, corrective services and housing to enable more holistic service provision.• Improve the quality of alcohol and other drug services through development of the <i>Western Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Quality Framework</i> into an accreditation system.• Address the holistic needs of individuals and families of those in treatment through family inclusive practice.• Provide access to education, health promotion, treatment and support services to address alcohol and other drug problems for young people in detention.• Provide a range of alcohol and other drug treatment programs in prison and community corrections locations for those assessed as having high needs or at high risk of reoffending.• Provide education and statewide needle and syringe exchange programs to reduce and control the spread of blood borne viruses.



> Key Strategic Areas

Strategic coordination and capacity building

Key Outcomes	Key Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriately aligned and coordinated local, regional state and national action across government, non-government and related sectors.• Workforce planning and development initiatives that build the capacity and sustainability of the alcohol and other drug sector and other key stakeholders.• Innovative and evidence based responses to alcohol and other drug issues through data collection, monitoring, evaluation and research.• Capacity building of the workforce to better respond to the needs of Aboriginal people and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate policy and strategy related to alcohol and other drugs, at local, regional, state and national levels in consultation with other government departments, non-government services, consumers and the community.• Provide guidance in delivering culturally secure programs and Aboriginal ways of working, in order to strengthen their efforts to manage and reduce alcohol and other drug related harm in Aboriginal communities.• Consider the perspectives and specific needs to particular groups, such as those from culturally and linguistically diverse populations, young people, and those with co-occurring mental health and alcohol and other drugs conditions, in the development of policy and services.• Further the working relationship between the alcohol and other drug sector and other key sectors such as mental health and justice to provide improved and coordinated services for people with both mental health and alcohol and/or drug problems.• Encourage engagement and partnership with communities, particularly those at high risk, to build their capacity and involvement in reducing alcohol and other drug use and problems.• Undertake workforce planning initiatives to ensure a sustainable workforce for the future.• Provide comprehensive workforce development for professionals (that include primary health care providers), and volunteers across the sector, to build expertise, sustainability and capacity.• Provide nationally recognised Aboriginal workforce development programs and career pathways, including Aboriginal traineeships, and culturally secure training for non-Aboriginal staff.• Establish across government and sector groups to develop and implement appropriate responses to emerging alcohol and other drug issues.• Collaborate with tertiary institutions and other agencies to gather evidence and improve the translation of alcohol and other drug knowledge into policy and practice.



> Key Strategic Areas

Strategic coordination and capacity building (continued)

Key Outcomes	Key Initiatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect data to monitor drug issues, trends, service delivery, and assist in the development of new programs and policies.• Collaborate with local, State and Commonwealth Governments to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health and those aspects of health impacted by alcohol and other drug use.• Monitor public opinion on current and proposed alcohol and other drug policy and strategy to determine its ongoing appropriateness.



> Implementation and Monitoring

The Drug and Alcohol Office is the State Government agency responsible for alcohol and other drugs strategies and services in Western Australia and is accountable to the Minister for Mental Health. As such, the implementation, monitoring and review of the *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015* will be the responsibility of the Drug and Alcohol Office in collaboration with other government agencies through the *Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategic Senior Officers' Group* (DASSOG) that consists of senior representatives from the main human and social service State Government departments.

The Drug and Alcohol Strategic Senior Officers' Group (DASSOG)

The *Framework* was developed by DASSOG in targeted consultation with key stakeholders and the community. Members of DASSOG consist of high-level representatives from the following departments:

- Department of the Attorney General;
- Department for Child Protection;
- Department for Communities;
- Department of Corrective Services;
- Department of Education [including School Drug Education and Road Aware];
- Department of Health;
- Department of Housing;
- Department of Indigenous Affairs;
- Department of Local Government;
- Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor;
- Drug and Alcohol Office;
- Mental Health Commission;
- Office of Road Safety; and
- Western Australia Police [including Office of Crime Prevention]

Where appropriate, agencies represented on DASSOG will develop, implement and report on an annual action plan that more specifically outlines their key activities to support the *Framework*. To measure progress on the implementation of the *Framework* and the *Agency Drug and Alcohol Action Plans*, DASSOG will be responsible for reporting against outcome based key performance indicators and other qualitative and quantitative

measures on an annual basis. The annual reports will be available on the Drug and Alcohol Office website: www.dao.health.wa.gov.au

The performance indicators that will be reported on as a minimum, are:

- Percentage of the population aged 12 to 15 years reporting use of illicit drugs and alcohol, compared to the percentages reported nationally.
- Percentage of the population aged 14 years and over reporting use of illicit drugs and alcohol at harmful levels, compared to the percentages reported nationally.
- Average per capita alcohol consumption in Western Australia.
- Number and weight of illicit drug seizures by drug type.
- Number of eligible cannabis offenders diverted by police to a cannabis intervention session.
- Number of juvenile drug offenders with identified drug use diverted away from the criminal justice system by either police or the court system.
- Number of adult drug offenders with identified drug use diverted into treatment through court diversion programs.
- Number of adult offenders with alcohol and other drug issues attending programs in prison.
- Number of *Liquor Control Act* infringement notices issued.
- Number of drink driving offences.
- Number of drug driving offences.
- Number of alcohol and drug treatment episodes and the percentage of treatment episodes completed as planned (or the client is still in treatment).
- Rate of hospitalisations related to alcohol.
- Rate of hospitalisations related to illicit drugs.

The above indicators are the minimum that will be reported against by DASSOG and the development of additional performance indicators will be ongoing, with a particular focus on priority groups, drugs of concern and emerging issues. *Annual Agency Action Plans* will outline other performance indicators that are specific to the actions identified.



> Other Supporting Documents

The *Strong Spirit Strong Mind – Western Australian Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drugs Framework* complements the *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015*. It provides guidance to key stakeholders in delivering culturally secure programs and Aboriginal ways of working in order to strengthen their efforts to manage and reduce alcohol and other drug related harm in Aboriginal communities.

A number of other plans will also be available for the following priority areas:

- *Alcohol Support Plan 2011-2015*
- *Illicit Drug Support Plan 2011-2015*
- *Volatile Substance Use Support Plan 2011-2015*
- *Capacity Building, Coordination and Monitoring Support Plan 2011-2015*.

The relationships between national and state alcohol and other drug strategies





Government of **Western Australia**
Drug and Alcohol Office