



MINUTES

MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON DRUG POLICY (MCDP)

MEETING

Tuesday 12 September 2000
7.30pm - 8.30pm

Cabinet Room 8.4
Parliament Buildings, Wellington

Ministers present:

Hon Annette King (Chair) - Health
Hon Lianne Dalziel - Associate
Education
Hon Steve Maharey - Social Services &
Employment
Hon Tariana Turia - Associate Māori
Affairs, Corrections & Health
Hon Phillida Bunkle - Customs

Apologies:

Hon Laila Harre - Youth Affairs
Hon Mark Gosche - Transport & Pacific
Island Affairs
Hon Matt Robson - Corrections &
Courts
Hon Hon Parekura Horomia - Māori
Affairs
Hon Phil Goff - Justice
Hon George Hawkins - Police

Officials present:

Grant Allan - Te Puni Kōkiri
Catherine Coates - Police
Karleen Edwards - HFA
Phillipa Gaines - HFA
Mike MacAvoy - Alcohol Advisory
Council
Janet O'Callaghan - Alcohol Advisory
Council

Peter Leniston - Social Policy
Vivienne Morrell - Justice
Ruth Lawton - Education
Colin Brown - Education
Shilinka Smith - Minister of Customs
Office

MCDP Secretariat (Health)

Matthew Allen
Selwyn Katene
Paul Marriott-Lloyd
Andrew Zielinski
Rob Smith

MINUTES

1. REVIEW OF THE LEGAL STATUS OF CANNABIS

Hon Annette King advised that Ministers had agreed upon the terms of reference for the review, which will be undertaken by the Health Select Committee (next year). The terms of reference state:

“To inquire into the most effective public health and health promotion strategies to minimise the use of and harm associated with cannabis and consequently the most appropriate legal status of cannabis”.

2. PROPOSED YOUTH WEBSITE

The paper outlining progress with this IACD initiative was noted.

3. HARM MINIMISATION

The paper setting out the philosophies of harm minimisation was noted.

4. TOBACCO CONTROL WORK PROGRAMME

The paper setting out the work programme was noted.

Agreed:

(a) Release the Tobacco Work Programme publicly.

5. NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON THE NAMING, PACKAGING AND MERCHANDISING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

These guidelines, produced by the Alcohol Advisory Council in association with the liquor and retail industries, were noted.

6. SIX-MONTHLY REPORTS FROM IACD AGENCIES

These six monthly reports were noted.

7. ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

Potential options for the restriction of alcohol advertising outlined in the MCDP paper were discussed. Ministers agreed that legislation to prohibit television alcohol advertising would be difficult to progress. However, the option of a

Members' Bill was raised. A potential increase in moderation advertising was discussed, but this option was not taken up. Ministers discussed the potential for either an independent or departmental review and requested officials to provide further advice about these options. Ministers also requested advice about changing the responsibility for oversight of alcohol advertising from the Advertising Standards Authority to the Broadcast Standards Authority.

Agreed:

- (a) ***Direct the IACD to draft a paper for the next MCDP meeting covering options for an independent or departmental review of broadcast alcohol advertising, and the mechanisms, appropriateness, and value of changing the responsibility for oversight of alcohol advertising from the Advertising Standards Authority to the Broadcast Standards Authority.***

8. POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME AND FETAL ALCOHOL EFFECTS

Options for FAS/FAE interventions outlined in the paper were discussed by the MCDP. Ministers considered the option of submitting a Closing the Gaps bid to address FAS/FAE. The need to ensure that targeted programmes are conveyed in a positive manner was also discussed.

Agreed:

- (a) ***Discuss with Ministers the option of a Closing the Gaps bid to target FAS/FAE.***
- (b) ***Direct the IACD to undertake further work on the FAS/FAE options for MCDP consideration for a future well-planned and possibly staged FAS/FAE strategy. IACD to consider a bid for funding for the 2001/02 budget process.***
- (c) ***Direct the IACD to produce briefing notes regarding mandatory health warning labels on alcohol products for the Minister of Health, for distribution to MPs.***

9. NGO REPRESENTATION ON THE IACD

Ministers discussed the appropriateness and value of NGO representation on the IACD. Given the need for free and frank discussion about issues (including material classified as budget secret), the large size of the current IACD (17 agencies are already represented), and the lack of a single NGO representative of all NGOs, this option was not supported.

Ministers agreed that opportunities for NGOs and community groups to be involved in drug policy should be developed and improved.

Agreed:

- (a) ***Direct the IACD to develop and improve opportunities for NGO involvement in drug policy by:***
- ***allocating part of IACD meetings for NGOs to attend if they wish on items of concern to them, and for the IACD to seek NGO input***
 - ***taking (and making) opportunities to hold meetings and hui on specific drug policy issues***
 - ***contributing to other fora, informing NGOs and community groups of drug policy initiatives***
 - ***developing a strategy for better communication of the work of the IACD, and to encourage input and feedback on all issues of drug policy from NGOs and community groups.***

10. DRAFT NATIONAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY

The final draft of the National Alcohol Strategy, produced by the Alcohol Advisory Council, was presented. It was suggested that a separate National Alcohol Strategy may be inappropriate as it could be seen as a break from the National Drug Policy. However, the Minister of Health and officials emphasised that the National Alcohol Strategy is to sit under the NDP, and represents an action plan on reducing alcohol-related harm.

Agreed:

- (a) ***Submit the Strategy to Cabinet Committee for consideration and ultimately (if agreed), publication as a clear subset of the National Drug Policy.***

11. REVIEW OF DRUG EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Education prepared two papers for the MCDP, which reviewed the current framework for drug education in schools and individual programmes that are in place (*Review of Drug Education in Schools* and *Evaluations of Drug Education in Schools*).

Ministers noted that there was very little evaluation of the effectiveness of current drug education programmes in schools and little knowledge of what programmes schools were implementing. Ministers considered that future work should focus on reviewing appropriate characteristics for drug education programmes rather than reviewing existing programmes. This work could

help schools fulfil their obligations under the Health and Physical Education curriculum, which becomes mandatory in 2001.

Agreed:

- (a) ***Direct the Education Review Office to prepare a report about effective characteristics of drug education programmes developed and taught in schools or offered in schools by external providers.***

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Ministers accepted the minutes of the Ministerial Committee on Drug policy (MCDP) meeting of 13 June 2000 as an accurate reflection of that meeting.

13. NEXT MEETING

A date for the next MCDP meeting will be set as soon as possible.