

INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON DRUGS (IACD) MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held 10 August 1998, 10.30 am - 4.15 pm

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Dr Gillian Durham, Ministry of Health (Chair)
Ms San Fitzgibbon, Ministry of Education
Ms Sandra Meredith, Ministry of Youth Affairs
Ms Carol Stevenson, Te Puni Kokiri
Ms Catherine Coates, Police
Mr George Smollet, Customs Service
Mr Dave Negri, Customs Service
Mr Mark MacCallum, Ministry of Justice
Mr Bruce Asher, Department of Corrections
Ms Virginia Webb, Ministry of Transport
Mr Bill Frith, Land Transport Safety Authority
Dr Mike MacAvoy, Alcohol Advisory Council

For part of the meeting

Dr Janice Wilson, Ministry of Health
Dr Bob Boyd, Ministry of Health

Secretariat

Mr Matthew Allen, Ministry of Health
Mr Michael Webb, Ministry of Health

Apologies

Mr Tony Johns, Department of Corrections
Ms Bette Kill, Health Funding Authority
Ms Cathy Scott, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ms Franceska Banga, The Treasury

SUMMARY OF ACTION ARISING

Agenda item 1 - Introductions

- The Chair welcomed members to the inaugural Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs meeting, and each member briefly introduced themselves. Apologies were received from three IACD members who could not attend the meeting. The absence of a representative from the Health Funding Authority (HFA) was noted as being unfortunate.

Action arising:

Members to advise the Secretariat of the name of an alternate who can substitute for them in the event they cannot attend an IACD meeting.

Agenda item 2 - Procedural matters

- The Secretariat introduced various procedural aspects to the way in which IACD meetings will be conducted, including the services which will be provided by the Secretariat. Members were reminded that, in future, where they wish to place items on the agenda, relevant papers should be made available to the Secretariat at least one week in advance of the scheduled meetings, in order to allow sufficient time to prepare appropriate summaries and for all papers to be collated in special folders ready for pre-distribution to members.
- The Chair canvassed the fact that the Chair of the Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy (MCDP) had directed that no "BUDGET SECRET" papers were to be shared or discussed with the representative from the Alcohol Advisory Council, in order to respect the normal conventions around access to such information. The Chair questioned whether a similar protocol should apply to the representative from the Land Transport Safety Authority.

Action arising:

Ministry of Transport to clarify whether "BUDGET SECRET" material can be shared with the Land Transport Safety Authority, and advise the Secretariat accordingly.

Agenda item 3.1 - Drug use in the New Zealand context

- Members representing the Customs Service, Police, ALAC and Ministry of Health made brief presentations on the current drug use situation in New Zealand, plus emerging trends.

Agenda item 3.2 - Development of the National Drug Policy

- The Secretariat summarised the policy development process for the National Drug Policy, surveyed the key milestones in the policy document, and provided an overview of the additional commitments which New Zealand has signed itself up for at the recent United National General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS). The Chair noted that although some of the milestones listed in the National Drug Policy are medium-term, and the UNGASS commitments are medium- to long-term, the priority for IACD must be to focus on preparing for the first MCDP meeting, to be held on 25 August.

Agenda item 4.1 - Agency reports

- Members each briefly spoke to the summary reports which had been filed by their agencies, and answered any questions which other

members had about the contents of their reports. The HFA report was taken as read by members; the Chair invited members with follow-up questions about the HFA report to direct them to the Secretariat in the first instance, which will pass them on to the Authority for a response.

- The Secretariat highlighted the fact that this 'environmental scan' of work by agencies which relates to the National Drug Policy is necessarily incomplete, because of the fairly narrow membership of the IACD. Examples of other public sector agencies which could have an important role in advancing the desired outcomes of the policy include other population-based departments (eg. Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs) and operational arms of current IACD members (eg. Maritime Safety Authority, Civil Aviation Authority etc.). IACD members agreed that the Secretariat should approach these other agencies to develop a comprehensive picture of Government interventions which address drug-related harm.

Action arising:

Secretariat to approach other relevant public sector agencies to seek their help in developing a more complete environmental scan of Government interventions which address drug-related harm.

- The Ministry of Transport representative raised the issue of alcohol-related drowning data. The ALAC representative informed the meeting that Professor Gordon Smith, currently attached to the Injury Prevention Unit of Auckland Medical School, has recently completed a study for ALAC on boat drownings in the Auckland region where alcohol was involved. Various members questioned what the effect of current transport-sponsored legislative amendments will be on the issue of alcohol-related drownings.

Action arising:

Ministry of Transport to clarify the intended effect of current legislative amendments in the maritime transport sector, and report back to the IACD any proposed amendments which deal with alcohol-related harm.

Action arising:

ALAC to distribute copies of Professor Smith's report to IACD members.

Agenda item 4.2 - Gap identification

- Members suggested various information gaps or service gaps which prevent progress being made or evaluated against the desired outcomes listed in the [National Drug Policy](#). A list of such gaps was prepared by the Secretariat for subsequent distribution to IACD members.

Action arising:

Secretariat to distribute gap identification list to all IACD members [copy attached].

- The ALAC representative highlighted recent work commissioned by the Council which was undertaken by Ms Sandy Brinstone on the location, strengths and weaknesses of alcohol databases in New Zealand.

Action arising:

ALAC to distribute copies of Ms Brinstone's report to IACD members.

Agenda item 5 - Planned work programme

- The Chair briefed members on discussions with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Chair of MCDP about the prospect for new drug-related initiatives being factored into upcoming Budget rounds, building on agencies' current work programmes. The Chair also reported the Minister's wish that "pressure points" be identified in this area.
- The intersectoral Strengthening Families model was debated by members at some length. Using the Strengthening Families model, members agreed a process for moving forward. A typology for the planned work programme was developed, and for each topic a series of focus questions was devised. The Chair then sought agreement by members to nominate a lead agency/ies for each topic, which could act as project leaders for the necessary work.

Action arising:

Secretariat to distribute list of general topics and focus questions for the planned work programme to all IACD members [copy attached].

- Members acknowledged that the resulting stocktake would inevitably be fairly superficial, but it should identify any gaps and overlaps, and improve the targeting of programmes. Members resolved to complete the stocktaking exercise by the end of October 1998 so as to be able to report-back to an expected smaller group of MCDP Ministers (perhaps a "G4"?) to check that agencies are basically 'going in the right direction'.
- Members agreed that the intention should be to develop a vision for where real gains could be made under the banner of the National Drug Policy, which could then be mapped to the "pressure points" identified by IACD and MCDP (eg. cannabis, Maori, young people etc.).

Agenda item 6 - Advisory structures

- The Secretariat spoke to the issue of advisory structures which could perhaps support the National Drug Policy, and in particular how to involve non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other institutional actors. The Chair reported to members comments she had picked up

from the Chair of MCDP, who indicated that NGOs should be involved when the intersectoral work programme is 'up and running' and then on an 'as appropriate' basis.

- Various members expressed a preference for the intersectoral work programme to be developed to a draft stage, and then for the draft to be consulted on with interested NGOs. One possibility discussed was to invite interested groups and individuals to join a mailing list which would be used to distribute information about the implementation of the National Drug Policy, and to seek wider views about the type of intersectoral work programme being proposed. The Chair suggested that the issue of NGO involvement was a matter that should properly be put before Ministers for decision at the first MCDP meeting.

Action arising:

Secretariat to raise the issue of advisory structures for consideration by Ministers in the MCDP agenda paper on opportunities to build on current work by agencies (draft MCDP agenda item 4.2).

- The Secretariat also briefly touched upon the issue of where the IACD or MCDP receives advice from on illicit drug issues. The demise of the Drugs Advisory Committee was seen to leave a gap, raising a question mark over where Ministers would get technical advice on illicit drug issues from (especially emerging drug trends, like abuse of methamphetamines). The establishment in Australia of a National Expert Advisory Committee on Illicit Drugs was discussed. The Chair noted that IACD should focus its efforts on the immediate work which needs to be done for the first MCDP meeting, and that the priority for this meeting is the purchase interests of Government rather than the ownership interests of Government.

Agenda item 7 - Agenda for MCDP

- The Secretariat introduced various procedural aspects to the way in which MCDP meetings are intended to be conducted, including the role which officials will be expected to play. Members were also briefed about the wish of the Chair of MCDP that a small number of officials should make oral presentations to the Committee at the inaugural MCDP meeting.
- Members endorsed the draft MCDP agenda which had been prepared by the Secretariat.

MCDP agenda item 2 - Procedural matters

- Ministers will be asked to endorse a short paper on how MCDP meetings will be run, the services provided by the Secretariat, and the relationship between MCDP and the IACD.

Action arising:

Secretariat to prepare an appropriate paper on procedural aspects of MCDP meetings.

MCDP agenda item 3.1 - Drug use in a New Zealand context

- Ministers will be asked to note a paper on the current drug use situation in New Zealand, as well as an assessment of emerging drug use issues and comparative trends in Australia. Three officials will also be asked to make very short oral presentations on key themes: Customs (imported/emerging drug use trends), ALAC (youth issues) and Te Puni Kōkiri (the importance of economic and community development strategies in combating the cultivation of cannabis as a cash crop). The Chair of IACD will introduce the three officials and provide a general overview of the drug use situation. It is expected that this presentation should take no more than 10-15 minutes.

Action arising:

Secretariat to prepare an appropriate paper to support the oral presentations by officials. This paper is likely to be an expanded version of the paper under agenda item 3.1 of the IACD agenda papers. Secretariat to distribute a draft paper for comment by IACD members by Wednesday 19 August [responses back by 5pm Thursday 20 August].

Action arising:

Customs, ALAC and Te Puni Kōkiri officials to prepare an appropriate one-page OHP to support their oral presentations on the three themes. Text for OHPs to be provided to the Secretariat by Tuesday 18 August for uniform formatting. Formatted OHPs will be returned to officials on Thursday 20 August for cross-checking. The final set of overheads will be distributed to all IACD members prior to the MCDP meeting.

MCDP agenda item 3.2 - Work by agencies to advance the National Drug Policy

- Ministers will be asked to note a paper on the current work by agencies to advance the National Drug Policy. This paper will provide a one-page summary of Government interventions to address drug-related harm, and then collate half- or one-page summaries from each agency about the work that they do under the three main strategies of supply control, demand reduction and problem limitation. Cost estimates will be included where possible, although a general caveat will be given that, until further work is done, the IACD is not confident that it can come up with robust estimates of Government expenditure on drug-related interventions. Officials will again be asked to make very short oral presentations to describe the work which is currently being done in these three strategy areas: Customs/Police (supply control), Health/ALAC (demand reduction) and Health/HFA (problem limitation). The Chair of IACD will once again introduce the officials. It is expected

that this presentation should also take no more than approximately 10-15 minutes.

Action arising:

Secretariat to prepare an appropriate one-page summary of the main types of interventions to address drug-related harm [copy attached]. Members to provide any suggested edits to this summary to the Secretariat by 5pm Monday 17 August.

Action arising:

Secretariat to provide IACD members with a copy of the agreed template for the preparation of half- or one-page summaries about the work that they do under the three main strategies of supply control, demand reduction and problem limitation [copy of template attached, along with an already-completed example by the Customs Service]. Members to provide their completed half- or one-page summaries to the Secretariat by 5pm Monday 17 August.

[top of page](#)

MCDP agenda item 4.1 - Balance between harm prevention and harm reduction

- Ministers will be asked to consider and debate a short paper on the balance between measures which are designed to prevent drug-related harm and measures which are designed to reduce drug-related harm. The Secretariat will provide a preliminary draft of this paper for comment and approval by IACD members prior to the MCDP meeting. It is possible officials may be called in to offer agency perspectives or further information on this paper, although a more likely scenario is that questions will be directed by Ministers at the Chair of IACD (who will remain in the MCDP meeting room throughout the meeting).

Action arising:

Secretariat to prepare a draft background paper on the balance between measures which are designed to prevent drug-related harm and measures which are designed to reduce drug-related harm. Preliminary draft to be distributed to IACD members for comment by Monday 17 August [with responses back by 5pm Thursday 20 August].

MCDP agenda item 4.2 - Opportunities to build on current work by agencies

- Ministers will be asked to consider the IACD's proposed process to develop an intersectoral work programme for the National Drug Policy by January 1999. Key aspects of this process will be a comprehensive stocktake of current work to advance the policy, which identifies any

gaps and overlaps, as well as opportunities to improve the targeting of existing programmes, or possible new initiatives which could build on agencies' work. This stocktaking exercise would be reported back to a smaller group of MCDP Ministers by the end of October 1998 to get a steer that agencies are 'going in the right direction'. The Secretariat will prepare a draft paper which sketches this process and distribute it for comment and approval by IACD members prior to the MCDP meeting. Officials could again be asked to offer agency perspectives or further information under this agenda item.

Action arising:

Secretariat to prepare a draft paper which outlines the process the IACD proposes to follow in order to develop an intersectoral work programme for the National Drug Policy by January 1999. Preliminary draft to be distributed to IACD members for comment by Wednesday 19 August [with responses by 5pm Thursday 20 August].

Agenda item 8 - Other business

- Some members raised a proposal by Statistics New Zealand to remove Census questions about tobacco and alcohol. Various members expressed concern that this would affect the ability to maintain good baseline information on the use of these drugs in the community. It was suggested that the Chair of IACD could write to Statistics New Zealand requesting that questions on tobacco and alcohol be retained in the next Census. However, IACD members agreed that any such correspondence should come from individual agencies themselves, rather than under the umbrella of the IACD.
- The Secretariat led a brief discussion of whether members wish to be involved in the work of the New Zealand delegation at the next Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) meeting [16-25 March 1999], how to ensure better co-ordination between agencies on work with an international dimension, and how IACD members can build better linkages with Australian officials on drug-related issues. A decision on the first question was deferred for further consideration by members; resolutions were, however, made on the second two questions.

Action arising:

IACD members to consider whether they would like to contribute to the development of New Zealand's role at the 42nd Session of CND.

Action arising:

Secretariat to routinely notify IACD members of relevant international initiatives, either as out-of-session papers or at regular IACD meetings.

Action arising:

Chair of IACD to write to the Australian Inter-Governmental Committee on Drugs, seeking to formalise links between the committees and to engender closer Trans-Tasman co-operation on drug issues.

Action arising:

"Law enforcement members" of IACD (esp. Police, Customs, Justice) to consider whether they would like to pursue the possibility of taking part in future Inter-Governmental Committee on Drugs meetings, with the outcome of this consultation to be communicated to the Secretariat.

Action arising:

Secretariat to arrange for distribution of relevant IACD papers to those non-member public sector agencies which have a direct interest in them (eg. Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Ministry of Labour, etc.).

- The representative from ALAC also distributed an advance copy of the Council's draft National Alcohol Strategy for the information of members. Formal consultation copies of the strategy document will shortly be sent to IACD members and other interested parties, together with a letter in questionnaire form inviting responses. The ALAC representative advised that such responses will most probably be called for by the beginning of next year.