

INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON DRUGS (IACD) MEETING

*10 July 2008, 1:00pm – 4:00pm
Ministry of Health, Rooms 1.01 & 1.02, 1.03, 1 The Terrace, Wellington*

MINUTES

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees - IACD Agencies	
Chris Laurenson (Chair)	Fiona Roberts (Justice)
Bronwen Hicks (Health)	Kurt Vlietstra (Justice)
Mark Heffernan (Health)	Amanda Shaw (Justice)
Bruce Atmore (Health)	Laurie Gabites (LGNZ)
Peter Kennerly (Health)	Grant Guillosson (MSD)
Susan Edwards (Health)	Alex Handiside (MYD)
Megan Larken (ALAC)	Stuart Mills (NDIB)
Andrew Hearn (ALAC)	Laura Hayton (NDIB)
Clare Helliwell (Customs)	Paul Tricklebank (NDIB)
Dave Negri (Customs)	Virginia Andersen (Police)
Frances Scott (Customs)	Geoffrey Dunn (Police)
Kirsty Ruddlesden (Corrections)	Te Rina Moke (Te Puni Kokiri)
Anna Mills (CYF)	Te Atarangi Whiu (Te Puni Kokiri)
Mark Corrigan (Education)	Helen Fielding (Transport)
Jo Bridger (Education)	

Apologies	
Jenny Wolf (Health)	Barbara Phillips (Health)
Jonathan Lyall (Police)	

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 25 March 2008

Members agreed that the minutes from the 25 March 2008 IACD meeting be approved and placed on the website, pending minor grammatical changes.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM 25 March 2008 MEETING

3.1 Minute item 4 Illegal Drug Harm Index

Police advised that the actions concerning the Illegal Drug Harm Index have been dealt with.

3.2 Minute item 5.1 Illegal Drug Monitoring Report

Justice advised that the Illegal Drug Monitoring Report had been updated.

3.3 Minute item 5.2 Ministry of Transport Update

Transport advised that the working group established to access random drug testing has occurred.

3.4 Minute item 6 Progress of Working Groups

The NDP Discretionary Grant Fund proposals for the 2008/2009 round have been approved by the Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy (MCDP).

3.5 Minute item 7.1 Child and Maternal Health Action Plan on Alcohol and Other Drugs

Health and ALAC advised that work on the Child and Maternal Health Action Plan on Alcohol and other Drugs is underway.

3.6 Minute item 7.2 National Alcohol Action Plan

The National Alcohol Action Plan is to be discussed at agenda item 9.

3.7 Minute item 10.1 Methamphetamine Action Group

The Methamphetamine Action Plan is to be discussed at agenda item 6.

4 DRAFT AGENDA FOR 28 JULY 2008 MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON DRUG POLICY (MCDP) MEETING

The Chair advised that Chief Executives of IACD agencies have been invited to the next MCDP meeting. It is envisioned that discussion of drug issues at a senior level will further improve inter-agency commitment and collaboration.

Action:

The Committee agreed that:

(a) an appropriate agenda item for the MCDP meeting could be 'Improving Inter-Agency Collaboration'.

The IACD considered four papers prepared for the 28 July 2008 MCDP meeting. These were discussed under agenda items 4.1 – 4.4.

4.1 Ready-to-drink beverages, availability and price of alcohol in supermarkets, and excise tax-paper for MCDP consideration

As directed by MCDP at its last meeting, Health had prepared a paper on ready-to-drink beverages (RTDs), availability and price of alcohol in supermarkets, and excise tax for MCDP consideration at the forthcoming 28 July meeting.

The paper comprises three parts: RTDs, availability and price of alcohol in supermarkets and excise tax as a harm reduction approach

Part 1: RTDs

Part 1 of the paper outlines five of the following options to address the issues with RTDs:

- Option 1 involved implementing a targeted tax on spirit based RTDs
- Option 2 involved the creation of a new class of alcoholic beverages for all pre mixed drinks (whether beer, wine or spirits-based) so that all RTD products would be subject to the same taxation rate
- Option 3 involved the imposition of a minimum price on RTDs
- Option 4 involved the development of a voluntary Code of Conduct with Industry
- Option 5 involved continuing to address the wider environment in which alcohol is consumed by young people rather than specifically focussing on RTDs

The Committee discussed the five options. The Committee noted that although increasing the excise duty could be effective, it is difficult to predict the likely pricing effects of an excise increase on RTDs, because the extent to which any increase in excise will be passed on to the consumer is not known. The Committee discussed the definition of an RTD, and the need to take into account new products on the market. Further consideration was given as to whether a minimum price policy should be applied to all alcohol products rather than RTDs specifically. The Committee noted that the most commonly consumed type of alcohol among youth is beer (at 40%) with RTDs coming in second at 27%. The Committee also noted that there are many initiatives already proposed, such as the National Alcohol Action Plan (NAAP), proposals expected to be in the Sale and Supply of Liquor and Liquor Enforcement Bill and that the Advertising Standards

Authority is already developing a new code to cover the naming, labelling, packaging and sales promotion of liquor products. There was a general preference for options 4 and 5,

Part 2: *availability and price of alcohol in supermarkets*

The paper noted that supermarkets have become a major force in the alcohol market and are now being joined by other mega-stores such as The Warehouse with its 'store within a store', Warehouse cellars. Members considered that the majority of problems appear to be occurring with the smaller operators who have minimal stock. The Committee noted that following the Review of the Regulation of Alcohol Advertising, Cabinet agreed that the Ministry of Health initiate a process of engagement with relevant stakeholders to encourage them to develop voluntary codes in relation to product display.

Part 3: *Excise Tax as a Harm Reduction Approach*

The Committee discussed the use of excise tax as an effective strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm. Members noted that evidence had consistently shown that when other factors remain unchanged, an increase in price has generally led to a decrease in alcohol consumption, and that a decrease in price has usually led to an increase in alcohol consumption. Members considered that while RTDs may be an issue, focusing on RTDs as the issue to address binge drinking among young people may not necessarily be the most effective approach to take. Members raised concerns that young people may switch to alternative, cheaper alcoholic beverages in the face of an increase in price on RTDs and considered whether alcohol should be taxed according to alcohol content rather than being taxed in ranges according to ethanol content or beverage volume as in the current system.

The Committee agreed that:

Health is to amend the MCDP paper to address IACD concerns including:

- (a) clarification of the range of alcohol strength of RTDs in New Zealand.**
- (b) identification of the linkages between the five options in the paper and current government initiatives and proposals.**
- (c) inclusion relevant noting and agreement recommendations to reflect the content of the paper**
- (d) support for option 5 with some minor wording changes and further consideration of option 4.**

Health is to circulate the paper to IACD members for further feedback prior to submission to MCDP.

4.2 NDIB Precursor Assessment and Project STOP

4.2.1 Precursor Assessment

NDIB provided an overview of the Precursor Strategic Assessment. The report is in the final editing stages and is expected to be released at the end of July.

The Committee:

- (a) noted the pending release of the precursor strategic assessment and the findings and recommendations of the report.**
- (b) noted that further consideration was needed as to how the final recommendations might best be progressed.**
- (c) agreed that the Methamphetamine Action Group (MAG) will consider the recommendations in the report.**

4.2.2 Update on Privacy Concerns In Relation To “Project STOP”

Health presented a paper advising that Project STOP may breach the Privacy Act 1993, and privacy rules under the Health Information Privacy Code (HIPC). New Zealand Police stated they had received legal advice that suggested HIPC may not be breached if a project like STOP was implemented in New Zealand. It was noted that the NDIB and Police had recommended in the precursor assessment Project STOP (or a similar initiative) could be effectively implemented in order to reduce the domestic diversion of pseudoephedrine.

There was discussion as to whether Project STOP, or a similar initiative, was a Health tool or a law enforcement tool. IACD members resolved that such an initiative would be classified as a harm minimisation tool.

Police spoke on the paper responding to the privacy concerns raised by Health. Police sought to further engage Health in exploring the options available.

Action:

The Committee agreed:

- a) that a working group meeting be convened between Police, Health and Justice to further consider Project STOP prior to MCDP consideration. Health will arrange this meeting by the end of July.**

4.3 Alcohol and Illegal Drug Monitoring Report

Justice informed the Committee that it has received project updates from six or seven agencies. Members discussed the circumstances that determine whether a project is added or removed from the report. For example, once a paper has been reported to MCDP it could be removed from the report in order for new projects to be added. Removed projects could be added to a list of completed projects. It was noted that input from each agency is necessary for the report to be up to date.

Action:

The Committee agreed that:

- a) Justice will prepare a covering memorandum (with recommendations) requesting clarification from MCDP on the process for updating the report.**
- b) Justice would prepare a brief synopsis to be included in the introduction of the report.**

4.4 National Drug Policy (NDP) Discretionary Grant Fund

The Chair reminded members that MCDP has agreed to discuss the effectiveness of the Discretionary Grant Fund at its next meeting. The Committee discussed the range of options for refocusing the fund including more proactive management of the fund. However it was felt that there would be resourcing issues across agencies which would make this impractical and that such a move may limit innovative ideas.

Action:

The Committee agreed that:

- a) Health prepare a paper to be submitted to MCDP recommending greater Ministerial involvement in the selection of priority areas but continuing with the process of a general call for proposals.**

5 GLOBAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY

Health advised that consultation is likely required with other agencies, and possibly industry and NGOs to develop a New Zealand response on the Global Alcohol Strategy. Members discussed the commitment of other agencies to be involved in the Global Alcohol Strategy.

The committee noted that:

- a) **ALAC, Justice, Health, Police and Local Government are to form a working group.**
- b) **Transport, Education, Customs, Police and Te Puni Kokiri are to be corresponding members.**

6 METHAMPHETAMINE ACTION PLAN

Police noted the proposed actions and recommendations from the 2003 Methamphetamine Action Plan and the previous update on the Plan provided to the MCDP. Police suggested an early meeting of the Methamphetamine Action Group (MAG) to discuss progress on the Plan. The MAG is a working group of the IACD set up to consider and review the Plan.

Action:

The Committee agreed that:

- a) **the Methamphetamine Action Group (MAG) will convene a meeting soon to discuss latest developments around methamphetamine.**
- b) **Police will clarify whether Corrections wish to be included on the MAG.**
- c) **the MAG agenda item will be removed from the agenda of the pending MCDP meeting.**

7 COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

Health advised that a new political declaration will be adopted by the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at its meeting to be held in March 2009. There will be a high level segment including Ministers from member states. This will be followed by the regular CND meeting. The Committee noted that the Minister of Health has agreed, in principle, that New Zealand attendance at the High level meeting should be a priority and that a Minister will lead the delegation.

Action:

The Committee agreed that:

- (a) **agencies, especially Police and Customs will consider their participation in the New Zealand delegation for CND 52.**

8 ILLICIT DRUG MONITORING SYSTEM

Police announced that three separate reports have been released by the Centre for Social Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE). They also noted that Chris Wilkins of SHORE will be available to respond to any media queries about the research. The members of the IDMS steering group are in

agreement to put forward a report. Health and Police have agreed for the report to be viewed by the IACD. It was noted that the following Ministers have been briefed on the release of the three IDMS reports:

- Associate Minister of Health, Hon Jim Anderton;
- Minister of Customs, Hon Nanaia Mahuta;
- Minister of Corrections, Hon Phil Goff;
- Minister of Justice, Hon Annette King;
- Minister of Police, Hon Annette King.

Actions:

The Committee agreed that:

- (a) the IACD is to provide comments on the report by Friday 11 July 2008.**
- (b) the Secretariat is to provide Police with a list of all IACD members and their email addresses.**

9 NATIONAL ALCOHOL ACTION PLAN (NAAP) & THE SALE OF LIQUOR ACT 1989 AMENDMENTS

Health advised that the consultation plan has been updated and the working group has reconvened. It was noted that the Ministry of Health will collaborate with the NAAP working group on consultation matters. Major tasks will include developing and implementing a communications plan, planning meetings, and agreeing funding arrangements with contributing agencies. Health noted that consultation on the NAAP and amendments to the Sale of Liquor Act 1989 are likely to occur concurrently and that this could place pressure on the sector.

The Committee also noted the progress on proposed changes to the Sale of Liquor Act 1989 incorporating: capping the number of liquor licenses, widening the grounds on which the public could object to a liquor licence being granted and considering the types of stores (e.g. dairies) selling alcohol. The Committee noted that Local Government is committed to the changes and congratulated Justice for achieving this bill.

It was suggested that agencies that work closely with local authorities encourage them to consider development of alcohol action plans.

Recommendations:

The Committee noted that:

- a) the National Alcohol Action Plan Working Group had completed a significant amount of work on the Plan.**

Action:

The Committee agreed that:

- a) **Health will request that a paper on the NAAP and Proposed Changes to the Sale of Liquor Act 1989 be considered for the MCDP agenda if there are outstanding issues at that time.**

10 UPDATE ON CANNABIS STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The NDIB Strategic Assessment "New Cannabis The Cornerstone of Illicit Drug Harm" included a number of recommendations and initiatives that focussed on reducing the supply and demand for cannabis in NZ with the aim of reducing the harm posed by cannabis cultivation and subsequent abuse.

The NDIB continues to monitor international trend developments in cannabis cultivation and analyse likely or potential impacts on domestic cannabis cultivation trends.

NDIB advised that the cannabis, including hydroponically grown cannabis, has a much stronger THC level. There is evidence of the mother plant being cloned, thus turning this into a 'high-tech' system.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) **that NDIB will be invited to give a short presentation on the cannabis strategic assessment at the next IACD meeting.**

11 EACD UPDATE

Health updated the Committee on the business of the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs. The Committee was advised that the EACD had been briefed on the proposed regulations under the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Act 2005 to place further controls on restricted substances and that the EACD has considered a paper on, new BZP-free pills. Health advised that they intended to put out a generic statement on the potential dangers of ingesting unknown substances, including BZP-free party pills. .

12 NEXT MEETING

The next IACD meeting is being tentatively planned for October and will be advised by the Secretariat.