

INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON DRUGS (IACD) MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held

24 February 2000, 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm

Attendees

Greg Ariell, Alcohol Advisory Council
Ann Broome, Ministry of Social Policy
Nicola Chapple, Ministry of Health
Catherine Coates, New Zealand Police
Karleen Edwards, Health Funding Authority
Dairne Grant, Te Puni Kokiri
Kerry Harvey, Ministry of Education
Suzanne Jones, Alcohol Advisory Council
Peter Kennedy, Department of Corrections
Anna Long, Health Funding Authority
Cynthia Maling, Health Funding Authority
Vivienne Morrell, Ministry of Justice
Dave Negri, New Zealand Customs Service
Craig Smith, Department of Child, Youth and Family Services
David Wilson, Department for Courts

IACD Secretariat

Matthew Allen, Ministry of Health (acting Chair)
Paul Marriott-Lloyd, Ministry of Health
Andrew Zielinski, Ministry of Health

Apologies

Deborah Anderson, Treasury
Bill Frith, Land Transport Safety Authority
Jim Harper, Crime Prevention Unit
Lisa Johnson, Ministry of Transport
Mike MacAvoy, Alcohol Advisory Council

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

Matthew Allen welcomed attendees and sought the meeting's approval for him to act as interim Chair, which was agreed.

2. Reporting framework

Andrew Zielinski thanked the agencies that had returned their IACD reporting template, originally due on 11 February, and indicated that there were only a couple of templates outstanding. The reports would be worked into a

summary report for the Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy (MCDP) Meeting on 17 April.

Andrew reminded agencies that comment on the Outcome Indicators report was sought by 29 February.

3. Drug and alcohol treatment services

Matthew Allen reported on Judge John Walker's meeting with the Minister of Health. This primarily concerned gaps in treatment services for offenders (especially the young) entering the courts. The Minister shared the Judge's concern.

Karleen Edwards stressed that a clear funding deficit was evident.

Catherine Coates indicated that Police were seeking new Budget funding for young recidivist offender programmes, although these were not exclusively focused on offenders with drug/alcohol problems.

Kerry Harvey noted that Education had a Budget bid for alcohol and drug education programmes for 2000/2001.

Peter Kennedy noted a need to address treatment issues for both community-based and prison sentences.

Action:

- Health, Corrections and Child Youth and Family Services were to work co-operatively.
- Health to work to include funding for alcohol and drug treatment services in the funding bid for the Mental Health Blueprint.
- This issue to be discussed at the up-coming MCDP meeting, Judge Walker will attend the meeting.
- Health/HFA would lead preparation of a paper (based on work particularly regarding the treatment services gap relating to the criminal justice system) for the MCDP meeting, in consultation with relevant agencies including CYFS, Corrections and Police.

4. Legal status of cannabis

Matthew Allen reported that the Minister of Health had asked officials for advice on the nature and timing of a possible review on the legal status of cannabis. The review was to be government agency led or a select committee inquiry but not a commission of inquiry.

Action:

- Catherine Coates (Police) agreed to lead preparation of a paper for the MCDP, in consultation with Justice, Health and other relevant

agencies. The paper would be a broad scoping document with comment on the nature of a review, timing and costings.

5. Hemp cultivation

Andrew Zielinski reported on calls from the Hemp Association and others that the moratorium on issuing licenses to cultivate hemp should be lifted. Some agencies had concerns, however, about the safety and security of hemp cultivation.

The Minister of Health had agreed that the Ministry of Health should convene a meeting of relevant government agencies to discuss the best way to progress the issue, including possible establishment of a working party.

Action:

- Health is to convene a meeting of relevant government agencies including Police, Customs, MAF and Commerce to progress the hemp issue.

6. Drug education guidelines

Kerry Harvey reported that the guidelines, which advised principles and boards of trustees, would be introduced into schools in April.

Schools would be offered regular professional development on the guidelines and seminars in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin were planned for May. A national strategy was also proposed.

The guidelines were to tie-in with the Strengthening Families initiative.

Cynthia Maling noted synergies with the Health Promoting Schools Programme. Sally Liggins (HFA Auckland Office) is the contact.

7. Review of effectiveness of drug education guidelines

Kerry Harvey reported that Education wished to link the draft paper on research-based evidence of drug education programmes, back to earlier international evidence. There was little good New Zealand data (i.e. longitudinal studies of effectiveness) available.

8. Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill

Paul Marriott-Lloyd reported that legislation was currently before the Health Select Committee and had a priority two on the legislative programme.

The Bill provides for fast scheduling of controlled drugs, presumption of supply for Ecstasy, defence for travellers entering or leaving New Zealand with prescribed controlled drugs, and ability to impose conditions on medical practitioners prescribing controlled drugs to treat dependence.

Submissions closed on 29 February and Health's briefing on the Bill is due with the Committee by 29 March.

Paul discussed the establishment of a committee to advise on drug classifications. Representatives from Health, Police, Customs, Environmental Science and Research, as well as a toxicologist, drug experts and treatment providers would be invited to make up the committee. Drs Sellman and Robinson were suggested as appropriate members.

Action:

- Paul Marriott-Lloyd to formulate letters to agencies with regard to establishing a drug advisory committee by late April. Terms of reference will also be developed.

9. Communication strategy

The IACD Secretariat is working on development of a communication strategy for use by all agencies. A draft will be circulated to agencies when available.

10. New initiatives / commitment / information

Discussion occurred around the need to broaden the scope of NDP initiatives.

It was noted that the Government supported the recommendations of the Health Committee Inquiry into the Mental Health Effects of Cannabis, including a review of the legal status.

A need to focus more on alcohol and tobacco as the most widely used drugs was stressed. Greg Ariel stated that ALAC would release their National Alcohol Strategy in March, which was being tied into the NDP. A possibility of a review of alcohol taxation was suggested.

Craig Smith reported that the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services had introduced screening for alcohol and drug problems. This focused on the 500 most at risk youth in the country. Funding moved with the children rather than with service providers.

A need for treatment programmes based around the courts was noted, with immediate access to services. A pilot programme was suggested - Catherine Coates noted possible legislative barriers.

Cynthia Maling raised the issue of inequalities / social determinants of health and the need to address underlying problems early on, which may lead to drug/alcohol problems. It was noted that efforts were being made to tie-in the NDP with Strengthening Families.

Peter Kennedy raised the issue of inequities between Maori and European populations. He believed initiatives in this area would be well received by the Government. Cynthia Maling noted that the Tu Tangata programmes in the

Central and Midland regions were currently being evaluated. These were community development programmes set in schools and based on the pilot Tu Tangata programme in Wainuiomata.

Dairne Grant reported that the Maori Community Development models (Health Action Zones) were continuing. Dairne noted that there was a need to build infrastructure as taking drugs out of certain communities impacted on their economy. The HFA were also working on this initiative.

Dairne added that TPK was currently undergoing restructuring and a 12 month extension of the above initiative was being sought.

Greg Ariel stressed that ideas should be tied to policy. Greg recommended that workforce development should be a focus.

Matthew Allen wound-up discussion by stressing that agencies needed to show commitment to new NDP initiatives and should keep the IACD Secretariat informed about developments.

11. Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy (MCDP) meeting

The MCDP meeting would occur on 17 April at 4.30pm. The proposed agenda was:

- papers & oral presentations - drug use situation and work underway to reduce drug related harm: tobacco, alcohol & national alcohol strategy, illicit drugs
- drug and alcohol treatment services - Judge Walker
- review of legal status of cannabis
- communications strategy
- directions from Ministers for 2000-2002.

Peter Kennedy believed that the NDP was being well co-ordinated by the IACD. Agencies may wish to highlight, however, activities which may be lost due to restructuring.

Ann Broom raised the issue of overlapping causes and solutions to drug/alcohol problems. Combating a range of problems was more effective than addressing single problems alone. The need to tie-in with cross-sectoral initiatives such as Strengthening Families was again noted.

Cynthia Maling emphasised links with gaps/inequalities work, noting the ad hoc Cabinet Committee.

Action:

Papers (final drafts to be provided to Secretariat by 3 April at latest for circulation)

- **IACD Secretariat** to co-ordinate papers

- **Secretariat (Health)** to draft overview NDP paper and lead drafting Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services Paper
- **Police** to lead drafting legal status of cannabis paper
- **Education** to lead drafting paper on drug education issues

Presentations (5 minute - Secretariat to co-ordinate style)

- NDP overview - **IACD Secretariat (Health)**
- Alcohol - **ALAC**
- Illicit drugs - **Customs**
- Drug/Alcohol Treatment Services - **HFA** (to work with Corrections/Courts on criminal justice angle)
- Drug/Alcohol education strategies - **Education**

12. Youth web site

Matthew Allen stated that the idea of a youth website covering mental, and physical (including sexual) health had been supported by the IACD and the committee relating to the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Greg Ariel stated that ALAC believed the initiative had potential and supported it. Work was needed, however, on how it would be developed including a new website and/or a link to existing sites. Anna Long supported the idea of linking to other sites, but the need to ensure safety/appropriateness was noted (i.e. different countries had different legal frameworks).

Suzanne Jones explained that the site could act as a portal and be complementary to other sites which would fill gaps in information. The site would be for communication and advice for the young, who do not always know where to go for assistance.

The issue of whether the website would attract corporate sponsorship was raised.

Suzanne pointed out that females were accessing health-related websites more than males, unless sites were particularly targeted at males.

The issue of concept testing including who the website would reach was discussed. It was noted, however, that this could be costly.

Action:

- A website working group was to be established, led by ALAC. Anna Long (HFA) volunteered to participate, Health, Youth Affairs and Education were also to be involved.

13. Other business

Inter-Governmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) - Australia

Catherine Coates reported on the recent IGCD meeting. New Zealand has a standing slot on the agenda.

The Australian diversion and infringement scheme for minor cannabis offences was discussed. Most states had a tiered approach. This process helped keep people out of the criminal justice system and there was some interest in extending it to include other drugs. The next meeting occurs in Darwin in May.

The International Narcotics Control Board Annual Report

Paul Marriott-Lloyd indicated that the International Narcotics Control Board had commended the New Zealand Government on measures employed to tackle the abuse of illicit drugs.

The INCB Annual Report released on 23/2/2000, singled New Zealand out for commendation on work programs developed for the first stage of the implementation of the NDP.