

INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON DRUGS (IACD) MEETING

*29 January 2007, 1:30pm – 4:30pm
Ministry of Health, Rooms 4.01 & 4.02, 1-3 The Terrace, Wellington*

MINUTES

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Attendees - IACD Agencies	
Ashley Bloomfield (Chair)	Claire Helliwell (Customs)
Chris Laurenson (Health)	Amy Russell (Youth Development)
Mark Heffernan (Health)	Alison Stephens (Justice)
Olivia Stapleton (Health)	Sheridan Smith (Justice)
Megan Larken (ALAC)	Anna Mills (CYFS)
Wendy Moore (ALAC)	Vanessa Schuster (PI Affairs)
Lesley Daly (Police)	Helen Fielding (Transport)
Kirsty Ruddlesden (Corrections)	Ian Stuart (Corrections)
David Negri (Customs)	Grant Guillosson (Social Development)
Susan Hunt (ACC)	

Apologies	
Kim Williams (NDIB)	Ian Macdonald (Education)
Sara Bennett (ALAC)	Ruth Richards (Social Development)
Ross Judge (Social Development)	Tracey White (Social Development)
Bruce Atmore (Health)	

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, in particular new members. All members introduced themselves.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 1 JUNE 2006

Members approved the minutes from the previous IACD meeting held on 12 September 2006 and the Strategic Workshop Planning Day held on 10 November 2006, subject to minor grammatical changes.

The Chair noted the completion of action points from the previous meeting and workshop and discussed the need to further consider how priority of action areas for the implementation of the National Drug Policy can be taken forward.

Authorisation was given for the minutes from the previous IACD meeting and workshop to be placed on the NDP website.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING 12 SEPTEMBER 2006

3.1 Minute Item 3.4 *National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategy*

ALAC informed the Committee that a paper on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategy is being developed and will be circulated to IACD members upon completion.

3.2 Minute Item 7 *Illicit Tobacco*

Customs informed the Committee that a paper on illicit tobacco is still being developed. This paper is expected to be tabled for the next Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy meeting that is scheduled to be held on 14 March 2007.

4. IACD TERMS OF REFERENCE

Health provided IACD with a discussion paper to inform the development of the IACD Terms of Reference. At the IACD workshop it was agreed that it would be useful to formalise IACD Terms of Reference.

In general, members commented that the Terms of Reference could serve as an important reporting framework within agencies and could formalise a process for cross agency consultation and collective work. The potential for the Terms of Reference to provide new members with background information on the purpose and function of the IACD and to assist agencies in deciding who would be appropriate representatives on the IACD was identified. In addition, developing a Terms of Reference would provide an opportunity to clarify issues, such as separating national drug policy work from general business and formalising the relationship between various committees and agencies. It was noted that it would be timely to develop the Terms of Reference in parallel with the publication of the new National Drug Policy 2007-2012.

Agreed:

That a working group facilitated by the Secretariat would provide draft Terms of Reference for consideration at the next IACD meeting. The working group would comprise Health, Customs, Police, Justice and Youth Development.

5. BZP UPDATE

Health provided IACD with an update on the developments following the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs' advice to classify benzylpiperazine (BZP), phenylpiperazine and related substances as Class C1 drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975. Health noted that the advice provided by the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs has been made publicly available and interested parties, including IACD agencies, have been invited to comment on the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs' advice during the consultation process.

Practical implications for enforcement agencies were considered briefly by the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs, with Customs, Justice and Police represented on the Committee, and IACD members were urged to use the consultation process to contribute any further important issues that agencies think should be presented to the Minister. The Chair noted that, should BZP be classified as illicit, the development of the regulatory framework would have less imperative. However, the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs has recommended that other substances that do not pose a moderate risk of harm will be developed and could be included in this framework.

The Committee was informed that they will be kept updated on the policy process and asked for further input as required.

6. METHAMPHETAMINE ACTION PLAN

Health prepared an update paper on the Methamphetamine Action Plan and requested further IACD input before reporting back to the 14 March 2007 Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy meeting. Justice informed the Committee that the Criminal Proceeds and Instruments Bill had not progressed to Select Committee.

It was noted that in Australia a Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission enquiry on Amphetamine Type Substances could also inform the Methamphetamine Action Plan and the next Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs meeting could provide a useful opportunity to work more closely with Australia on methamphetamine issues.

Agreed:

That Health would lead a working group to consider, and report to Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy on, the future direction for the Methamphetamine Action Plan. The working group is to comprise Health, Police and Customs and Health will send a follow up email requesting further agency interest.

7. NDP DISCRETIONARY GRANT FUND

Health prepared a paper reporting on the discussion of the working group that convened in December 2006 to review the process, criteria and priority areas of the NDP Discretionary Grant Fund. Draft criteria for both research and service/operational proposals were presented for IACD discussion.

Members discussed the criterion that research proposals be evidence informed, suggesting that only research hypotheses need be informed by evidence or that the wording around this criterion should be restricted to specify that research should contribute to the current body of evidence.

It was agreed that in principle there is a need for separate criteria for research and operational/service projects. In particular, the evaluation criterion should only apply to operational/service projects, while the criteria for research proposals should include peer review.

Members agreed that it is unrealistic to expect applicants to be aware of all agency guidelines and that the criterion for proposals to meet other recognised government guidelines should be removed.

Members noted that the Expert Advisory Committee on Drug's consideration of BZP largely informed the priority areas for research proposals in the 06/07 funding round. It was agreed that the National Drug Policy team could include upcoming issues likely to be considered by Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs into the priority areas for the 07/08 funding round.

Agreed:

That all members would identify their agencies top two or three priority areas for research and service/operational proposals for the 07/08 funding round and reflect upon the issues raised by the Ministry of Youth Development in their memo to the IACD Chair. Priority areas and comments are to be directed to the Secretariat by 12 February 2007.

That the criteria and priority areas for research and operational/service proposals be re-drafted and presented to the Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy for noting.

8. REVIEW OF REGULATION OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

Health provided an oral update on the Review of Regulation of Alcohol Advertising. The Review's steering group has met monthly from June 2006 and has considered research on the impacts of alcohol advertising, heard presentations from experts in the area, commissioned and reviewed research on the methods, effects, limitations and conditions of sponsorship by the alcohol industry and commissioned a critical appraisal of selected research studies on the impact of alcohol advertising on youth drinking.

Stakeholders were invited to submit written submissions on the Review over a six-week period and a hui and a fono were held in Auckland to facilitate feedback from Maori and Pacific stakeholders. A version of the consultation document was developed for young people by Youth Development.

Over 250 submissions on the Review have been analysed and a draft report summarising the submissions from stakeholders is currently being finalised. The due date for the final report from the steering group to Government has been extended from December 2006 to the end of March 2007.

9. NDP STRATEGY

The Committee noted a brief paper updating the progress of the National Drug Policy 2007-2012. The Committee was informed that the document is currently awaiting Cabinet approval and will then be finalised for printing. A copy of the draft National Drug Policy 2007-2012 was circulated to members during the meeting.

10. AUSTRALIAN MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON DRUG STRATEGY AND ICE FORUM UPDATE

Health and Police provided IACD with a report on the Australian Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy meeting that was held in Sydney on 15 December 2006 and the Australian National Leadership Forum on Ice held in Sydney on 14 December 2006.

It was noted that Australia currently has guidelines for drinking during pregnancy and that the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy has agreed to identify best practice approaches to reduce Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

11. DRUG IMPAIRED DRIVING

Transport presented a paper for IACD on the development of a proposed compulsory roadside impairment test. The test is a set procedure that can be followed by police officers when an officer suspects the driver is under the influence of a substance other than alcohol. It is proposed that it should be an offence to fail a compulsory impairment test and have drugs present in a blood sample. It was noted that many factors need to be considered when assessing whether an individual has satisfactorily completed the test.

Cabinet Policy Committee has agreed that the proposed regime should apply to illegal drugs only. A challenge for the proposal is the lack of published evidence on the effects of drugs on driving performance, with the potential for the Illicit Drugs Monitoring System to provide further evidence on the relationship between drug use and driving impairment.

12. ALCOHOL AND ILLICIT DRUGS IN PRISONS

Corrections provided IACD with a report on the Department of Corrections initiatives aimed at reducing the use of alcohol and illicit drugs in prisons. Further updates on some projects will need to be provided when the report is tabled for the 14 March 2007 Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy meeting. In particular, figures relating to existing or previous problems with drugs and or alcohol in the general population need to be updated to reflect the latest figures released in the 2006 New Zealand Mental Health Survey and the Prisoner Health Survey 2005.

Action:

Health is to assist in providing Corrections with recent data on drug and alcohol problems in the general population.

13. EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS PROJECTS

Justice provided an update paper on the Effective Interventions projects. The paper is to be tabled at the 14 March 2007 Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy meeting by Damien O'Connor as the Associate Minister of Health, with further changes to the paper possible before the meeting.

There are two projects relating to alcohol and other drug treatment for offenders. The first project is being lead by Health and Justice with the support of Corrections and Police to review the interface between mental health and alcohol and other drug systems and the criminal justice system. A Cabinet paper for this project will be finalised by May 2007. The second project is being lead by Health with the support of Corrections and assesses the gap between the need and availability of alcohol and other drug services for offenders in the community. A Ministerial paper for this project will be finalised by March 2007.

14. 2007 COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS MEETING

The Chair informed the IACD of the next Commission on Narcotic Drugs Meeting scheduled to be held in Vienna in March 2007. Health will attend and other agencies were asked whether they were intending to be part of the New Zealand delegation. Agencies attending the meeting will report back to IACD.

Action:

Agencies planning to attend the next Commission on Narcotic Drug meeting should inform Health.

15. NEW ZEALAND ARRESTEE DRUG MONITORING SYSTEM AND ILLICIT DRUG MONITORING SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORTS

Police provided an update on two Police funded projects, the Illicit Drugs Monitoring System (IDMS) and the New Zealand Arrestee Drugs Monitoring System (NZ-ADAM). Police noted the usefulness of the simultaneously released reports in providing information on frequent users and users who interact with Police. The reports highlight drug use in various populations, including the 'recreational' MDMA user and the profile of the methamphetamine-using offender. Police operations have commented that it is unclear from the reports how or from whom people obtain drugs and the type of economy used to purchase drugs. Members noted with interest the NZ-ADAM finding that four out of five methamphetamine users are of Maori descent, as this figure seems disproportionate considering 47 percent of the sample were Maori.

Police expressed an interest to work with Corrections in developing an assessment of the marketing and use of drugs in prison populations. Furthermore, the issues and questions raised by the reports may provide areas that can be addressed by the IACD and NDP Discretionary Grant Fund.

Police commented that there is a lack of capacity for Police to continue progressing with the Drug Harm Index. It was suggested that it could be useful to harness the New Zealand Drug Foundation networks for people who can assist in developing a collection of measurable outcomes or to emulate the Australian process.

Note:

Copies of the presentations on the reports are available from Health upon request.

16. REVIEW OF THE SALE AND SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL TO YOUTH

Justice presented an oral update on the Review of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol to Youth. The Review will be lead by a Steering group comprising representatives from Justice, Health, ALAC and Police. The Terms of Reference for the Review drafted by Justice and Health officials are currently being discussed by Ministers, with a release date yet to be announced. The research and analysis for the Review are due to be completed in April 2007 and the options and recommendations for reform will be presented to Ministers in September 2007. There will be opportunities for IACD comment throughout the policy process. Individual Ministers will be consulted but due to the short time frame, the Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy will not be formally involved.

Youth Development commented that Hon Nanaia Mahuta was likely to be interested in this process and Justice welcomes interest from other agencies who would like to be involved in the Review process.

17. NEW ZEALAND HEALTH BEHAVIOURS SURVEY – ALCOHOL USE

The Chair noted the Public Health Intelligence report entitled “Analysis of the 2004 New Zealand Health Behaviours Survey – Alcohol Use”, reiterating that the report should not be distributed further until the official release date in early March. The survey was designed and carried out by the Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE) and Te Ropu Whariki, of Massey University. The analyses were carried out by Public Health Intelligence, Ministry of Health.

Action:

Health to report back to IACD on the timeline for analysis of the illicit drug use module of this survey.

18. ITEMS FOR BRIEF UPDATE

18.1 Volatile substance abuse update

Health updated IACD on a global literature review of volatile substance abuse that is being compiled by the New Zealand Drug Foundation. The review will be available for IACD input in March 2007. The finalised literature review and a voluntary retailer’s code adapted for New Zealand is due to be completed in June/July 2007.

18.2 Medicinal cannabis

Health reported that the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill has been withdrawn after discussions between the Minister of Health, Hon Pete Hodgson and the Green Party. The Ministry of Health provided a briefing to Minister Hodgson outlining the Ministry's concerns about the Bill. These concerns included the potential harms to physical and mental health from smoking cannabis, the difficulties in assuring quality control or titration of the dose of THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) with the use of leaf cannabis, concerns over the diversion of medicinal cannabis into the illegal market, and problems with legitimate supply of medicinal cannabis.

The briefing to the Minister also outlined evidence of the therapeutic value of medicinal cannabis and advised of a pharmaceutical form of cannabis called "Sativex" that is manufactured in the United Kingdom. The Ministry of Health commented in the briefing that the introduction of Sativex would address concerns with the proposed Bill as the product provides a controlled dosage without the potential health risks of smoking and addresses concerns around the "legitimate" supply of leaf cannabis.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS

11.1 Alcohol and Illicit Drugs Monitoring Report Update

Justice noted that the Alcohol and Illicit Drugs Monitoring Project now produced by Justice and ALAC will continue to be tabled at the Ministerial Committee on Drug Policy. Some items have been removed as they have become integrated into the Effective Interventions projects.

Members noted that the report provided a useful checklist in 2003 and it may be timely to consider producing an annual report with action points that reflect the National Drug Policy.

11.2 Proposed Change to NDP Discretionary Grant Fund Project

The University of Auckland has approached Health and suggested two alternative research project options that could replace two already funded studies on BZP. This comes after the announcement from Hon Jim Anderton that he has received a recommendation from the Expert Advisory Committee of Drugs to schedule BZP as a Class C Drug. It is proposed that a variation to contract be made to replace the existing study with a study exploring the issue of "Doctor Shopping" – the misuse of prescription drugs. Justice, Youth Development, ALAC, Social Development and Police have indicated their support of the alternative proposal to the agreed study by Auckland University.

Agreed:

That the alternative proposal will need to be discussed with Hon Jim Anderton for his approval.

11.3 Police Illicit Drugs Strategy

Police reported that the Strategy is going to the Police Executive Committee in early February and will be published pending the Committee's discussions.

12 NEXT MEETING

The next IACD meeting is scheduled to be held in April 2007.