A guide to reviewing and developing alcohol, tobacco and other drug resources for young people

Prepared by the Australian Drug Foundation in partnership with the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT and the ACT alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector.

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Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug
Association ACT

November 2010

This guide was developed by the Australian Drug Foundation in partnership with, the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT and the ACT alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector as part of the Review of alcohol, tobacco and other drug written materials for young people in the ACT.

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Australian Drug Foundation

Celebrating 50 years of service to the community, the Australian Drug Foundation is Australia's leading body committed to preventing alcohol and other drug problems in communities around the nation. The Foundation reaches more than a million Australians through community sporting clubs and also work with a wide range of Australians in governments, workplaces, health care settings and schools, offering educational information and campaigning for healthy and strong communities.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, their families and ancestors.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all of the services and individuals who gave their time and effort to contributing to the development of *A guide to reviewing and developing alcohol, tobacco and other drug resources for young people* (the Guide).

- The Australian Drug Foundation

- The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT

- The ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Project, Youth Coalition of the ACT

- The ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Workers Group

- The Review of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Written Materials for Young People in the ACT Sub-Committee

- The ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Executive Directors Group

- ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Sector Agencies, including:

    - Alcohol and Other Drug Policy Unit, ACT Health
    - Alcohol and Drug Foundation ACT
    - Alcohol and Drug Program, ACT Health
    - Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy
    - CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn
    - DIRECTIONS ACT
    - Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
    - Salvation Army
    - Ted Noffs Foundation ACT
    - Toora Women Inc
    - Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service

Introduction to the Guide

Access to accurate, credible information is a fundamental aspect of all drug prevention and intervention strategies. There are many good quality resources available on topics ranging from individual drug effects to brief intervention to treatment guides. However, there may not always be a resource that covers the information needs of your clients and you may decide to produce your own.

Whether you are looking at using existing resources or producing your own, this guide can assist you in ensuring that the resource is of a high quality and relevant to the target audience.

The first section, ***Resource review checklist: brochures, pamphlets and fact sheets***, has been developed to help you to determine the quality of an existing resource. When looking at existing resources it's important to make sure that they contain good quality information in a format that is right for the target audience. This section is useful if you want to find an existing resource that meets your needs to avoid the time and expense associated with producing your own. This section can also be of assistance when developing new resources, as you can use the checklist to review your resource.

The second section, ***Guidelines for resource development***, is designed to assist you when planning and developing new resources. When developing resources, it is important that you ensure the information is accurate and relevant for the target audience.

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Resource review checklist: brochures, pamphlets and fact sheets

This section of the Guide provides a checklist that you can use to review resources to ensure they are reliable, of high quality and suitable for your needs.

If you are developing your own resource you may also find this section useful. You can use the checklist when developing the content of the resource and/or reviewing the early drafts to ensure they are of high quality and meet the needs of the target audience.

The checklist is made up of 29 questions that cover six aspects of the resource:

- Purpose
- Format
- General content
- Targeted content
- Credibility
- Does the resource achieve its purpose?

When using the checklist it's important to not only consider the resource itself but how you intend to use it and the audience it will be going to. For example, a resource may contain good quality information, but if the language used is not appropriate for the audience you intend to use it with, they may not be able to understand or relate to it. This means that when you use the checklist on a resource, the questions may be answered differently depending on the context in which you are planning on using the resource.

Each question involves rating the resource, and how it suits your intended use, on a 3-point scale (A, B or C). Those questions that may not be applicable for all resources include a "not relevant" option.

A high quality resource that is suitable for your needs will score all (or almost all) A's on the checklist.

If a resource scores a C or a number of B's it indicates that the resource may not be suitable for your needs. For example, if you score the resource a C for question 9, "Is the content missing any critical information?", you should ask yourself what impact the resource will have if important information is missing. Do you still want to use it even though you know that the target audience is not going to get all the important information they need? Perhaps there is a more suitable resource available or if there is a gap, you could consider developing your own (see section 2, Guidelines for resource development).

Purpose

Q1. Is the aim of the resource clear?

A good quality resource will have a clear aim. Clear aims are important because they outline the parts of the topic that will be covered and help you to judge whether the resource is likely to contain the information you want. For example, does it aim to increase a person's general knowledge about the drug or to provide more practical information about reducing the risks of drug use?

Examine the opening paragraphs for a description of the content, scope and expected impact of the resource.

Although the resource's title may be descriptive, the aims should be clearly outlined in the text at the beginning.

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource has clear aims.

☐ **B.** Partially—the resource has aims but they are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—the resource does not include any indication of its aims.

Q2. Is it clear in what settings the resource can be used?

Resources can be used in many different ways and in many different settings. For example, was it developed to be used as a general, stand-alone resource, or to be used as supporting material for a counselling session?

This information should be included in the opening paragraphs along with the aims of the resource.

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource clearly states suitable settings for its use.

☐ **B.** Partially—the resource does not state suitable settings for its use but it is implied in the aims.

☐ **C.** No—it is unclear which settings are suitable to use the resource in.

Q3. Is it clear who the target audience is?

Different audiences require different information to meet their needs. Different audiences may also need their information presented in different formats and styles to be more accessible. Knowing the target audience the resource was developed for can help you decide if it will be suitable for your purpose.

This information should be included in the opening paragraphs with the aims of the resource.

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource clearly states the target audience.

☐ **B.** Partially—the resource does not state the target audience but it is implied in the aims.

☐ **C.** No—it is unclear who the target audience is.

Format

Q4. Is the information easy to read?

"Plain language" should be the goal when developing resources for young people. This means using short sentences, and avoiding long words and jargon as much as possible.It does not matter how accurate the information in a resource is if the target audience cannot understand it.

When reading the resource, imagine that you are reading it to the target audience. Is the resource written in a language they can understand or is it complicated and uses jargon and technical language that is not clearly explained?

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource is easy to read.

☐ **B.** Relatively easy—the language could be simpler.

☐ **C.** No—the resource is very complicated.

> Do not use the resource for this situation. If the information is too complicated for the audience it will not be helpful.

Q5. Is the resource well organised and designed?

A well organised and well designed resource can help make information easy to read. Look at how the resource is designed and organised. For example:

- Does the design and layout of the resource highlight important information and help the reader find the information they are looking for?
- Is the text size large enough? Is the text in an easy-to-read font?
- How is colour used and is there enough contrast between colours to ensure it is easy to read?
- Are the levels of headings clear?
- Is the formatting of dot points consistent?

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource is well formatted.

☐ **B.** The formatting could be improved.

☐ **C.** No—the formatting is too complicated and makes the information hard to understand.

> Do not use the resource for this situation. If the information is too hard to read or access it will not be helpful.

Q6. Is the information presented in a format that is appropriate for the target audience?

See question 3. Look at how the information is presented. For example:

- Are the graphics appropriate/suitable for the target audience?
- If the information is aimed at young people, does it include colour and images that will appeal to them?

☐ **A.** Yes—the format is suitable for the target audience.

☐ **B.** Not sure whether the format is suitable for the target audience.

☐ **C.** No—the resource uses inappropriate graphics and layout for the target audience.

Q7. Is the resource free of spelling and formatting mistakes?

Examine the resource for errors such as spelling mistakes and mislabelled figures and tables.

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource is free of mistakes.

☐ **B.** A few mistakes—but it doesn't affect the resource's readability.

☐ **C.** No—there are many mistakes throughout the resource.

General content

Q8. Is the content balanced and unbiased?

It is important that information about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is honest and informative. It should not exaggerate and use "shock tactics". For example, is it giving the impression that usage is more common than it is?

You should judge the information on its own merits and you should not be influenced by what you know about the author or producer. Well-respected individuals can produce poor quality resources, and an unknown author or producer can produce resources that meet a high standard.

One particular viewpoint can be acceptable if the author has made this clear in the aims (see question 1) and has acknowledged that other viewpoints exist. In all cases, the information should be drawn from a range of research and experience. You should not give a high rating to a resource that relies on a single source of evidence or has not revealed any sources.

Ideally, a resource should be independently reviewed and approved by an expert or professional organisation. Evidence of an external assessment provides readers with some assurance that the information is unprejudiced. However, this is not common practice and a resource that omits this information can still achieve a good rating on this question.

☐ **A.** Yes—the information is completely balanced and unbiased.

☐ **B.** Partially—some aspects of the information are unbalanced or biased.

☐ **C.** No—the information is largely unbalanced or biased.
    Do not use the resource for this situation.

Q9. Is the content missing any critical information?

Refer to the aim of the resource in question 1 to determine if important information is missing from the resource. For example, if the aim is to provide information about a particular drug, does it include short and long term effects?

If the resource does not state an aim, consider how you intend to use the resource and if any important information you need is missing.

☐ **A.** No—there is no critical information missing.

☐ **B.** There is some information missing but it is not critical to the aim.

☐ **C.** Yes—there is important information missing.

Q10. Is the information free from any obvious factual errors?

It is important that the resource contains accurate information and does not perpetuate any myths or misinformation.

☐ **A.** Yes—the information is accurate.

☐ **B.** Not sure whether the resource contains factual errors.

☐ **C.** No—there are factual errors.

    Do not use the resource for this situation.

Q11. Is the information relevant and appropriate for the target age group and audience?

While it is important to provide information about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, there is sometimes controversy over the type of information that is suitable for different audiences. You can reduce the risk of problems arising by ensuring that the information in the resource is relevant to, and suitable for, the age group and audience for which it is intended (see question 3).

The resource should not provide information that is inappropriate or offensive. For example:

- A resource aimed at naïve 12 year olds should not contain safer injecting information.

- People aged 18–25 years tend to pay more attention to resources that highlight specific consequences of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (e.g. weight gain, expense, embarrassing oneself etc) rather than "bigger" consequences such as long-term damage, violence, road accidents etc.

- Is it aimed at a low literacy audience?

Your judgement will be very important for rating this question. Your rating can take into account both the content and the presentation of the information. Consider the target audience and what information they will need and find useful.

☐ **A.** Yes—the information is relevant and appropriate for the target audience.

☐ **B.** Partially—the information is appropriate but not relevant.

☐ **C.** No—the information is not relevant or appropriate for the target audience.

    Do not use the resource for this situation.

Q12. Does any of the content promote the harmful use, cultivation, manufacture or supply of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs?

Australia's drug strategy, based on harm minimisation, is working to reduce drug-related harm to all Australians. Therefore a resource should not promote or endorse any harmful behaviours.

☐ **A.** No—the resource does not promote harmful behaviour.

☐ **B.** Not sure whether the resource promotes harmful behaviour.

☐ **C.** Yes—the resource does promote harmful behaviour.

    Do not use the resource for this situation.

Targeted content

The following questions may not be relevant for all resources. When deciding if the question is applicable, you will need to consider the aim of the resource (see question 1), the target audience (see question 3) and how you intend to use the resource.

Q13. Does the resource include the short and long term effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on the body and mind?

A good quality resource will include information about the effects of the drug on the body and mind. This may include details of how it is taken (or administered—see question 17).

☐ Not relevant.
or
☐ **A.** Yes—the description of each drug includes details of how it works on the body and mind.

☐ **B.** Partially—details provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—none of the descriptions about the drugs include details of how they work on the body and mind.

Q14. Does the resource include information about the level of use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs?

Does the resource provide accurate and up-to-date information about the level of use of the drug? This may include providing information about the percentage of the population that uses the particular drug.

☐ Not relevant.
or
☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but they are unclear, incomplete or out-of-date.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q15. Does the resource include information about why people use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs?

Does the resource provide information about risk and protective factors and some of the many reasons why people may use drugs?

☐ Not relevant.
or
☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q16. Does the resource include information about the characteristics of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs?

This may include information about the physical characteristics of the drug, its chemical composition, and the drug's pharmacological actions on the body.

☐ Not relevant.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially— details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q17. Does the resource include information about techniques for administering alcohol, tobacco and other drugs?

For example, does the resource include information about swallowing, snorting, injecting and associated risks? Does any of the content promote the harmful use of drugs?

☐ Not relevant.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided and does not promote harmful use.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided or is provided but promotes harmful use.

Q18. Does the resource include information about alcohol, tobacco and other drug legislation and law enforcement?

For example, does the resource include information about whether the drug is legal or illegal? Does it mention laws relating to use, cultivation, manufacture, possession and supply? If it does, it should also include a legal disclaimer (see question 22).

☐ Not relevant.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q19. Does the resource include only relevant information about the cultivation or manufacturing of drugs?

For example, does the resource promote or endorse the cultivation, manufacture or supply of drugs or any harmful or illegal activities?

☐ Not relevant.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—relevant information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided or is provided but promotes manufacture, cultivation and/or supply of drugs.

   If the resource promotes the manufacture, cultivation and/or supply of drugs do not use the resource for this situation.

Q20. Does the resource include information about the effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use on society?

Drug use does not just affect the person using the drug; it can also impact on their family, friends, workplace, and the broader community. For example, does the resource include information about heavy drinking and violence or the risks associated with driving under the influence of a drug?

☐ Not relevant.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q21. Does the information dispel public misconceptions and myths regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs?

There are many myths and misconceptions about drugs and drug use. Does the resource provide accurate information that will help to educate the target audience and dispel the common myths?

☐ Not relevant.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q22. Is there a disclaimer that covers the purpose, limitations, scope, authority and currency of the content?

It is important that the limitations of the resource are acknowledged. For example, the resource should state that the information included was correct at the time of printing and include a publication date so people are aware of how current the information is (see question 25).

If the resource includes legal or health information, the resource should include a disclaimer explaining that the information is provided as a guide and not as legal/medical advice. The disclaimer should also encourage people to seek advice from a professional who can provide them with more information to suit their specific needs.

☐ Not relevant.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Credibility

Q23. Is it clear who has produced the information?

Look for logos or copyright information that identify who produced the resource.

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q24. Are the credentials, qualifications and/or experience of the author or publisher clearly stated?

Look for information about the author and publisher and their qualifications and experience. This may not always be listed on the resource; you may need to search elsewhere (e.g. the Internet) for information about the author and publisher. Are they credible? Are they experienced and knowledgeable in the area?

☐ **A.** Yes—this information is provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—details are provided but are unclear or incomplete.

☐ **C.** No—this information is not provided.

Q25. Does the resource have a publication date?

A good quality resource will make the date of the information explicit. Evidence about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs can change and it is important that information includes the latest developments in knowledge and practice. An indication of the age of the information is important, as it may lead you to question whether the information is current and to seek further information about the most recent developments.

The date of a print publication is usually found on the back page of a leaflet or on one of the title pages of a book (usually copyright date).

- A revised resource has been changed or updated since initial publication, and you should use the date for the revised edition to rate the question.

- A reprinted resource will not contain new information and you should use the copyright date.

Look not only for the date the resource itself was produced, but also for the dates of the main sources of evidence used and reported in the resource. The resource cannot be older than the sources of evidence, whereas the sources of evidence can be much older than the resource.

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource publication date and dates for all acknowledged sources are clear.

☐ **B.** Partially—only the date of the resource itself is clear, or dates for some but not all acknowledged sources have been given.

☐ **C.** No—no dates have been given.

Q26. Are the information sources used to establish credibility clear?

Information about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs should be accurate and based on the best available scientific evidence. For example, a main statement or fact about a drug should be accompanied by a reference to the source of evidence in the text in the main part of the resource. For example, "X per cent of young people use cannabis every month (reference)".

A good quality resource will make it clear where the evidence for the information included has come from. This may be in the form of a list of references, a bibliography or through footnotes. Details of the sources of evidence are important, as they enable you to check the information or choose to seek further information. Just because the information sources are listed does not mean they provide accurate information or are of good scientific quality—see question 27.

Sources of evidence can include research articles and the opinions of experts such as clinicians and representatives from self-help organisations. The author or producer is not considered a source for this question. Other sources need to be provided to help you discriminate between good and poor quality resources.

Additional sources of support and information, such as "Further reading" or "Useful addresses", should not be rated as the sources of evidence. The information provided by additional sources will not necessarily have been used to compile the resource, and in many cases may provide very different information.

☐ **A.** Yes—the sources of evidence are very clear and the resource enables you to link the source mentioned in the text to a full reference at the end of the resource or to another source of information.

☐ **B.** Partially—the sources of evidence are clear to some extent or the resource quotes a reference in the text for some but not all of the main statements or facts.

☐ **C.** No—no sources of evidence for the information are mentioned.

Q27. Are the information sources used to establish credibility reputable?

If you answered no to question 26 this question can not be answered and is not applicable.

Reputable sources include articles published in scientific journals or information from books published by reputable publishers. Information from websites must be from a reputable organisation.

☐ Not applicable.

or

☐ **A.** Yes—the sources are reputable.

☐ **B.** Partially, some sources are reputable or it's difficult to tell if sources are reputable.

☐ **C.** No—the sources are not reputable.

Q28. Is key referral information included, including help and support?

Details of other sources of support and information are important. The resource may not provide you with all the information you need and you should be able to locate further information easily.

Additional sources of information and support can be reading materials and other organisations, details of which may be located via printed details or online links. Additional sources are often listed under headings such as "Useful addresses" and "Further reading". A reference list or bibliography can also be considered further reading.

When rating print or conventional sources within the resource, the details provided should enable you to find them easily, for example name, address and telephone number in the case of an organisation, and author, title, publisher or producer in the case of reading material (and ISBN and date if the material is known to be a book). Similarly, if details of additional online sources are provided, they should enable you to locate them on the Internet easily.

Many resources provide details of local branches of the same organisation. While these may be useful for information about local services, they are unlikely to provide different information, and you should not give a high rating to a resource that only provides these details.

☐ **A.** Yes—the resource provides full details of any additional sources of information other than local branches of the same organisation.

☐ **B.** Partially—the resource provides details of an additional source or sources of information, but the details are incomplete or consist only of local branches of the same organisation.

☐ **C.** No—no additional sources of information are provided.

Does the resource achieve its purpose?

Q29. Does the resource achieve its purpose and aims?

A good quality resource will provide the information it has aimed to provide. This question is designed to help you assess whether the information that was promised at the beginning of the resource (see question 1) has actually been provided. This question is important because a resource that does not achieve its aims is incomplete.

After reading the resource, you should refer back to the aims and consider whether all of the information that you were led to expect would be provided has been provided.

If the resource did not have clear aims (see question 1) this question is irrelevant and should not be answered.

If aims were outlined but were not clear or were incomplete (rated "partial" on question 1), you need to use your judgement to decide what expectations the aims had raised and then rate to what extent those expectations have been fulfilled.

☐ Not applicable.
or

☐ **A.** Yes—all the information you were expecting from a description of the aims has been provided.

☐ **B.** Partially—some of the information you were expecting from the aims has been provided.

☐ **C.** No—none of the information you were expecting from the aims has been provided.

Guidelines for resource development

This section of the guide provides an overview of the steps involved in planning and developing new resources.

There are 10 steps outlined in the process:

- Preliminary assessment
- Reference groups, steering committees and consultations
- Production plan
- Content development
- Editorial process
- Design and layout
- Focus group testing
- Printing
- Distribution
- Copyright, legal compliance and disclaimers
- Evaluation.

Each of these steps plays an important role in helping to ensure resources are of a high quality, contain accurate and relevant information, and are suitable for their intended purpose.

Preliminary assessment

Producing a resource can be time-consuming, expensive and resource-intensive. So before you start the process it is important to run through a series of questions to ensure that you have considered all your options. These questions can also help to clarify why you want to develop the resource and whether you have the capacity to be able to undertake the process.

Is there a substantial demand or need for the information?

How have you established there is a need for the information? For example:

- Do you need the information for a specific program or service?

- Have you had an increase in requests for the information?

- Have you spoken to the intended target audience to see if there is a need?

- Have you spoken to other health, legal and law enforcement professionals and services to see if they agree there is a need?

Does a similar resource already exist?

Have you searched existing resources to see if there is already a similar resource available? If there is, use the checklist detailed in the first section of this guide to review any such resource for its quality and suitability for your purpose.

If one of these existing resources is suitable for your needs, consider using the existing resource rather than investing in the development of a duplicate resource.

If there is a resource available that almost meets your needs, you may be able to liaise with the author to adapt the resource.

Do you have the capacity to develop a resource?

Before starting the process, read through this guide to ensure you have an understanding of the process, skills and budget required to produce a resource. This also includes ensuring you have the capacity to maintain and update the resource as required.

Once you have an understanding of what will be required to develop and maintain the resource, you can compare the projected cost with the perceived benefit and decide whether to continue.

Have you conducted a risk analysis?

Before undertaking any project you should conduct a risk analysis to ensure you have prepared for all eventualities and are willing to manage associated risks (see Appendix 1 for a risk analysis template). Potential risks may include anything from changes in staff and the associated loss of knowledge and skills to budgetary limitations, risks associated with the resource being used inappropriately, and legal risks.

Reference groups, steering committees and consultations

Once you have decided that there is a need for the resource and you have the capacity to produce it, the next step is to decide whether you should set up a reference group, steering committee or a series of consultations to guide the resource development.

Involving members of the target audience, experts and key stakeholders in the process can assist with ensuring the resource meets the needs of the target audience.

Production plan

The next step is to develop a production plan (see Appendix 2 for a resource production plan template). This includes identifying the following:

Purpose or goals of the resource:
- Define and record the reasons for producing the resource.

Audience and audience needs?
- Who are the potential audience?
- What information do they require?
- What style of language will be suitable?
- How will readers want to use the resource?

Delivery mode:
- Print, web, email, CD-ROM, DVD?
- Consider the requirements of your audience, accessibility, type of information (easier to read long resource in print), distribution, and cost.

Identity and legal requirements:
- This includes corporate identity (logos), disclaimers, and acknowledgments of use of copyright material.

Production schedule/timeline:
- List each stage of the production process and detail how long each stage will take. This will assist developing a production timeline and will help keep track of whether the process is progressing as scheduled.
- It is important to be as accurate (and realistic) as possible in estimating the time required for each stage

Budget:
- This will influence the quality of your resource. It will cost more to produce a high quality resource within a tight timeline.
- Refer to Appendix 3 for a resource costing form.

The skills required to produce a good quality resource:

This can include:

- Project management
- Research and writing
- Editing and structuring
- Graphic design and layout
- Proofreading
- Printing
- Distribution, marketing and promotion.

Ideally, this guide will enable you to undertake the project management in-house. If the skills required for the publishing project are not available in-house, the best way to find suitable people is to ask for recommendations from similar organisations that produce information, refer to professional societies or look in the business telephone directory. If you do outsource some of the tasks, the project manager will still need to develop the work briefs for these tasks (e.g. author brief, design brief, distribution plan).

Content development

Developing guidelines/author brief

Once you have decided on the purpose of the resource, the audience and the mode of delivery of the information, you can develop a brief for the author that describes the project.

The type of audience and how the content will be used generally controls the length and the style of writing. For example, consider if the resource is intended as a stand-alone resource or if it is to be used within the context of teaching and supported by personal contact. See the checklist detailed in the first section of this guide for more guidelines and examples.

The author you choose needs to be able to effectively write for the target audience. Sometimes you will want to hire an author who already has the information or knows the topic area, although the author will still need your perspective on the topic to get it right. If the author is not an expert in the content area, they will also need to know the source and location of any relevant background or reference material. Any available research capacity that might be required should be identified. Research could involve a literature search, consultations with the target audience and/or key informant interviews. How you provide the information will influence the writing cost.

Note that writing is not research, interviews or consultations. If you expect the author to do any of these, expect to pay more than if they are only writing using information you have provided.

Refer to Appendix 4 for an author brief template.

Content review

Identify either an internal or external expert to review the content of your resource.

Ideally, a resource should be independently reviewed and approved by an expert or professional organisation.

Evidence of an external assessment provides readers with some assurance that the information is unprejudiced.

Refer to Appendix 5 for a reviewer brief. You may also encourage your reviewers to use relevant sections of the checklist detailed in the first section of this guide.

Editorial process

Editing

The purpose of editing is to ensure that the structure, expression and design reflect the intention of the resource by correcting errors or inconsistencies in spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, style and layout that could otherwise distract from the message that the writer is trying to deliver. The editor also has to consider the audience's perspective and make sure the level of language used and knowledge assumed suit the target audience.

Structural editing: involves assessing the resource as a whole to see whether the content, structure, language and presentation need refining to meet the needs of the audience.

Copy editing: involves ensuring accuracy and consistency in language, style and layout. The use of an editorial style guide is important at this stage. A style guide provides guidelines about preferred spelling, language and format. If your organisation does not have its own style guide, the Australian Government produces the *Style manual: for authors, editors and printers* (Snooks & Co 2002), which covers the entire publishing process.

Refer to Appendix 6 for a copy editing checklist.

Proofreading

This involves a final check to make sure the resource is ready for printing. The aim of proofreading is to ensure that there are no errors or mistakes between the approved copy sent to the designer/typesetter and the formatted proof.

This is the final check before the resource is sent to the printer.

A proofreading checklist is outlined in Appendix 7.

Design and layout

Good design attracts attention and presents information in a way that suits the content and target audience. While you can do this in-house, a good designer will understand how people read and how information will be gathered from a resource they are designing. They will know which elements to emphasise and how to draw attention to important points.

A design brief should include the:

- Scope of the job. This includes the technical details and what you expect in a nutshell (e.g. brochure, poster, size, number of concepts required, pages, colour).

- Project management. This includes what you expect people to do (e.g. the designer to organise and direct photography, liaise with editor).

- Essential elements. Corporate identity, sponsor requirements.

- Target audience. For example, information brochure for 12–15 year olds.

- Style. This also includes the project theme (e.g. modern, youth friendly, innovative, theme to centre around).

- Likes and dislikes. For example, colours, images. Try to give examples of work that you like.

- Deadline. When do you want the finished job?

The checklist detailed in the first section of this guide may provide you with some ideas of other things to consider when developing a design brief.

Refer to Appendix 8 for a design brief template.

Focus group testing

Focus groups are a formal way of testing design and content ideas during a publishing project. While not an essential step in the publishing process, focus group testing is recommended as a way of making sure the resource is useful, appropriate and relevant to the target audience.

Organising a focus group test generally involves bringing together about six to nine people representing the target group, usually with a moderator, to elicit responses and discuss concerns and ideas.

Feedback can be incorporated at the proofreading stage.

Printing

Arranging for a resource to be printed is a significant project management task. Many decisions at this stage will depend on your budget.

In most cases the designer will provide an electronic copy of the resource for reproduction.

The options for printing range from:

- Printing in-house on your printer or photocopier.
- Digital on demand print service—economical for small print runs.
- High quality offset printing—more expensive than digital printing.

If you are using an external print company, obtain quotations from a few to get the best price.

Printing may take up to 14 working days so you need to include this in your publishing plan.

Refer to Appendix 3 for the details required in a printing quotation.

Distribution

When developing a resource it is important to consider how it will be distributed. Drug use is a sensitive issue. For example, there is concern that information provided in isolation has the potential to encourage drug use among young people by increasing curiosity about drugs. This is of particular concern with regard to specific information on how drugs are used (i.e. harm reduction).

While the development and distribution of print resources can be targeted at a particular group, there is little control over how these are used, and by whom, after the initial distribution. In some cases a resource is distributed by someone other than the organisation producing it, and so there needs to be some guidelines about how this is done to reduce the risk that the resource will be given to an inappropriate audience.

When distributing a resource it can be useful to note down the following information:

- The title of the resource that is being requested and its target audience.
- Who is requesting copies of the resource.
- Why they are seeking this information.
- How they are going to use this information.
- What support services may be required.

Refer to Appendix 9 for a sample distribution tracking sheet.

Copyright, legal compliance and disclaimers

When producing any resource it is important to remember the legal requirements related to copyright and privacy when providing advice.

Copyright

Your resource should comply with Australian copyright laws. The Commonwealth *Copyright Act 1968* (and subsequent amendments) protects original works made or first published in Australia and works made or first published in a country that has a copyright agreement with Australia. Copyright owners have certain exclusive rights.

Refer to Appendix 10 for a sample request for copyright permission that can be used to request permission to reproduce copyright material.

Use the following copyright notice on the imprint of (free) resources:

© *[insert organisation name, insert year]* This publication is copyright, but its contents may be freely photocopied or transmitted, provided the authors are appropriately acknowledged. Copies of this publication must not be sold.

Use the following copyright notice on the imprint of resources produced for sale:

© *[insert organisation name, insert year]* Except as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* and subsequent amendments, and any fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review, no part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All inquiries should be made to the publisher at the address above.

Other legislation to consider

Apart from the copyright laws, other relevant legislation might include laws on privacy, defamation, contempt of court or parliament and laws concerning trade marks, designs, trade practices and offensive material.

Disclaimers

All published resources in the alcohol and other drugs field should carry a disclaimer indicating that the resource only provides general information and people should seek more specific information from a professional. For example:

Information contained in this *[insert type of resource]* is intended as a general guide only. While care has been taken to ensure that the information is complete and correct, the *[insert organisation name]* makes no representation as to the completeness, accuracy, reliability or suitability of the information. The *[insert organisation name]* does not offer any information in this *[insert type of resource]* as a tool for treatment or counselling, and recommends that prior to making any decision based on any information in this *[insert type of resource]*, you should obtain independent professional advice.

Evaluation

Once the resource has been released, asking for reader feedback is a useful way of determining whether or not your resource has achieved its purpose.

It is relatively easy to design a simple, one page feedback sheet for readers to complete and send back to you. Alternatively, you could encourage readers to complete the checklist detailed in the first section of this guide to establish if they considered the resource of high quality and suitable for their needs.

While not an essential step in the process, evaluation is an important one. Your readers' responses will help you determine whether or not your resource has "hit the mark", will give you ideas for further improvement, and will provide input that can help next time you're planning to produce a resource.

References and further reading

ACT Insurance Authority "Risk Management Toolkit" 2004 ACT: ACT Insurance Authority, available at http://treasury.act.gov.au/actia/Docs.htm.

Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia 2009 *Tips and tricks for new players …a guide to becoming familiar with the alcohol and other drugs sector* 2nd edn, Canberra: Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia.

Australian Drug Foundation 1993 *The role of drug information in reducing drug related harm,* Melbourne: Australian Drug Foundation.

Charnock D 1998 *The DISCERN handbook: quality criteria for consumer health information: user guide and training resource,* Oxon: Radcliffe. Available at www.discern.org.uk.

Snooks & Co 2002 *Style manual: for authors, editors and printers* 6th edn, Milton: John Wiley & Sons Australia.

Streetwize 2009 "Streetwize Process", available at www.streetwize.com.au/sw_process.html.

Whitebread D 2009 *The design manual* 2nd edn, Sydney: UNSW Press.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Risk analysis

The risk analysis table provided below is a very simple form that can be adapted to suit the needs of the project.

A more detailed risk assessment matrix is available in the ACT Insurance Authority "Risk Management Toolkit" (2004), available at http://treasury.act.gov.au/actia/Docs.htm.

To use the table:

1. Detail all potential risks in the table using as much detail as possible. Some examples of potential risks have been included.
2. Rate the impact and consequences these risks would have if they occurred.
3. Rate the likelihood that these risks would occur.
4. Discuss these risks with management and decide whether they are acceptable risks.
   If they are, detail how risk will be managed and who will be responsible for managing it.

Nature of risk or uncertainty	Impact extreme=4 high=3 medium=2 low=1	Likelihood extreme=4 high=3 medium=2 low=1	Acceptable risk? Actions required & who will take responsibility to manage risk.
Processes risk			
Author does not meet deadlines			
Reviewer finds major problems with resource			
Focus group testing provides conflicting information			
Risks to reputation			
Resource being misused/provided to inappropriate audience			
Financial risks			
Cost exceeds budget by $200			
Cost exceeds budget by $1000			
Legal risks			
Information provided in the resource is believed to have resulted in harm			
Copyright is violated			

Appendix 2: Resource production plan

The person in charge of developing the resource (Project Manager) is responsible for filling out this form.

Who is in charge of this resource? Supporting staff?

Content:

....

Finished product:

....

Sign-off:

....

Others:

....

....

What is the purpose of the resource?

....

....

....

Who is the resource targeted at?
(e.g. young people, Indigenous Australians etc)

....

....

What do you envisage the resource will be?
(e.g. an eight page brochure on cutting down cannabis use)

....

....

How will the resource be distributed?

....

....

Are there any mandatory features on the resource?
(e.g. logo, acknowledgements)

....

....

What is your approximate timeline for the resource?

....

....

Stage	Steps to complete this stage	Timing guidelines
Draft	• Author to prepare an initial draft of the resource according to the brief (see Appendix 4). • Get feedback from at least one internal reviewer and an external reviewer where possible. • Check all facts and information with relevant sources. • Author to make any necessary changes.	Allow at least four weeks for this process, including the checking of facts.
Editing	• Editing refers to the stage when the resource is checked both for structure and style. • This should be done by an experienced editor who will follow the copy editing checklist (see Appendix 6).	Depending on the size of the resources this can take from between one day to a week.
Design	• Assign somebody to do the design. • Get feedback about the design. • Send edited text to designer for formatting into the final design template.	Depending on the designer, this process should take approximately one to two weeks.
Focus group testing	• Once the resource is formatted it can be focus tested by a small group of people who represent the target audience.	Allow approximately a week for the focus group and incorporation of feedback.
Proof reading	• Proofing refers to the stage when the resource is checked for spelling, syn tax, consistency in styles and formatting. • Give to at least two people to proofread. • Follow the proofreading checklist (see Appendix 7). • Make any necessary changes. • Spell check.	Allow two days for each person who is proofing the resource as well as another two days for making changes.
Printing	• Get at least two quotes for printing. • Send final artwork off for printing (the designer will prepare this for you). • Organise delivery location.	Depending on the printer, this process should take approximately one to two weeks.
Distribution	• Develop a distribution plan; this may include a mailing list.	

Appendix 3: Resource costing form

Title:

....

Size/format:

....

Extent:

....

Printing:

....

Binding:

....

Stock:

....

Artwork:

....

Quantity:

....

Expected date for printing:

....

....

....

Task/service	Supplier	Cost
Research		
Management		
Writing		
Editing		
Proofreading		
Design		
Layout and production		
Illustration		
Focus testing		
Couriers		
Sub total		
A. Printing x copies		
B. Printing x copies		

Appendix 4: Author brief

Title: (The name of the resource or project)

....……………..………………….....

Purpose:
(e.g. to provide general information about a particular drug, to provide harm reduction information about a particular drug, to provide general resilience information)

....……………..………………….....

Target audience:
(e.g. age and level of experience, male, female)

....……………..………………….....

Methodology:
(e.g. how or where will the author get the information? Will you provide it? Will they be expected to do the research? Do you want them to work with and/or interview members of the target audience?)

....……………..………………….....

Components of the resource:
(e.g. introduction, main headings, footnotes and sources included?)

....……………..………………….....

Style and vocabulary:
(Are there any special requirements such as tone of voice, words or phrases that we can assume the audience knows or style guides that should be followed? Provide examples of similar resources if appropriate.)

....……………..………………….....

Length and format:
(Provide the author the range of the words or pages required. Microsoft Word? HTML? Are pictures required? Footnotes and sourcing?)

....……………..………………….....

Acknowledgements and permissions:
(Is copyrighted material used? Is the author responsible for obtaining permissions?)

Timelines

First draft   Final draft

....……………………   ....

Appendix 5: Reviewer brief

Title:
....

Reviewer:
....

Date:
....……….

The resource you are reviewing was developed to *[insert aim].*

The primary audiences for this paper were identified as *[insert target audience].*

The resource was developed via *[insert method, e.g. consultation with the sector, by means of key informant interviews].*

The following list is a guide to help you with the review.

- Is the subject to be discussed described clearly?
- Does the author cover the key issues?
- Are appropriate references used and are they up to date?
- Is the resource presented in a logical, easy to read format?
- Are the interpretation and conclusions sound?

Comments:
....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

Appendix 6: Copy editing checklist

Language

☐ Errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation have been corrected.

☐ Author and/or senior editor/publisher have been consulted regarding significant rewording and editorial queries.

☐ Meaning is clear.

Consistency

☐ House style has been followed for language consistency.

☐ Design specifications have been followed for visual consistency.

References

☐ Accuracy of cross-references and links to other parts of the resource (tables/captions to text) has been checked.

☐ Contents, illustrations and graphics lists match headings and page numbers.

☐ Textual and bibliographic references are complete and consistent in style.

Resource completeness

☐ Covers, spine, running headers/footers and blurbs have been checked.

☐ Prepare and check: title page, half-title, contents, imprint (including copyright), foreword, acknowledgements.

☐ The body of the resource is complete: tables, illustrations, captions, labels, footnotes/endnotes are in position.

☐ Prepare and check: appendices, glossary, bibliography/references.

☐ Position and placement of all material are correct; all page numbers and other numerical sequencing are correct.

☐ The index has been spot-checked for accuracy and edited for content, capitalisation, punctuation, order and layout.

Appendix 7: Proofreading checklist

Please note that this is a quality control activity, not a substitute for copy editing.

Verification

☐ Copy has been checked against previous copy (for discrepancies).

☐ Amendments and corrections have been inserted correctly.

Integrity

☐ Content has been checked: cover, spine copy, title pages, imprint, foreword, acknowledgements.

☐ The body of the resource is complete: tables, illustrations, captions, labels, footnotes/endnotes are in position.

☐ Endmatter is complete: appendices, glossary, bibliography/references.

Spelling and punctuation

☐ Spelling, typographical and punctuation errors have been checked with the editor.

Specifications

☐ Text conforms with the editorial style sheet and/or house style: spelling, hyphenation, capitalisation, numbers, abbreviations.

☐ Resource conforms with design specifications: heading hierarchies, running headers/footers, buttons, boxes, labels, type styles (fonts), alignment and spacing, page/screen layout.

☐ Sequence, cross-references and links

☐ Lists of contents, illustrations, graphics and tables have been checked against the text.

☐ Index has been proofread.

☐ Cross-references have been checked or referred to the editor.

Layout

☐ Page/screen, line and word breaks have been checked.

☐ "Rivers" of white space have been addressed.

☐ Images/graphics, captions, labels have been placed appropriately.

Queries

☐ Queries to the editor have been marked-up.

Appendix 8: Design brief

Scope of the job:
Description (e.g. brochure, poster, size, number of pages, colour or black and white)

....

....

Project management:
(e.g. number of concepts required, approval process, designer to organise and direct photography or illustrations to be provided, liaise with editor)

....

....

Essential elements:
(e.g. corporate identity, funder requirements)

....

....

Target audience:
(e.g. an information brochure for 12–15 year olds)

....

Style:
(e.g. modern, youth friendly, innovative, theme to centre around)

....

....

Likes:
(e.g. red and blue, cartoon illustrations)

....

Dislikes:
(e.g. lime green, graffiti style illustrations)

....

Deadlines:

....

....

Appendix 9: Distribution tracking sheet

Title of resource:

....

....

Name of organisation/person requesting copies:

....

....

Reason for request:

....

....

....

....

How the resource is going to be used:

....

....

....

....

Number of copies sent:

....

....

Date sent:

....

Appendix 10: Sample request for copyright permission

Dear *[insert name]*

Re: request to reproduce copyright material.

I am preparing a resource *[insert title or working title]* to be published by the *[insert publisher]*. Approximately *[insert number of copies to be printed]* copies will be produced at a retail price of $*[insert cost]*.

I seek your permission to reproduce in this resource, and in future editions, extracts from the following publication:

> *[insert publisher]*
> *[insert authors]*
> *[insert title of work]*
> *[insert page numbers]*
> *[insert lines]*

Full acknowledgement of the origin of the extract will be given in the resource. A release form appears below for your convenience, and a duplicate copy of this request and the release is attached for your files.

Please reply to *[insert your name]* by *[insert date]*.

If you are not the copyright holder, could you please pass on any information you may have concerning the rights holder?

Yours sincerely,

[insert your name and details]

Permission is granted for the use of the material as stipulated below:

Publisher
....

Author/s
....

Work
....

Page number/s
....

Lines
....

Date
....

Signature
....

If any special form of acknowledgement is required, please list below.
....
....
....
....

ATODA

Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug
Association ACT