

National Drug Strategy Governance Structure

The following information about the National Drug Strategy Governance Structure is available in The National Drug Strategy 2010–2015: A framework for action on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.



Continued partnership between health and law enforcement portfolios

The Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (MCDS) was established at a Special Premiers' Conference on 2 April 1985. It was agreed that the MCDS would coordinate and direct the then National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (1985–92) and have authority to deal with all drug-related matters. It was also agreed that the National Drug Strategy would take a balanced approach on demand and supply and on minimising the harms drugs cause.

The establishment of the Council as the auspicing group for the strategy set up a unique and new partnership between law enforcement, health and education which has enabled great strides to be taken in demand, supply and harm reduction through integrated approaches. This partnership approach will be maintained under the National Drug Strategy 2010–2015.

On 13 February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) approved a comprehensive reform plan for a new system of ministerial councils. These changes will see a fundamental shift towards a council system focused on strategic national priorities and new ways for COAG and its councils to identify and address issues of national significance. The new arrangements for COAG and its councils took effect on 1 July 2011. Standing councils on health and on police and emergency management will progress priority issues relevant to their portfolio areas. The MCDS met for the last time on 25 February 2011 and agreed that the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs would identify strategic issues for discussion that could be addressed at annual informal meetings of interested health, police, attorneys-general, education and other relevant ministers.

Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs

The Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) will manage the ongoing work of the National Drug Strategy. The committee is a Commonwealth, state and territory government forum of senior officers who represent health and law enforcement agencies in each Australian jurisdiction and in New Zealand, as well as representatives of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The committee provides policy advice to relevant ministers on drug-related matters, and is responsible for implementing policies and programs under the National Drug Strategy framework.

The IGCD will prepare an annual report on its activities that will be provided to health, police, attorneys-general, education and other relevant ministers.

Members of the IGCD form the health officials and law enforcement officials subcommittees, which facilitate a

focused approach on relevant health and law enforcement issues.

IGCD standing committees and working groups

The IGCD will be supported by four standing committees. These will focus on alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs and pharmaceutical drug misuse. The standing committees will provide ongoing guidance and expertise to the IGCD on issues relevant to their respective drug types, and will lead the updating or development of their respective sub-strategies.

Time-limited working groups will also be established during the life of the strategy. The working groups will be given discrete, time-limited tasks which align with priority areas identified in the strategy. The three immediate priority areas are the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Drug Strategy, a national drug research and data strategy, and a national workforce development strategy.

The working group structure will allow for additional groups to be established as new priorities are identified.

The IGCD will invite relevant representatives of intergovernmental councils, government agencies, non-government organisations, the research sector, peak organisations, consumers, carers and industry to participate in these committees and groups.

Stakeholder engagement

The IGCD will convene an annual stakeholder forum to discuss issues related to drug policy. The forum will engage a range of drug and alcohol experts and a broader selection of stakeholders including consumers, carers, consumer representative groups, peak bodies, non-government organisations and industry.

Outcomes from the forum will inform discussion at the annual IGCD strategic workshop.

Australian National Council on Drugs

The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) will continue to provide ministers and senior government officials with independent, expert advice on matters connected with legal and illegal drugs. The ANCD is also tasked to facilitate enhanced partnership and communication between government and the community in the development and implementation of policies and programs to redress drug-related harms.

Members of the ANCD are appointed by the Prime Minister. They include people with a wide range of experience and expertise in various aspects of drug policy such as treatment, rehabilitation, education, family counselling, law enforcement, research, and work at the coalface in community organisations.

The ANCD will develop a work plan and report annually to the Prime Minister. It will also provide reports to relevant ministers and the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs.