

DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFICE

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION -
INFORMATION STATEMENT**

March 2004

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INTRODUCTION

The Freedom of Information Act 1992 enables the general right of access by the public to information held by State and Local Government public bodies.

In accordance with the requirements of Section 94 of the Act, the Drug and Alcohol Office is required to prepare an Information Statement to describe:

- The structure and functions of the agency;
- How the functions of the Drug and Alcohol Office affect the public;
- A description of arrangements that exist to enable members of the public to participate in the formulation of drug and alcohol policy and the performance of the Drug and Alcohol Office functions;
- A description of the various documents produced by the Drug and Alcohol Office; and
- How members of the public may access documents under the Freedom of Information Act (1992).

Most of the information in this Information Statement is available via the Drug and Alcohol Office website: www.dao.health.wa.gov.au

The contact officer regarding all Freedom of Information matters is:

**Executive Officer/FOI Coordinator
Drug and Alcohol Office
7 Field Street
Mount Lawley WA 6050**

**Telephone: 9370 0352
Facsimile: 9271 5055**

FUNCTION OF THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFICE

The Drug and Alcohol Office is the peak Government agency that works across the Government and non-Government sectors to address drug and alcohol issues in the community.

The Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO) was established following the 2001 Community Drug Summit. The rationale was to bring together the key Government organisations working in the drug and alcohol sector. These included Next Step Specialist Drug and Alcohol Services, the WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office (WADASO), the Alcohol and Drug Policy Branch (Mental Health Division of the Department of Health) and the Department of Health, Alcohol and other Drugs Program.

The Drug and Alcohol Office was established in 2002. It is accountable to the people of Western Australia and the Government and is overseen by a Board. Since operations commenced, its driving mandate has been to assist with implementation of Summit initiatives and coordinate, implement and monitor the WA Alcohol and Drug Strategy and undertake ongoing engagement of the community, Government and non-Government agencies in developing initiatives and programs with regards to drug and alcohol use and related problems.

The Drug and Alcohol Office continues to provide strategic advice on drug and alcohol use and related problems to the Government and the alcohol and drug sector, key stakeholders and the wider WA community, as well as providing resources and specialist alcohol and drug services.

Ongoing coordination, implementation and monitoring, as well as communicating with and engaging key stakeholders, are critical to the continued performance of the Drug and Alcohol Office as the lead agency for response to drug and alcohol problems in Western Australia.

VISION

For Western Australians to lead healthy lifestyles and to have access to the best services and programs to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug-related harm.

AGENCY OBJECTIVES

- Coordinate, implement and monitor the WA Community Drug Summit initiatives in accordance with *The Government's Response 'Putting People First'*.
- Coordinate, implement and monitor the *Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002 – 2005*.
- Develop, resource and deliver best practice drug and alcohol services and programs throughout Western Australia.
- Coordinate whole of Government planning and activity targeting people affected by drug and alcohol use.
- Provide expert advice to Government regarding drug and alcohol use and related harm.

STRUCTURE OF THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFICE

DAO is divided into four directorates, supported by two units, each with a responsibility and budget for provision of services to the community (see organisational chart at appendix 1). They include:

- Next Step Drug and Alcohol Services;
- Prevention;
- Client Services Resourcing and Development; and
- Practice Development.

There are also two units which provide support across the Drug and Alcohol Office. These are:

- Executive Support Unit; and
- Corporate Support Unit.

NEXT STEP DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES

Next Step Drug and Alcohol Services provide a range of clinical services for people affected by drug and alcohol use (ie those who use; families etc). Clinical placement and research programs support these activities. Services provided by Next Step Drug and Alcohol Services include:

- ***Inpatient Services***
Next Step provides a statewide medical inpatient drug and alcohol withdrawal service. Special care beds are used for youth, pregnant women, and mothers with babies, HIV positive people and Indigenous people.
- ***Pharmacy Services***
A dispensing service for opiate replacement therapies operates from Next Step's East Perth premises.
- ***Metropolitan Drug and Alcohol Centres***
Next Step, in conjunction with other Government and non-Government agencies, has established three Drug and Alcohol Centres (DACs). Centres are located in Warwick (North) and Fremantle (South). The East Metropolitan Drug and Alcohol Centre will replace the existing Next Step outpatient service at the Moore Street premises, in East Perth. The model of service delivery within each of the DACs has been developed in response to local community needs. Each DAC provides integrated medical and counselling services that are cost effective and ensure that clients and their families have improved access to treatment.
- ***Youth Services***
The Youth Services operate from Moore Street, East Perth and provide a specialist outpatient service for young people and their families. The service provides a comprehensive multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment program both on site and on an outreach basis.

PREVENTION

The Prevention area provides a range of prevention and early intervention programs and services that aim to:

- prevent and delay the onset of drug use;
- support environments that discourage hazardous and harmful use;
- enhance healthy community attitudes and skills to avoid hazardous and harmful use;
- support and enhance the community's and the family's capacity to address drug and alcohol problems; and

- support initiatives that address inappropriate supply of drugs and alcohol.

The Prevention Branch is comprised of three sub-program areas, Alcohol, Illicit Drugs, and Community Programs.

The range of prevention and early intervention activities include:

- public education – including public campaigns, production and distribution of printed materials;
- healthy public policy and legislative strategies – including liquor licensing, local government policies, Alcohol Accords and policies to promote responsible service of alcohol;
- sponsorship activities;
- organisational activities – coordinated activity with Police, Liquor Industry and night venue owners to identify opportunities to reduce drug and alcohol use;
- research and evaluation; and
- community support activities – includes support of School Drug Education Project, Local Drug Action Groups, community support and health promotion professional development.

CLIENT SERVICES, RESOURCING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Client Services, Resourcing and Development area provides a leadership role in strategic and operational planning for drug and alcohol programs and services. The branch works with key stakeholders to plan, resource, develop and monitor the community's access to drug and alcohol statewide treatment and support services.

The area is comprised of three areas, Planning and Coordination, Services and Development and Evaluation and Reporting.

Planning and Coordination

The Planning and Coordination aims to:

- develop and coordinate Area Drug and Alcohol Plans for the 10 Health Regions statewide;
- develop and coordinate strategies to enhance system integration and coordination of services and programs targeting people affected by drug and alcohol problems;
- information, research and support (providing evidence, research and support to stakeholders in the development and implementation of policy and programs); and
- analyse and plan for specific program areas as identified through stakeholder consultations and the Drug and Alcohol Office strategic directions.

Services and Development:

Services and Development aims to:

- provide resources to agencies statewide to ensure a diverse range of treatment and support services are available in order to improve client access;
- deliver quality and consistency in the range and operation of drug and alcohol treatment support services across the state;
- ensure that quality assurance monitoring underpins service delivery;
- ensure that the performance of service providers is reviewed and service agreements clearly define the requirements; and
- ensure that continuity of care for clients is coordinated through the integration of specialised Government and non-Government drug and alcohol treatment and support services.

WA Diversion Program

In addition, this area also manages the Commonwealth funded WA Diversion Program that aims to divert offenders with drug use problems, away from the criminal justice system and into treatment. The initiative consists of a number of police and court diversion programs ranging from brief, early intervention through to more intensive treatment regimes. The continual development of the program is monitored through a State Reference Group consisting of key stakeholders. Pilot programs are evaluated through the Branch.

The current WA Diversion Program priorities are to:

- expand diversion services across the state;
- provide more appropriate diversion programs for Indigenous people;
- ensure efficient and effective programs for offenders appearing at the Perth Children's Court; and
- ensure that the program is supported through appropriate training, resource development and management.

The WA Diversion Program is also supported through a number of measures including a school and family program due for completion on the 30 June 2003 and the 30 June 2004 respectively. The school program aims to engage high-risk youth into treatment, the family program targets family members of diverted offenders.

Evaluation and Reporting:

Evaluation and Reporting aims to:

- evaluate the outcomes of funded drug and alcohol programs and other activities;
- establish a unitary Government and non-Government inter-agency client monitoring system;
- collect, compile, analyse, and disseminate relevant, timely, accurate and reliable information concerned with the drug and alcohol service delivery system and a range of population parameters (including morbidity, mortality and health services utilisation) at State and national levels;

- develop, in collaboration with other key stakeholders, projects to improve, maintain and share relevant data;
- evaluate the outcomes of existing service delivery systems, innovations in service delivery, and other related activities; and
- maintain and promote data collection for analysis and interpretation of trends and outcome-specific data to inform policy development and strategic decision-making.

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

The Practice Development area provides accessible information, advice, counselling and referral options to the broad community and works to support organisations, systems and the workforce to respond effectively to people affected by drug and alcohol use. The core functions of Practice Development are:

- ensuring access to quality information on drug use, drug harm and prevention and treatment options through an evidence-based approach;
- identifying and disseminating effective practice guidelines;
- building the capacity to implement effective prevention and treatment practice in individual practitioners and organisations;
- supporting workforce development through a comprehensive range of organisational development, consultancy and support strategies; and
- contributing to strategies to ensure clear and effective pathways of care for people affected by drug and alcohol use.

The program areas of the area are:

- *Aboriginal Health* contributes to policy advice and practice development initiatives to enhance responses to Aboriginal people and communities affected by drug and alcohol use. Currently the program manages Aboriginal traineeships around the State;
- *Workforce Development* provides practice and organisation development initiatives to a wide range of individuals (e.g. nurses, medical staff, drug specialist staff, justice staff) and organisations (e.g. schools, hospitals, Department of Justice, drug specialist services). These include consultancy services, mentorships, resource development (e.g. clinical guidelines) accredited courses (the organisation is a Registered Training Organisation) and tertiary education courses;
- *The Drug Overdose Prevention Program (DROPP)* works with a wide range of agencies (e.g. drug specialist agencies, Department of Justice, hospitals) implementing strategies to prevent and respond effectively to drug overdose;
- The *Library* provides information and library services to those who are implementing responses to people affected by drug and alcohol use;
- The *GP Support Program* provides practice development, support and consultancy services to GPs and the *Community Program for Pharmacotherapies (CPOP)*. This includes the 24-hour *Clinical Advisory Service (CAS)* for General Practitioners and other professionals. The *Patient Advisory Service* for pharmacotherapies is managed by ADIS; and

- The *Alcohol and Drug Information Services (ADIS)* is a 24 hour, statewide, confidential telephone service providing information, advice, counselling and referral. The service includes the *Parent Drug Information Service (PDIS)* (parents who offer support to other parents whose children are affected by drug and alcohol use), Quitline counselling and responses to various state and federal drug and alcohol prevention campaigns.

EXECUTIVE SUPPORT UNIT

The Executive Support Unit provides 'central point' coordination for drug and alcohol activity.

Core functions of the unit are:

- Development of strategic, systemic and evidence-based approach to service and program delivery;
- Strategic coordination including the integration of the Drug and Alcohol Office, Government, alcohol and other drug sector and community;
- Strategic communication incorporating all aspects of the agency's internal and external transfer of information;
- Ministerial liaison; and
- Media and public relations.

In delivery of these functions, Executive Support Unit staff work collaboratively with other sections of the Drug and Alcohol Office, other State Departments, the Commonwealth, community groups and stakeholders. The overall aim of Unit activity is to ensure a coordinated series of activities, broadly consistent with the WA Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2002 - 2005.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services is comprised of administrative branches whose services include Human Resources, Communication, Information Technology and Finance.

The main focus of this division is to provide services to other areas of the Drug and Alcohol Office. The Director of this area reports directly to the Executive Director and the structure of this division is broken into three main areas and they are:

The Branch of Human Resources and Corporate Support is comprised of the following sections:

- Human Resources
- Payroll
- Administrative Services
- Purchasing
- Reception
- Corporate Records
- Risk and Contract Management
- Information Technology

HOW THE FUNCTIONS OF THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFICE AFFECT THE PUBLIC

Drug and alcohol problems affect the entire community and have significant health, social and economic impacts on all Western Australians. The cost to the community is not only financial. Individuals, families and the community as a whole bear the impact of the poor health, violence and crime that is associated with drug and alcohol use.

Drug and alcohol use are a complex issues. Although some problems are the direct result of use, we now recognise that complex social, psychological and economic factors underpin most drug and alcohol-related problems. It is often the most disadvantaged who suffer to the greatest extent.

The complexity of these issues requires more than a single agency response. As such, the Drug and Alcohol Office works with other key Government agencies in coordinating a whole of Government approach. Primarily the aim of this approach is to enhance coordination across Government to ensure resources are used effectively to deliver the best outcomes and initiatives developed to build a healthy community for all.

Key Government agencies include the Departments of Health, Indigenous Affairs, Housing and Works, Education and Training, Local Government and Regional Development, Justice, Racing Gaming and Liquor, the WA Police Service and the Department for Community Development.

ARRANGEMENTS TO ENABLE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATE IN FORMULATION OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFICE FUNCTIONS

In August 2001, the Community Drug Summit was held in the Parliament of Western Australia. This was unprecedented in its involvement of the community in shaping the future direction of drug and alcohol policy and strategy.

The Government is committed to ongoing community input and to effect this, the Minister for Health established the Community Advisory Council.

Community Advisory Council

The Council was established with the aim of ensuring that the Drug and Alcohol Office and other Government agencies receive independent advice from the professional and broader community regarding drug and alcohol policy and programs. The 10 member Council have a wide range of experience and expertise on drug related issues. Collectively, the Council represents the interests of young people, families, Aboriginal and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, people from rural and remote areas, drug users and service providers.

The Government has acknowledged that the best way to devise appropriate strategies in this area is to involve as many sectors of the community as possible.

Members of the community are invited to raise matters of concern regarding drug and alcohol related issues to inform discussions of the Community Advisory Council.

Written submissions are welcomed by the Council, as a method of informing the Council of community views and to assist the Council in its deliberations. Written submission guidelines are available on the Drug and Alcohol Office website <http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au> or by contacting the Drug and Alcohol Office.

POST:	FAX:	PHONE:
Community Advisory Council C/- Drug and Alcohol Office 7 Field Street Mount Lawley WA 6050	(08) 9272 6605	(08) 9370 0333

E-MAIL: dao.communitycouncil@health.wa.gov.au

Other Public Participation

Any member of the public may also write directly to the Executive Director of the Drug and Alcohol Office who will arrange for the issue to be investigated and provide a response accordingly.

The Drug and Alcohol Office also undertakes community and key stakeholder consultation as a part of its core business when developing policies, strategy and services and their delivery.

It was instrumental in assisting Government agencies to develop Agency Drug and Alcohol Plans in 2003, representing a significant step forward to a more integrated response to drug and alcohol problems in WA.

It also produces a wide range of publications. Pamphlets and brochures to ensure the public is informed about the harms associated with drug use and has a comprehensive and informative website.

DAO staff regularly contribute to research, policy and strategy reports prepared across the AOD sector at state and national levels. These include prevention and harm reduction materials, information on sources, policy, strategy and planning documents etc.

DOCUMENTS PRODUCED BY THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFICE

The Drug and Alcohol Office produces a range of information sheets on various drug and alcohol related issues, all of which are available through the

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) on telephone 9442 5000 or toll free 1800 198 024.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL OFFICE LIBRARY

The Drug and Alcohol Office is located at 7 Field Street, Mount Lawley, telephone 9370 0390 and is open from 9.30 to 12.00 and from 1.00 to 4-00pm Monday to Thursday (closed public holidays).

HOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY ACCESS DOCUMENTS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (1992)

The Drug and Alcohol Office aims to provide information promptly and at the least possible cost, and wherever possible, documents will be provided outside the Freedom of Information process.

The public can access reports, information sheets and documents related to the Drug and Alcohol Office's business on its website under publications.

Alternatively the Library can provide copies of public documents upon request.

If the information is not routinely available, the Freedom of Information Act (1992) provides the right for access to documents held by the Drug and Alcohol Office.

Information on specific drugs can be obtained on the Drugaware website at www.drugaware.com.au.

Amendments to Personal Information

Members of the public who believe that their personal information held by the Drug and Alcohol Office is inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading, may apply in writing to have the information corrected.

How to Apply

Persons wishing to apply for Freedom of Information access must lodge an application with the Drug and Alcohol Office.

For an application to be valid it must:

- Be in writing;
- Give enough information to enable the requested documents to be identified;
- Give an Australian address to which notices can be sent; and
- Be lodged with the Drug and Alcohol Office with any application fee payable under the regulations.

Applications and enquiries should be addressed to:

**The Executive Officer/FOI Coordinator
Drug and Alcohol Office
7 Field Street
Mount Lawley WA 6050**

**Telephone: (08) 9370 0352
Fax: (08) 9271 5055**

Applications will be acknowledged in writing and applicants notified of the decision within 45 days.

Access Arrangements

Access to documents can be granted by way of inspection, a copy of the document, a copy of an audio or videotape, a computer disk; or a transcript of a recorded, shorthand or encoded document from which words can be reproduced.

Notice of Decision

The Drug and Alcohol Office aims to make a decision as soon as possible, but in any case within 45 days in accordance with the Act. Applicants will be provided with a notice of decision, which will include details such as:

- Date on which the decision was made;
- Name and designation of the person who made the decision;
- If an exempt document, the reason for classifying the document exempt, or why access is given to an edited document; and
- Information on the right to review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

Refusal to Access

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision of the Drug and Alcohol Office are entitled to request an **internal review** by the Drug and Alcohol Office. Applications should be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the notice of decision.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the review within 15 days.

If applicants are not satisfied with the result, applicants can then apply to the Information Commissioner for an **external review** when the decision is issued.

The contact details are:

**The Information Commissioner
Level 21, Exchange Plaza
2 The Esplanade
Perth WA 6000**

