

Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum Communiqué 28 November 2019

The fifth meeting of the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum (the Forum) took place via teleconference on 28 November 2019.

The Forum consists of Ministers from across Australia with responsibility for alcohol and other drug policy from the health and justice/law enforcement portfolios from each jurisdiction.

The meeting was chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP.

Major items discussed by Ministers today included:

National Alcohol Strategy

Ministers endorsed the National Alcohol Strategy 2019-2028. The National Alcohol Strategy builds on a long-standing commitment from all governments under the National Drug Strategy to prevent and reduce harmful drinking in Australia.

The National Alcohol Strategy outlines four agreed priority areas:

- improving community safety by introducing safer drinking environments, reducing injury and violence, and improving treatment
- improving management of the availability, price and promotion of alcohol
- ensuring people have access to treatment, information and support services, and
- improving awareness of how alcohol-related harm impacts the Australian community.

The National Alcohol Strategy is available on the [Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum website](#).

Ministers acknowledge and recognise the considerable time and resources contributed by all jurisdictions during the development process, and thank everyone who submitted feedback through the consultation processes which informed the development of the National Alcohol Strategy.

E-Cigarettes

Ministers discussed the growing evidence from Australia and overseas implicating e-cigarettes in a range of harms to population health. Broadly, this evidence concerns the direct harms e-cigarettes pose to human health, their impact on smoking initiation and cessation, uptake among youth and dual use with conventional tobacco products.

Ministers noted the current evidence regarding e-cigarettes and agreed to continue to monitor the emerging evidence.

National Quality Framework for Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services

Ministers endorsed an update to the National Quality Framework for Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services (National Quality Framework). The National Quality Framework is an action of the National Ice Action Strategy (NIAS) and now includes strengthened clinical governance requirements and a list of accreditation standards specialist treatment service providers must meet.

The implementation of the National Quality Framework is based on collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictional health agencies. The National Quality Framework aims to improve quality by setting a benchmark for the delivery of all alcohol and other drug treatment services.

The National Quality Framework is available on the [drughelp website](#).

National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Framework

Ministers endorsed the National Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment 2019-2029 (The Framework). The Framework enables a shared strategic vision of the drug and alcohol treatment system and facilitates coordinated planning to provide the context for national and state and territory processes, programs and policies.

The National Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment 2019-2029 will be available in December 2019 on the [drughelp website](#).

National Drug Strategy Annual Report

The National Drug Strategy requires measurement of its effectiveness to be provided to the Council of Australian Governments from MDAF. This 2018 Annual Report provides updates and progress against five headline indicators and 12 supplementary indicators as well as the Strategy's sub-strategies, including the National Ice Action Strategy.

Ministers endorsed the 2018 National Drug Strategy Annual Report and agreed to provide it to COAG.

Other Items of Note

The Forum noted a new National Tobacco Strategy is currently being developed. It is expected that public consultation on the draft National Tobacco Strategy will occur in early 2020.

The Forum received the final report into a study 'Alcohol availability trends in Australia: A Review'. The report identified that there is strong international evidence that demonstrates links between the physical availability of alcohol (in terms of outlet numbers and hours of sale), alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm.

'Alcohol availability trends in Australia: A Review' will be published by the [authors](#).

The next meeting of the Forum is expected to take place in June 2020.

Media contact: news@health.gov.au