

Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum Communiqué

16 December 2016

The inaugural meeting of the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum took place via teleconference today.

The Ministerial Drug and Alcohol 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 co-chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Health, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, and the Commonwealth Minister for Justice, the Hon Michael Keenan MP.

Major items discussed by Members today included:

Progress against the National Ice Action Strategy

Members noted that of the 31 actions identified in COAG's National Ice Action Strategy (published in December 2015) that significant progress had been made in implementing a number of key actions focussing on reducing the impact that crystal methamphetamine ('ice') has on Australian communities.

A detailed progress report on the National Ice Action Strategy will be provided to COAG, highlighting the following progress:

- Availability of new evidence-based online education and prevention resources ([Positive Choices website](#));
- Expansion of alcohol and other treatment services through [Counselling Online](#), new targeted funding provided to Primary Health Networks and increased capacity in state and territory services;
- Introduction of new Medicare items for Addiction Medicine Specialists;
- Strengthened efforts in responding to serious and organised crime;
- Continuing efforts to improve the timeliness and quality of data collections; and
- Ongoing development of a national precursor chemical tracking system (Ne-EUD) and jurisdictions commitment to improve and harmonise controls for precursor chemicals and equipment.

Members noted that further NIAS actions are expected to be implemented over coming months, including the establishment of a new National Centre of Clinical Excellence for Emerging Drugs of Concern, the commencement of the phased roll-out of a national network of Local Drug Action Teams and the launch of an online community resources toolkit ([Cracks in the ice website](#)).

The Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum will continue to oversee progress of the National Ice Action Strategy, and has identified two particular whole of government actions to be progressed for Ministerial consideration as a priority:

- Establish a national phone line that will serve as a single point of contact for individuals and families seeking to receive information, counselling and other support services for dealing with ice use and other drugs; and
- Implement a quality framework to provide consistent and appropriate treatment in accordance with best practice.

The National Drug Strategy

Members noted that a draft of the National Drug Strategy was well advanced, and have requested that a final draft be provided for consideration at the next meeting of the Forum.

Once the National Drug Strategy had been endorsed, the National Alcohol Strategy would be considered by the Ministerial Forum thereafter.

National Alcohol and Other Drug Governance Arrangements

Members agreed the Terms of Reference to guide the work of the Ministerial Forum (see below).

Ministers also noted advice from the National Drug Strategy Committee (a newly established Senior Officials group supporting the work of the Ministerial Forum) relating to the development of their 2017 workplan.

Ministers also noted that the newly established National Drug Strategy Committee had replaced the former Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs.

The next meeting of the Forum is expected to take place in March 2017.

Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum - Terms of Reference 2016

On 11 December 2015, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to Recommendation 32 of the National Ice Taskforce's Final Report, endorsing the implementation of a new Ministerial Forum to oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of Australia's national drug policy frameworks, including the National Ice Action Strategy (NIAS) from 2016.

Ministerial Forum roles	Description
Chair (s)	The Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum (MDAF) will be co-Chaired by the Commonwealth Ministers with portfolio responsibility for alcohol and other drugs (AOD), and justice/law enforcement for the first twelve months and then rotated annually.
Membership	Two Ministers from each jurisdiction, one each from the health/community services portfolios (with AOD policy responsibilities) and one from the justice/law enforcement portfolios. MDAF members may nominate a delegate to attend on their behalf if they are unable to attend a meeting.
Scope of responsibility	The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have a shared responsibility to build safe and healthy communities through the collaborative delivery and implementation of national strategic frameworks to reduce AOD related harms for all Australians. The MDAF will be supported by the National Drug Strategy Committee (NDSC) in the implementation and monitoring of these national strategic frameworks.
Roles and Responsibilities	The MDAF will be responsible for reporting to COAG on AOD issues of national significance.

Ministerial Forum roles	Description
	<p>The role of the MDAF is to:</p> <p>Oversee the development and implementation of the National Drug Strategy (NDS), including monitoring progress against priority areas;</p> <p>Oversee development and implementation of NDS Sub-Strategies (including the National Tobacco Strategy, National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples Drug Strategy, National Alcohol and other Drug Workforce Development Strategy, and the National Ice Action Strategy);</p> <p>Provide direction, advice and reports to other councils and committees, as required; and</p> <p>Provide an annual report to COAG.</p>
Secretariat	<p>Initially, caretaker Secretariat for the MDAF will be provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health, with future secretariat arrangements and resourcing to be confirmed.</p>
Operations	<p>The MDAF will meet up to three times per year and will endeavour to schedule meetings with regard to the COAG standard meeting schedule. Additional meetings may be scheduled if required.</p> <p>Meeting papers are to be circulated to all members no later than 10 working days before each meeting, unless under prior agreement of the Chair/s.</p> <p>If decisions need to be made as a matter of urgency and cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting, papers can be circulated for consideration and endorsement out of session following agreement by the co-Chairs.</p> <p>A quorum for a meeting of at least ten members with representation from each jurisdiction must be achieved in order for a meeting to be deemed official.</p> <p>The MDAF will release an agreed summary communique following each meeting.</p> <p>Other operational arrangements are to be made by the MDAF and do not require COAG endorsement.</p>
Decision-Making	<p>The MDAF will make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible. Where necessary, decisions will be made on the basis of a majority of members and the principle of one vote per jurisdiction will apply.</p>
Review and reporting	<p>The MDAF will provide COAG with an annual report on the development, implementation and monitoring of Australia's national drug policy frameworks, including information on implementation under each area of the NIAS. Reports will also provide advice on lessons learned through the implementation process, and next steps to ensure responses to ice remain innovative and robust.</p> <p>A final report will be provided to COAG by mid-2020 which will provide a robust evaluation of the implementation of the NIAS.</p> <p>The MDAF can refer matters to COAG for consideration, noting that these</p>

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	<p>will be matters genuinely requiring First Ministers' attention (such as major decisions and intergovernmental agreements).</p> <p>The MDAF can also advise COAG on an exception basis, especially when its priorities are not progressing satisfactorily.</p> <p>The MDAF Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 18 months.</p>