

Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum Communiqué

29 May 2017

The second 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 Greg Hunt MP, and the Commonwealth Minister for Justice, the Hon Michael Keenan MP.

Major items discussed by Members today included:

The National Drug Strategy

Members have endorsed the next iteration of Australia's National Drug Strategy and agreed for it to be published subject to some minor updates being made to reflect the results of the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey.

For the first time, the National Drug Strategy will run for a period of 10 years (2017-2026), recognising Australia's long-standing and ongoing commitment to the underpinning principle of harm minimisation and a balanced approach between health and law enforcement.

The National Drug Strategy provides a national guiding framework, which seeks to identify priorities to build safe, healthy and resilient Australian communities through preventing and minimising alcohol, tobacco and other drug related health, social and economic harms among individuals, families and communities.

Members recognised that there had been a significant time taken in developing this iteration of the National Drug Strategy and agreed that it was important each jurisdiction consider it in the development of local alcohol and other drug policy responses.

The Ministerial Forum will be reporting on progress against the National Drug Strategy to the Council of Australian Governments.

The National Alcohol Strategy

Members noted finalisation of the National Alcohol Strategy (a sub-strategy of the National Drug Strategy) as a key priority, and expect the National Drug Strategy Committee will bring forward a draft of the National Alcohol Strategy for consideration by the Forum later this year.

Progress against the National Ice Action Strategy

Members noted that there continues to be good progress on the implementation of actions under the National Ice Action Strategy which seek to reduce the impact that crystal methamphetamine ('ice') is having on Australian communities.

Members noted the progress that had been made on the establishment of a national telephone 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 that this should be operational by mid-July 2017.

Members also discussed the importance of progressing development of a National Quality Framework to support continued enhancements to safety and quality of drug and alcohol treatment services, and requested that a draft be provided for consideration by the Forum in September 2017.

Members also noted some of the key successes that Australian law enforcement agencies have experienced under the National Ice Action Strategy. These achievements include the release of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's first wastewater analysis report, and ongoing cooperation between the Australian Federal Police and Chinese authorities through Taskforce Blaze.

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

Media contact: Kay McNiece, 0412 132 585, news@health.gov.au