

WA STRATEGY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE ACTION PLAN 1997 - 1999

JUNE 1998

Together Against Drugs - One Year On

First Year Implementation

The WA Strategy Against Drug Abuse Action Plan 1997-99, Together Against Drugs, is a comprehensive, across government plan to address abuse of both legal and illegal drugs in Western Australia. Together Against Drugs assumes no single strategy is enough, that there are no simple solutions to this complex problem and no single strategy can stand alone. The Government's approach necessarily includes responses through public education, health and community support services, law enforcement and community action. All of these are essential as part of the integrated strategy.

Together Against Drugs outlines over 70 separate initiatives and 66 of these are underway. Key developments in the first year of implementation have included:

- A policy framework that is clear in its emphasis; first and foremost, on opposition to drug abuse, and second, recognising the need for harm reduction strategies to respond practically and with compassion where abuse is continuing.
- Expansion of community support services with the establishment of ten new Community Drug Service Teams, more beds in rehabilitation services and increased capacity for day treatment and parent support services. As a result there are no waiting lists for these services.
- Drug Aware public education campaigns, first supporting parents and then focussing on specific drugs beginning with heroin.
- Alcohol abuse public education including 100% Control and the Be a Good Host campaign as part

of the broader strategy of the Host Responsibility Program.

- Expansion of methadone treatment through general practitioners, also eliminating any waiting list for this treatment.
- Implementation of the School Drug Education Project as a joint initiative of the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools and the Education Department, with 280 schools engaged in professional development, an estimated 500 schools with school drug policies, the development of a new curriculum and corresponding parent materials currently being piloted, and a range of strategies to involve parents and the community.
- Expansion of parent drug education courses through non government alcohol and drug agencies.
- Drug Aware Pharmacy Project involving 70% of community pharmacies becoming providers of alcohol and drug information and advice.
- Peer drug education initiatives including outreach programs and a wide range of materials to reduce harm among continuing drug users.
- Professional education using innovative workplace learning approaches to enhance practice through development of both staff and policy, with Family & Children's Services and Ministry of Justice.
- Law enforcement targeting street dealing of drugs.
- Enhancement of police capacity to target large suppliers through joint task forces, telephone interception powers and listening devices legislation and equipment.

- A coordinated strategy to tackle heroin overdose involving ambulance and hospital emergency medical services, the Health Department, alcohol and drug agencies, the WA Substance Users Association, the Police Service, the Pharmacy Guild and the National Centre for Research into the Prevention of Drug Abuse.
- Establishment of a statewide network of forty Local Drug Action Groups supported by professional services. These groups provide a practical focus for the broad community to be part of the State strategy to prevent and reduce drug abuse.
- Development of the Leaders Against Drug Abuse with an Action Plan for 1998/99 to support community awareness and specific projects.
- Development of a drug management strategy for offenders by the Ministry of Justice (in draft) and the establishment of the Health Department Alcohol and Drug Policy Unit to enhance the response of the general health system.
- Commencement of a Parent Drug Support Project to expand the support available to families by enhancing existing specialist services, developing parent friendly resource material and further development of community support networks.
- Partnership with the WA Football Development Trust to engage football clubs around the State to promote the “drug free” message in local communities.
- Regular production of local statistical profiles and WA drug abuse indicators and analysis of key issues and indicators.
- Appointment of the Minister Responsible for WA Drug Abuse Strategy, establishment of the Ministerial Council on Drug Abuse Strategy and a corresponding Senior Officers Group, the implementation of coordination strategies for regions, services, education and research and the establishment of the WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office.

THE YEAR AHEAD

The year ahead will see continuing strategies such as the Community Drug Service Teams, the School Drug Education Project, enhanced law enforcement and the expansion of the network of Local Drug Action Groups, together with the range of other activities underway, impacting on drug abuse in the community.

The coming year will also see the WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office developing further the work commenced with businesses and workplaces, tertiary education, a range of sports, the popular media, and local government.

As indicated in the last point of Together Against Drugs, the WA Strategy Against Drug Abuse Action Plan 1997-99 is not a static program. Rather, it provides the capacity and the organisation to listen to the community and to work with it to respond to existing and newly emerging issues.

The year ahead will also see the development of the WA Strategy Against Drug Abuse Action Plan for 1999-2001. This plan will be developed with the participation of all partners in the strategy. It will take the State into the new millennium with a continuation of the concerted effort and strong determination to prevent and reduce drug abuse in Western Australia that characterises Together Against Drugs.

WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office

Level 1/6 Thelma Street, West Perth WA 6005

Telephone: (08) 9483 8244, Fax: (08) 9483 8299