

Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015

Department for Child Protection and Family Support - ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

In support of the *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015*, and to address a range of existing and emerging alcohol and other drug issues, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) identified a number of key initiatives for 2013-14. Outcomes are summarised below in the respective key strategic areas of the Framework.

Key Strategic Area 1: Focusing on prevention

Educating and encouraging individuals, families and communities to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills to choose healthy lifestyles and promote healthy environments.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- In August 2013, the Department contributed to the final stages of the Statewide Interagency Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Model of Care Implementation Plan. This Framework sets out the guiding principles and criteria to be considered in the development and delivery of FASD prevention/intervention programs, inclusion criteria, stakeholder engagement and background information. The final implementation plan was published by the Department of Health (DoH) in September 2013.

Key Strategic Area 2: Intervening before problems become entrenched

Implementing a range of programs and services that identify individuals, families and communities at-risk and intervening before problems become entrenched.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- During 2013, the Department worked with districts to renew memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between the districts and community drug service teams (CDSTs). As at November 2013, 11 out of 17 districts had current MOUs in place with the remaining having commenced the process of redeveloping their historical MOU.
- The Wiluna Young Guns program was presented by the Murchison District on 20 November 2013 at the Festival of Learning 2013. This presentation involved a multi-agency response to young people with issues around sniffing and associated anti-social behaviour.
- A newly revised Casework Practice Manual entry on Alcohol and Other Drug Issues - Drug Testing was released on 19 December 2013. The entry provides child protection workers with practical guidance for using drug testing to enhance casework with parents with alcohol and other drug issues that impact on the safety and wellbeing of their child.
- The implementation of Family Support Networks (FSNs) continued with the establishment of the Midwest site in January 2014, and the Mirrabooka site in May 2014. FSNs are a partnership between community sector services and the Department to provide a common entry point for families needing access to locally based family support services. FSNs appropriately link families to supports including alcohol and other drug (AOD) services where required.

- The Strong Families Program continued to engage Aboriginal families who require assistance to resolve complex or multiple issues including parenting, health, domestic violence, truancy and the use of alcohol and/or other drugs. In 2013-14, 429 families voluntarily participated in this interagency program.

Key Strategic Area 3: Effective law enforcement approaches

Reducing and controlling the availability of alcohol and other drugs and implementing strategies that aim to prevent or break the cycle of offending.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- The Director General of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, as a prescribed person, can apply to have premises declared liquor restricted, where the Department has concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children.
- During the 2013-14 financial year, the Department submitted a small number of applications to the Director of Liquor Licencing for a Liquor Restricted Premises declaration. These applications are applied for where parents or carers are not prepared, or able to, submit their own application and where the safety and wellbeing of a child is at risk due to alcohol use.
- A significant number of parent and carer initiated applications were also supported by the Department to have homes declared liquor restricted where there were concerns about the impact of alcohol on the safety and wellbeing of children. It has been reported that these voluntary arrangements are working well.

Key Strategic Area 4: Effective treatment and support services

Providing integrated, evidence based treatment and support services that promote positive and healthy lifestyle changes by effectively responding to an individual's use and those affected by someone else's use.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- Foster Care Workshops on FASD presented by the Department's Learning Development Centre were held on 16 September 2014 and 1 July 2014 as proposed in the 2013-14 plan. This training assisted Foster Carers to learn about FASD, the effects of alcohol on the foetus, behavioural challenges for children and families and prevention and intervention strategies.
- In 2013-14, seven Drug and Alcohol Housing Support services were in place, funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Services continued to provide intensive case management support targeted at clients with alcohol and other drug issues to secure and maintain stable accommodation.
- This program commenced in January 2010 and funding has been extended to June 2015. The latest available data from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection in 2012-13 showed these services supported 384 clients; 18 percent identified as Indigenous.

Key Strategic Area 5: Strategic coordination and capacity building

Providing improved and targeted responses to alcohol and other drug related problems through capacity building, workforce development, collaboration, evidence-based practice, monitoring, and information dissemination.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- The Department has provided staff, including the community sector, with training opportunities to increase their knowledge of and response to families affected by AOD issues. Training is positively received by staff and is planned in consultation with the Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO). In 2013-14 learning opportunities included the following:
 - Core AOD Training consisting of six online modules.
 - A two day face to face program: Alcohol and Other Drug Problems and Motivational Interviewing. This program was delivered three times in the 2013-14 financial year with a total of 35 people attending.
 - Staff were also encouraged to access DAO training programs throughout the 2013-14 year.
- The Department continued to participate in local and regional partnerships that respond to alcohol, drug and volatile substance use issues. Specifically, the Department participates in the following strategic groups: Drug and Alcohol Strategic Seniors Officers Group and the Statewide Volatile Substance User Coordination Group. At a local district level, groups include (varies by district): local volatile substance user groups; alcohol management groups; and Human Services Regional Manager Groups (where AOD issues are sometimes discussed).