

# Inter Agency Working Group on Drugs

Annual Report 2012-2013



## Chair's message

I am pleased to present, on behalf of the Inter Agency Working Group on Drugs (IAWGD) a report on the Group's activities for 2012-2013.

Since its inception, the IAWGD has managed some exciting developments and has made a significant contribution in response to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in the Tasmanian community.

There are some encouraging indicators suggesting that the IAWGD and the strategies progressed are having the desired effects, providing the Group much confidence to continue its work in dealing with this significant challenge.

The Australian Health Survey Results 2011-12 showed that:

- 21.7% of Tasmanians over 18 years of age were current smokers. This represents a statistically significant difference from the 2007-08 survey result of 24.9%, and suggests smoking prevalence is decreasing. However there is still a gap between Tasmania and other Australian jurisdictions where the rate of decline has been faster, resulting in a national current smoker prevalence rate of 18%.
- Of note is the encouraging decline in current smokers in Tasmania aged 18 to 24 years, from 37.7% in 2007-08 to 23.1% in 2011-12.
- The rate of Tasmanians aged 15 and over who drink at risky or high risk levels remained fairly constant at 12.9% in 2007-08 and 12.7% in 2011-12.

Another positive result is the decline in reported smoking during pregnancy from 23.1% in 2010 to 17.1% in 2011 (Tasmanian Perinatal Database).

Similar trends were observed in the *National Drug Strategy (NDS) Household Survey 2010 results, showing:*

- The Tasmanian daily smoking rates (aged 14+) declining from 22.6% in 2007 to 15.9% in 2010.
- Daily drinking rates in Tasmania remaining fairly constant at between 6.4% in 2010 and 6.8% in 2007.
- The proportion of Tasmanians having used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months declining from 14.8% in 2007 to 12% in 2010.

Self-reported cannabis use in Tasmania was the lowest of all states and territories at 8.3%, compared to the national average of 10%. Reported rates of alcohol use during pregnancy are also decreasing in Tasmania. There has been a statistically significant decline in reported alcohol consumption during pregnancy from 18.3% in 2005 to 9.5% in 2011 – a reduction of almost fifty percent (Tasmanian Perinatal Database).

Over the 2012-13 reporting period, the IAWGD oversaw the completion of the alcohol legislative scoping study of the legislation and regulatory regime dealing with the sale, supply and demand for alcohol and the management of alcohol related harm in Tasmania.

The scoping study was a key IAWGD project collaboratively funded by the Department of Health and Human Services' Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate (formerly Statewide and Mental Health Services) and Population Health Services; the Department of Police and Emergency Management; the

Liquor and Gaming Branch of the Department of Treasury and Finance; and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC).

The Legislative Scoping Study Report offered some workable recommendations for improvements to the legislative and regulatory processes dealing with the sale and supply of alcohol in Tasmania. It is pleasing to note that the majority of the recommended changes detailed in the Report have been adopted or are being worked on, the most significant of which is the review of the *Liquor Licensing Act 1990*.

The collegiate approach of IAWGD members to source funding in a constrained and difficult financial environment to enable this important project to be conducted, highlights the strength of the Group and the importance of collaboration.

Other significant achievements include the development and release of:

- The *Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2013-18*.
- *Everybody's Business: A Strategic Framework for Implementing Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention (PPEI) Approaches in Averting Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Use*.
- The *Smoke Free Young People Strategy 2013-2017*.
- The *Tasmanian Alcohol Report 2013* (a recommendation of the Legislative Scoping Study).

The *Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2013-2018* establishes Tasmania's strategic priorities under the National Drug Strategy (NDS), while *Everybody's Business* seeks to address the complex underlying causes of substance use by broadening the ATODs focus beyond traditional health and law enforcement/justice responses and education initiatives. *Everybody's Business* seeks to guide the formulation of prevention and early intervention activities and actions in Tasmania, and advocates for strategies and approaches that traverse multiple sectors.

The *Smoke Free Young People Strategy 2013-2017* outlines how we can work together to protect young Tasmanians from the harmful effects of tobacco use and is the first time a specific strategy to address youth smoking has been developed in Tasmania.

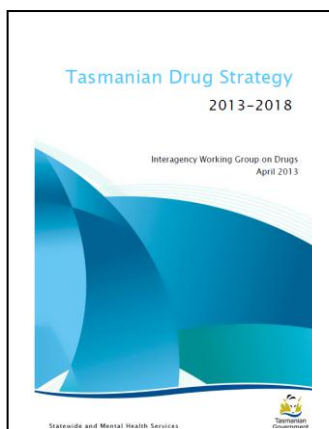
The activities of the IAWGD in 2012-13 and achievements to date provide a sound foundation on which to make further inroads to reduce the problems associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Tasmania.



Dr Roscoe Taylor, Chief Health Officer and Director of Public Health  
Chair, IAWGD

# Major Activities Undertaken in 2012-2013

## 1. Tasmanian Drug Strategy (TDS) 2013-2018



During the reporting period, a new TDS was developed and released to guide whole-of-government and community activities to reduce the harm associated with the use of licit and illicit drugs in Tasmania.

The *Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2013-2018* establishes Tasmania's strategic priorities under the National Drug Strategy (NDS) in order to link the NDS to previously identified strategic actions that are currently in place and that remain a priority for Tasmania, namely the Tasmanian Alcohol Action Framework and the Tasmanian Tobacco Action Plan, as well as other relevant key Tasmanian strategic documents.

The *Tasmania Drug Strategy 2013-2018* was developed following a review of the previous TDS, which noted that:

- Stakeholders were generally supportive of the TDS and acknowledged a need for an overarching strategic framework to coordinate Tasmania's responses to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs use issues.
- The concept of harm minimisation – encompassing supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction – is still relevant and has served Tasmania's drug policy well.
- Importantly, the TDS is an avenue for linking local interests with broader national strategies, such as the NDS and the National Preventative Health Strategy.

The *Tasmanian Drug Strategy (TDS) 2013-2018* utilises the NDS as the principal national strategic document. The TDS identifies elements of the NDS that are action focussed to address the specific needs of Tasmania. The TDS seeks to build upon previous efforts and provides the overarching framework to draw together and link existing policy responses to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

As with previous iterations of the TDS, the *Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2013-2018* maintains the concept of harm minimisation as its underlying principle. This concept is based on reducing:

- availability and supply of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- demand and consumption through prevention, early intervention and treatment services and programs
- harm associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Also consistent with previous iterations of the TDS, the current strategy provides the framework for coordinated effort to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs use.

## 2. Completion of the Alcohol Legislative Scoping Study

One of the key strategies under the Tasmanian Alcohol Action Framework 2010-2015 – *Rising above the Influence* (TAAF), is to introduce ‘An effective system for controlling the supply of alcohol in Tasmania’.

The identified areas, for action under the strategy, include reviewing legislation to ensure there is a consistent legislative and regulatory framework to support the control and supply of alcohol; and to provide opportunities for police, public health, local councils and industry to influence the licensing process so that public health and wellbeing, community safety, planning and development and economic impact are appropriately considered in licensing decisions.

The IAWGD identified the need to undertake a legislative scoping study as a matter of priority with several IAWGD members contributing funding to enable the study to be undertaken.

Stenning and Associates were engaged to undertake the project reviewing a range of legislation; focussing on those Acts that are likely to have the greatest effect on the control of liquor sale and supply, as well as reviewing those *Acts* with the broadest population-wide impact on associated harms. These legislations are the:

- *Liquor Licensing Act 1990*
- *Police Offences Act 1935*
- *Public Health Act 1997*
- *The Marine Safety (Misuse of Alcohol) Act 2006*
- *Road Safety (Alcohol and Drugs) Act 1970.*

As part of the Legislative Scoping Study, agencies responsible for the key legislation, along with key stakeholders such as the Glenorchy City Council; Hobart City Council; Tasmanian Hospitality Association; Tasmanian Small Business Council; Tourism Industry Council Tasmania; United Voice; Wine Tasmania; and the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction were consulted.

The final report was presented to, and endorsed by, the IAWGD at its September 2012 meeting and noted by Government in March 2013. The report made 22 recommendations to fill legislative gaps and improve the operation of the legislative framework, arranged into four strategic themes:

- Improving the focus on the need to minimise the harms related to the misuse of alcohol.
- Tightening the licensing process to improve administration, accountability and transparency.
- Strengthening compliance/enforcement arrangements, including the co-operation between the Commissioner of Licensing and Tasmania Police.
- Building a stronger TAAF.

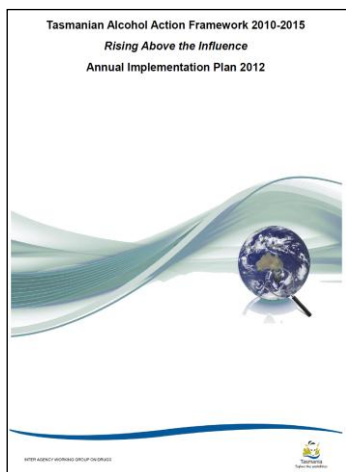
A series of work has emanated from the Legislative Scoping Study to improve the legislative and regulatory processes dealing with the sale and supply of alcohol in Tasmania, including a review of the Liquor Licensing Act.

The majority of the report recommendations that are administrative in nature have been adopted, with the Director of Liquor and Gaming also working with the

Licensing Board, LGAT and peak industry bodies on potential administrative mechanisms to achieve broadly similar outcomes.

The review of the Liquor Licensing Act will give consideration to recommendations of the Report pertaining to legislative changes, such as the introduction of an objectives provision that articulates harm minimisation principles and seeks to maintain a robust and viable hospitality industry.

### 3. Tasmanian Alcohol Action Framework implementation



The IAWGD is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Tasmanian Alcohol Action Framework with assistance and advice from the Alcohol Advisory Group.

In 2012-2013, the IAWGD developed and released the third Annual Implementation Plan under the Framework.

The agencies and organisations that provided input into the 2012 Annual Implementation Plan subsequently provided progress updates that were consolidated and reported by the IAWGD.

The Report shows a significant level of activity occurred under the 2012 annual implementation plan, with a majority of the planned activities either commenced, actioned or in progress.

Collaborative approaches, partnerships and activities featured prominently in the 2012 Annual Implementation Plan.

One of the most notable achievements under the 2012 Annual Implementation Plan is the successful completion of the alcohol legislative scoping study project, (discussed above). Other notable actions include the maintenance of liquor accords and the commitment by stakeholders to a range community safety and road safety partnerships throughout Tasmania.

Although there were some new activities identified in the Plan for 2013, the majority of the Annual Implementation Plan remained largely unchanged from 2012 as the activities in the Plan relate to stakeholders' core functions, are ongoing activities, or projects that span several years.

A number of new organisations participated in this process and provided input into the Plan.

The Tasmanian Institute of Sport, Marine and Safety Tasmania, Cancer Council Tasmania, Glenorchy City Council, South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation, Youth and Family Focus Inc. and Advocacy Tasmania Inc. are new participants and their contributions are highlighted in the Annual Implementation Plan for 2013.

### 4. Whole of Government input into IGCD

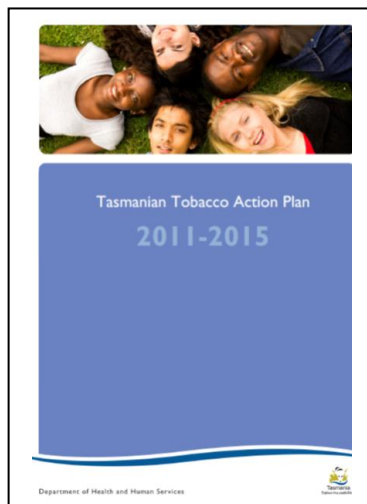
The IAWGD forum likewise provides an avenue for the consideration, coordination and reporting of activities from a whole of Government perspective on work at the national level. These include matters tabled at the Inter-Governmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD), and the contribution of information and input by members to IGCD work, such as the development of the IGCD Annual Report and the development of the NDS Implementation Plan.

The IGCD consists of senior officers representing health and law enforcement in each Australian jurisdiction (appointed by their respective health and law enforcement Ministers) and people with expertise in specific priority areas (for example, representatives of the Australian Customs Service and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs).

The IGCD provides policy advice and is responsible for implementing National Drug Strategy policies and programs. The Committee reports to Ministers through the Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee and the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council to the Standing Council on Health. Law enforcement and justice matters are also directed to the Standing Councils on Police and Emergency Management and Justice respectively.

In addition to providing input to the IGCD Annual Report against the NDS, the IAWGD contributed, to the development of the National Tobacco Strategy, and to meeting agenda items as relevant to member's portfolio areas.

## 5. Tobacco Action Plan 2011-2015 Progress



In September 2012, the IAWGD endorsed the *Tasmanian Tobacco Action Implementation Plan 2011-2015: Year 2 Report* and the *Smoke Free Young People Strategy 2013-2017*.

The *Tasmanian Tobacco Action Plan 2011-2015* was developed by the Tobacco Coalition in 2010 to prevent and reduce tobacco related harm in Tasmania.

Each year the Tobacco Coalition prepares a report on progress towards reducing smoking prevalence. A report for Year 2 was endorsed by the IAWGD in September 2012.

Significant action has been taken in recent years to address the health impacts of smoking in Tasmania. Actions progressed in 2012-13 included:

- Commencement of the Healthy Lifestyle and Tackling Indigenous Smoking program under *Closing the Gap*.
- Development of the *Smoke Free Young People Strategy 2013-2017*.
- Implementation of smoke free public events at carols by candlelight, markets, food/wine/music festivals and agricultural shows.
- Announcement that prisons would be smoke free by February 2015.
- Commencement of new graphic health warnings and plain packaging of tobacco products.
- Additional state funding secured to increase anti-smoking campaigns and ongoing implementation of the national tobacco campaign.
- Provision of brief intervention smoking cessation training provided to over 5000 health professionals state-wide.

With regards to the *Smoke Free Young People Strategy 2013-2017*, this has been developed to specifically deal with preventing youth smoking uptake and helping those who have already started smoking to quit. The key focus is on collaboration

between organisations with a key youth focus and those with expertise in reducing smoking rates.

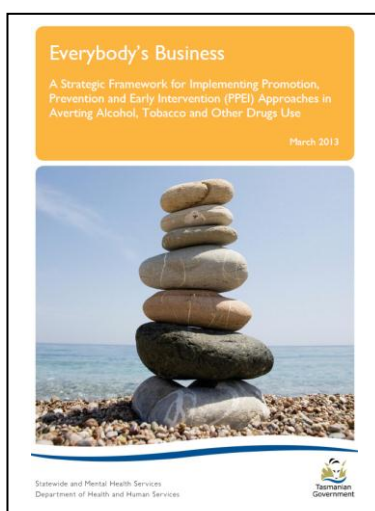
The document outlines five key strategy areas:

- a youth targeted campaign
- school based support and information
- de-normalisation of smoking
- cessation support
- promoting adults as role models.

Progress in 2013 was variable as no significant funding was obtained, although some smaller components are being implemented. These are the development of '*But it's the least of their problems*' guide for youth workers, and the collation of curriculum-based materials to support schools available in 2014 via a number of teaching platforms.

The results of the *Australian Health Survey 2011-12* indicates approximately 21.7% of Tasmanians over 18 years of age are current smokers. This prevalence rate compares unfavourably to 18% nationally but also reveals a statistically significant decrease from the previous 2007-08 survey Tasmanian result of 24.9%. These results suggest that smoking prevalence is decreasing. However there is still a gap between Tasmania and other Australian jurisdictions where the rate of decline is much faster. Of note is the encouraging decline in current smokers aged 18 to 24 years from 37.7% in 2007-08 to 23.1% in 2011-12. Another positive result is the decline in smoking during pregnancy from 23.1% in 2010 to 17.1% in 2011 (Tasmanian Perinatal Database). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the Tasmanian population continue to smoke, with uptake by young people an ongoing concern.

## 6. Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention



During the reporting period *Everybody's Business: A Strategic Framework for Implementing Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention (PPEI) Approaches in Averting Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Use* was completed and released.

PPEI is one of the key principles identified in the TDS.

PPEI is a comprehensive concept that represents different things to different sectors. *Everybody's Business* will assist in clarifying the importance of health promotion, harm prevention and early intervention in the Tasmanian context and will guide the formulation of PPEI activities and actions.

There is already good preventive work occurring in Tasmania that addresses a range of social determinants of drug use and other social problems. But too often that good work operates in isolation from other service sectors, disciplines and communities. Far too often that work does not receive the kind of recognition that helps build on-going, sustainable and transferable initiatives of benefit to all Tasmanians.

The purpose of *Everybody's Business* is to provide a structure that facilitates, inspires and encourages the adoption of evidence-based strategies within the



broader social and structural determinants of health and substance use, and build upon and utilise other related preventive strategies. The framework does not attempt to prescribe, or set out any specific activities or actions to address ATOD use as such.

The focus of *Everybody's Business* is on the following priority areas:

- nurturing the early years and strengthening families
- fostering resilient individuals
- building an inclusive community
- building an integrated service system
- focusing on whole of population approaches.

# Inter Agency Working Group on Drugs: An Overview

## Background

The Inter Agency Working Group on Drugs (IAWGD) was established in 2008 to coordinate the strategic development and service delivery of drug-related initiatives in Tasmania.

Since the mid 1980's, the National Drug Strategy (NDS) policy framework has informed the development, implementation and monitoring of alcohol and other drug policies across different levels of government, and between government, non-government and private organisations and the community. The NDS enables collaboration among health, law enforcement and education sectors, and promotes the use of evidence to inform drug policy and practices. The Tasmanian Drug Strategy (TDS) was developed to focus on issues specific to Tasmania.

## Purpose of the IAWGD

The IAWGD is the principal advisory body to Government, and is responsible for implementing, monitoring and progressing the NDS and related strategic policy in response to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in the Tasmanian community. Responses to the harm related to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs requires an integrated whole-of-government approach with links to other strategies and Tasmanian policy objectives.

The key function of the IAWGD is the facilitation, development and coordination of strategic policy and whole of government priorities and actions to reduce the harms from the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Tasmania.

The IAWGD is accountable to Government for its performance and outcomes, reporting to the Minister for Health.

## Membership

Core membership of the IAWGD comprises representatives of each of the following government agencies, community sector organisations and peak bodies:

- Department of Health and Human Services
  - Chief Health Officer/Director of Public Health
  - Statewide and Mental Health Services (in 2013-14 became the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate)
- Department of Police and Emergency Management
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (a corresponding member)
- Department of Treasury and Finance
  - Inter-Government and Financial Policy Branch
- Commissioner for Licensing
  - Liquor and Gaming Branch
- Department of Education
- Department of Justice
- Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (a corresponding member)

- Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council (ATDC).

Note: The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts agreed to become a member again in the 2013-14 period, following the review of the IAWGD Terms of Reference. This will be discussed in the 2013-14 Annual Report.

Secretariat support for the IAWGD is provided by the Department of Health and Human Services' Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate (formerly Statewide and Mental Health Services).

## **IAWGD Role and Function**

The stated role of the IAWGD includes:

- Leading and facilitating the development and coordination of strategic policy and whole-of-government priorities and actions to reduce the harm from the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Tasmania.
- Appraising the implications of the NDS and related national policy initiatives or reforms, and considering and making recommendations regarding the adoption of national policies and the implementation of national strategies in the Tasmanian context.
- Co-ordinating, implementing and, where required, reporting to national drug related strategic plans and corresponding initiatives and projects.
- Monitoring the Tasmanian alcohol, tobacco and other drugs environment and related trends, providing consolidated reports and recommendations for action, and developing strategic planning options where appropriate.
- Implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Tasmanian specific sub-strategies and initiatives under the NDS, including providing annual reports to Government.
- Responding at a whole-of-government level to current and emerging state and local issues.
- Appraising, monitoring and providing advice, responses and recommendations to other National and State strategies and initiatives where alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are identified as issues of concern, with a greater emphasis on the social and health determinants associated with drugs use, and a particular focus on prevention.
- Developing strategic planning options and recommendations.
- Liaising and collaborating with a range of key stakeholders across the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sectors, including but not limited to, community sector organisations, local government and peak bodies.

Prior to the abolition of the Tasmania *Together* Progress Board in late 2012, the IAWGD also monitored progress against relevant Tasmania *Together* goals and standards.

## **Reporting Obligation**

The IAWGD is required to report to Government the activities and progress for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, as set out in its Terms of Reference.

## **Meeting Protocols**

Meetings are held three (3) times annually, usually in June, October and March. The meetings are convened where possible to coincide with associated national forums - the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) and Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Principal Committee meetings.

A quorum includes a minimum of 75% of member agencies in attendance.

Attendance by proxy at an appropriate level of representation and authority is acceptable upon notice being provided to the Chair.

Other meetings may be convened by the Chair on an 'as needs' basis.

Matters can also be dealt with out-of-session, as determined by the Chair, for example, drawing information to members' attention, or considering issues that have been previously discussed and/or are unlikely to be contentious in nature.

Two (2) meetings were held during the 2012-13 reporting period. The third meeting scheduled for June 2013 was deferred to early July 2013, to ensure a quorum for the meeting.

# IAWGD Business 2012-2013

## Meetings held

The meetings held and the attendance of member organisations' representatives and /or their proxy is shown in the Table below:

Organisation	Meetings		Out-of-Session Input	
	Representative	Sep 2012		Mar 2013
Department of Health and Human Services - Chief Health Officer / Director of Public Health	Dr Roscoe Taylor (Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Department of Treasury and Finance / Commissioner for Licensing – Liquor and Gaming Branch	Adrian Christian (Deputy Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Department of Health and Human Services -Statewide and Mental Health Services	Nick Goddard	✓	✓ (Proxy) S. Engels	✓
Department of Police and Emergency Management	Debra Salter	✓	✓	✓
Department of Justice	Robert Williams	-	✓	✓
Department of Education – Early Years and Schools	Alan Green / Bruce Cameron	-	✓	✓
Department of Premier and Cabinet (Corresponding member)	John McCormick/ Bridgett Hutton/ Julia Hickey	-	-	✓
Department of Treasury and Finance – Intergovernment Financial Policy	Damien Febey	✓	✓	✓
Local Government Association of Tasmania	Georgia Palmer	✓	-	✓
The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council (ATDC)	Jann Smith	✓	-	✓
Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (Corresponding member)	Debra Davis / Peter Snowball	-	-	✓