Simon Cotterell
Assistant Secretary
Mental Health and Chronic Disease Division

Australian Government’s alcohol, tobacco and other drugs – policy directions.

Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association Annual Conference 2009
National Drug Strategy

- Achieved an overall decline in drug use in recent years

- 2010-2015 National Drug Strategy development
  - Review current evidence base and issues.
  - Consultations later in 2009
Preventative Health Taskforce

• Initiative of current government
• Released discussion paper in April 2008
• *Australia: the healthiest country by 2020.*

• Taskforce:
  • received 397 submissions;
  • Held 40 consultations with 1,000 stakeholders.
National Preventative Health Strategy

Targets:
- reduce the prevalence of daily smoking to less than 10%;
- reduce short-term risky/high risk levels of drinking to 14%;
- reduce long term risky/high risk levels of drinking to 7%.

Strategy available at www.yourhealth.gov.au for comment
Increasing emphasis on alcohol and tobacco

- The National Binge Drinking Strategy ($53 million over 4 years) for:
  - Community level initiatives
  - Early intervention pilot program
  - Social marketing campaign
- Increase in excise for ready to drink alcohol products.
- achieving reduction in these products.
Commitment to Reducing Smoking Rates in Australia

- From 1995 to 2007 people smoking daily has fallen from 23.8% to 16.6%
- Government has reinvigorated National Tobacco Strategy - $15 m over 4 years
- National Partnership on Preventative Health $61 m over 4 years for national social marketing campaign
- Aim to reduce daily smoking rate from 16.6% to less than 10% by 2020
Indigenous tobacco smoking rates

- $1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health
- High priority given to reducing Indigenous smoking rates to improve health outcomes
- Critical to Government’s objective of closing the life expectancy gap within a generation.
Continuing Commitment to Illicit Drug Programs

• No change to Rudd government’s “tough on drugs” stance

• Over 4 years from 2009-10 $353.8 m will be provided from the Health portfolio to tackle illicit drug issues
  ➢ Delivery of NGO drug treatment services;
  ➢ Capacity building including training;
  ➢ Research and education programs.
COAG National Healthcare Agreements

- Cooperative working arrangements

- Increased flexibility for states and territories in delivery of services to Australian people

- NHCA – 5 years - $60.5 billion
International Commitments

• High Level Session Commission on Narcotic Drugs 2009

• Continuing commitment to balanced approach incorporating:
  ➢ Supply reduction;
  ➢ Demand reduction;
  ➢ Harm reduction.