

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013**

**Question:** E13-027

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** National Alcohol Strategy

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Crossin

**Question:**

Australia's 'National Alcohol Strategy 2006 -2009' was extended until 2011 but has not been extended since then. It is now almost halfway through 2013 and Australia still does not have a National Alcohol Strategy nor has any progress been made towards the strategy being updated.

In late May 2013 the final draft of the 'Global Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Action Plan 2013-2020' was agreed by the World Health Assembly Member States of the World Health Organization. Australia is one of these Member States. This plan defines the priorities to prevent NCDs and sets clear targets under the Global Monitoring Framework for countries to reduce the harmful activities that contribute to NCDs. Alcohol is one of the priority target areas for the Global NCD Action Plan. Australia is a signatory to this Plan.

Now that the Global NCD Action Plan has been agreed, Australia's own National Alcohol Strategy is critical to the planning of how Australia will reduce alcohol-related harm over the coming years and achieve the targets set out in the Global NCD Action Plan.

The new National Alcohol Strategy should also reflect the recommendations within the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol released in 2010 by the World Health Organization.

- a) The National Alcohol Strategy expired in 2009 and was extended to 2011. It is now midway through 2013 and Australia still does not have a National Alcohol Strategy. Can the Government provide an explanation as to why a new National Alcohol Strategy has not been developed?
- b) Can the Government please indicate when a revised National Alcohol Strategy will be developed?

**Answer:**

- a) The National Alcohol Strategy is one of the sub-strategies sitting under the umbrella of the National Drug Strategy, which is the product of a partnership between the health and law enforcement portfolios of all Australian governments. The National Drug Strategy 2010-2015 continues to provide a framework for action on alcohol whilst a new strategy is being developed through the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs under the auspice of the Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Office.

- b) The Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs manages ongoing work under the National Drug Strategy, and has allocated the responsibility of updating the National Alcohol Strategy to its Alcohol Working Group, headed by the Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Office. Development of a revised National Alcohol Strategy is underway, and is expected to be finalised by mid 2014.