

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON DRUG STRATEGY (MCDS)

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (MCDS) met in Melbourne today and agreed to fast track the development of the federal government's \$53.5 million National Binge Drinking Strategy, including community level initiatives.

All jurisdictions agreed on the urgency to tackle alcohol abuse and Ministers will lead the development of an interim report to the July meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

This national approach aims to reduce the incidence of alcohol-related violence and the impact of alcohol abuse on individuals, the community, and the health system.

It was agreed that this national approach was required to build on the significant work already being done by all governments and the contribution of police commissioners.

A key outcome was the agreement to assess late night lock-outs for licensed premises based on analysis across the nation of existing and trial lockouts to recommend a preferred framework.

This framework will be used to more effectively target police resources to binge drinking hot spots.

The report will focus on:

- a national policy framework for Responsible Service of alcohol;
- a preferred regulatory model to address secondary supply of alcohol to minors;
- options for reducing alcohol content in products including those aimed at young people
- possible standards and controls for alcohol advertising targeting young people; and
- advice regarding the impact of health warnings on drinking behaviours.

As part of the process, a June Alcohol Forum will be led by Ministers, and involve government health and law enforcement officers.

MCDS also agreed all states and territories will enact legislation to prohibit the sale of fruit and confectionery flavoured cigarettes within their jurisdictions by December 2009.

The Australian Government has also agreed to investigate the feasibility of a ban on importation of these products.

Ministers also endorsed a National Amphetamine-type Stimulants Strategy and agreed to its public release. The Strategy encompasses a comprehensive approach to addressing problems associated with the use of amphetamine-type stimulants, with a range of actions recommended under each of the National Drug Strategy priorities – prevention, reduction of supply, reduction of drug use and related harms, improved access to quality treatment, the development of the workforce, organisations and systems, and strengthened partnerships.

The strategy will be available at www.health.gov.au

The MCDS noted the establishment of the Australian Youth Forum, funded in the recent federal budget as an opportunity for the government to consult with young people on issues and policies affecting their lives. The government will consult with the AYF when developing drug and alcohol strategies for young people.

The MCDS is very pleased to announce its official endorsement of Australia's first National Corrections Drug Strategy.

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