

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DRUG AND ALCOHOL STRATEGY 2002-05

Statement by Minister for Health

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Health) [9.26 am]: A year ago this week the State Government hosted the historic Community Drug Summit in this Chamber. This event was unprecedented in its magnitude, scope and commitment to community partnership. The summit emphasised that where drugs are concerned the WA community wants a smarter, inclusive and more caring approach. Our response to the Drug Summit, called “Putting People First”, was released in November last year and reflects a major ideological shift in approach to the drug problem.

The summit indicated the need for a comprehensive and coordinated response to drug use. This must involve all layers of government, in partnership with non-government agencies and the community. “Putting People First” is the basis for the development of the new “Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002-2005”, which I will table today. The strategy is a whole-of-government approach, to provide direction for the combined efforts of the community, government and non-government organisations. It is an integrated, coherent and cohesive strategy with a strong emphasis on continuity of care. The priorities for action are prevention and early intervention, support and treatment, and law, justice and enforcement. The strategy is based on the values of inclusiveness, compassion and understanding, equity and cultural security and builds upon the directions of the Drug Summit. As identified by the summit, the strategy acknowledges that a number of groups in the community are a priority. These groups include children and young people, families, indigenous people and communities, people from regional, rural and remote communities, and people with co-occurring mental health and drug use problems.

To underpin the strategy, the Drug and Alcohol Office has also produced two companion documents: models for “Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Early Intervention” and “Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Support Services”. While the strategy, the companion documents and the statewide planning process have been developed, work has also progressed on implementation of the Drug Summit recommendations and a range of new programs and activities are now well under way.

I have also had the pleasure of establishing the Drug and Alcohol Community Advisory Council. We have made significant progress toward drug law reform. A cannabis control Bill is being drafted, to enable a scheme of prohibition with civil penalties for minor cannabis offences. The “Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002-2005” is presented as a framework for all stakeholders to develop effective and cohesive action plans. By putting people first, and working collaboratively, we will contribute to the health and wellbeing of all Western Australians. I table the document.

[See paper No 143.]