

COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

UPDATE TO SUBMISSION PROVIDED TO THE INQUIRY INTO SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES – FEBRUARY 2003

This short report provides a further update to the submission provided by the Department of Education, Science and Training to the Inquiry into Substance Abuse in Australian Communities, originally provided in June 2000 and subsequently updated in August 2002.

The most significant achievement to date is the development of an overarching policy context for a nationally consistent approach to school drug education. This has been achieved through Commonwealth leadership in the development of the National School Drug Education Strategy (the Strategy) and agreement to the National Framework for Protocols for Managing the Possession, Use and/or Distribution of Illicit and Other Unsanctioned Drugs in Schools (National Framework) by all Australian Governments.

NATIONAL PROJECTSEvaluation of the National School Drug Education Strategy and the Council of Australian Governments' "Tough on Drugs in Schools" measures.

Preliminary findings of the current evaluation, due for completion in April 2003, indicate that the Strategy has been successful in strengthening the provision of educational programmes and supportive environments which contribute to its goal of 'no illicit drugs in schools'.

Commonwealth initiated and led development of key national policy documents, such as the Strategy itself and the *National Framework for Protocols for Managing the Possession, Use and/or Distribution of Illicit and Other Unsanctioned Drugs in Schools*, have played an important agenda setting role for schools. Strategic partnerships between Commonwealth and State and Territory education authorities and other key stakeholders, particularly parents, have been established and momentum is continuing to grow across Australia. Activities undertaken to date under both the Strategy and the COAG *Tough on Drugs in Schools* Initiative have provided a sound foundation for development of further strategies that support prevention and early intervention in school drug education.

The evaluation notes that the Strategy has made significant progress in achieving its objectives, particularly those addressing good practice in school drug education policies, programmes, curriculum and resources and enhancing State and Territory drug education strategies.

It notes that a strong feature of the development and implementation of State and Territory activities funded under the Strategy has been a consideration of local contexts and needs and a cooperative and collaborative approach.

Innovation and Good Practice Research in School Drug Education

The main report of this project has been completed and is attached.

Rethinking Drinking (update of original resource)

The draft Rethinking Drinking educational resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Schools and Students will be trialled early in Term 1 2003 and should be available mid year.

Review of the Principles for Drug Education in Schools

The Report of the Review of the 1994 Principles for Drug Education in Schools is attached for information. The Department has convened an "Editing Subcommittee" to consider the original 1994 Principles and the Report of the Review to assist/advise the development process to achieve a nationally accepted revised set of "Principles for School Drug Education". A

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consultation draft will be forwarded to jurisdictions and other relevant parties in the near future. It is anticipated that a revised set of Principles will be disseminated by mid 2003.

Effective Implementation Practice in Relation to School Drug Education

A copy of the report is attached for information.

Review of Pre-Service Teacher Training in School Drug Education

The report of this review is not yet available.

Identification and Development of Guidelines for Implementing Performance Management Processes for State and Territory School Drug Education Projects

A copy of this report is attached for information. Currently, the contractor is conducting further trialling of the tools developed in a small selection of schools.

School Drug Education Information Project

The REDI – Resilience Education and Drug Information materials comprise 5 videos, 4 CD-ROMS, a website and teacher support guides. The suite of resources is currently in production and distribution to school is anticipated in early Term 2 2003.

Cannabis Education Resource

The new resource *Cannabis and Consequences* is expected to be distributed to all Australian schools with secondary student enrolments and other key stakeholders by mid 2003.