



**Special Minister of State
Assistant Treasurer
Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management and
Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast**

TCO/13981

Mr Barry Wakelin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Wakelin

I refer to a letter to the Premier regarding the Standing Committee's inquiry into substance abuse in Australian communities, and to a similar letter received by Mr Geoff Barnden, Director, Office of Drug Policy, The Cabinet Office, from Ms Shelley McInnis, Inquiry Secretary.

The Standing Committee's inquiry will undoubtedly enhance the work that has previously been done in Australia to explore the social and economic impacts of drug abuse.

In financial terms, New South Wales estimates that in 1999/2000 total direct drug program expenditure in this State will approximate \$118 million. This figure relates to illicit drugs and to some degree alcohol, but does not take account of tobacco, prescription drugs or other substances. Indirect costs are known to vastly exceed this amount.

In May 1999, the NSW Government held a Drug Summit to explore fresh approaches to the problem of illicit drug use in particular. The Summit considered many of the issues that are identified in the terms of reference for the Standing Committee's inquiry, and I have enclosed for your assistance a copy of the Drug Summit CD, which contains transcripts of keynote speeches along with other useful material. The Government's response to the Summit is set out in the *NSW Drug Summit 1999 - Government Plan of Action*, which is also enclosed.

The Office of Drug Policy was established, as described in the Plan of Action, to coordinate illicit drug policy across government. I have not asked the Office to prepare a submission for the purposes of your inquiry, however the Office remains the appropriate point of first contact for NSW government agencies.

In relation to alcohol and tobacco, I have also enclosed for the inquiry's information copies of the Government's *Adult Alcohol Action Plan* and *Tobacco and Health Strategy*.

Yours sincerely

John Della Bosca MLC
Special Minister of State