



ACT
Government

ACT Health

ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018–2021: Progress Report 2019–20

August 2020



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Foreword by the Minister for Health

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA



"The ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018–2021: Progress Report 2019–20 demonstrates that the ACT is leading the nation in key areas to reduce the harms caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. It also sets out the requirement to continue working together to meet the needs of the growing Canberra population, and respond to the changing landscape of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in the ACT."

Overall, as Canberrans, we enjoy a high standard of health and wellbeing, but we do face various challenges in our community. Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use has long been associated with negative outcomes for health and wellbeing and poses otherwise preventable risks across our community.

To reduce these risks, in December 2018 the ACT Government launched the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018–2021*. The plan sets out the ACT Government's priorities over three years to reduce harms from alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in Canberra.

Our *Drug Strategy Action Plan* aligns to the framework provided by the *National Drug Strategy 2017–2026* and focuses on reducing supply, reducing demand and reducing harms. It is complemented by the ACT Government's *Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025*, which sets the foundations for every Canberran to enjoy the highest standards of health at every stage of life. Together, these plans are helping us build a safe, healthy and resilient Canberra.

During 2019, the first full year of implementing the Drug Strategy Action Plan, we have made significant progress including the following key activities:

- We ran Australia's second government-sanctioned pill testing trial in April 2019. The ACT Government commissioned the Australian National University to evaluate the trial. The evaluation, completed in December 2019, showed the effectiveness of pill testing in reducing the harms associated with drug use at festivals.
- We established the ACT Drug and Alcohol Court in December 2019. This was introduced to offer more sentencing treatment options to people whose drug and alcohol use has substantially contributed to their criminal behaviour.
- We decriminalised cannabis. In September 2019 the ACT Legislative Assembly became the first Australian jurisdiction to remove criminal penalties for adults who possess small amounts of cannabis. This legislation came into effect on 31 January 2020.

In 2020 and beyond, the ACT Government will continue to put our plan into action, with a commitment to innovative evidence-based policy that will minimise the harms associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Our evidence-based approach to minimising harms has become even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with our stakeholders, including non-government organisations and the Canberra community, we will ensure our *Drug Strategy Action Plan* makes a difference in our community.

Introduction



Purpose

This is the first report on the ACT Government's progress implementing the *Drug Strategy Action Plan*. It outlines key achievements during 2019 and, because COVID-19 delayed the report's finalisation, it also contains some updated information from early 2020.

This report focuses mainly on progress against the *Drug Strategy Action Plan* priority actions. The first section outlines major achievements and Appendix 1 contains a summary of initiatives against each action.

Future progress reports will provide more information on progress against higher level objectives, as more data becomes available over the life of the plan. A revised plan will be developed for 2022 and beyond.

Background

While many people equate 'drugs' only with illegal drugs, it is legal drugs, alcohol and tobacco that cause more health problems in our community. As a result, the objectives of the *Drug Strategy Action Plan* are to minimise harms arising from the use of all drugs, including alcohol, tobacco and related products, and illicit and illicitly used drugs (including pharmaceuticals used for non-medical reasons).

- Several national strategies underpin the ACT's plan, including the:
- *National Drug Strategy 2017–2026*
- *National Alcohol Strategy 2019–2028*
- *National Framework for Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Treatment 2019–2029*
- *National Quality Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services 2019–2022*.

The last three strategies were finalised in late-2019 and provide guidance for progressing the ACT *Drug Strategy Action Plan* during 2020 and beyond. In addition, an updated National Tobacco Strategy is expected to be released in 2020 for the period 2020 to 2030.

The ACT Government is committed to working within the Australian national harm minimisation approach to drug policy described in the National Drug Strategy 2017–2026. Harm minimisation includes the three pillars of:

- supply reduction (for example, police seizures of illicit drugs, or restrictions on sale of alcohol and tobacco)
- demand reduction (for example, drug treatment, advertising that highlights the negative effects of drug use, and controls on alcohol and tobacco promotion)
- harm reduction (a pragmatic approach to reducing harm from drug use that does occur despite the best efforts of supply and harm reduction, for example providing sterile injecting equipment to prevent the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C, and providing the medication naloxone to reverse potentially fatal opioid overdoses).

Scope of report

This report outlines progress in achieving the objectives and priority actions in the *Drug Strategy Action Plan* in the areas of:

- alcohol
- tobacco and related products
- illicit and illicitly used drugs
- emerging issues, data and reporting.

It does not describe the daily clinical work of the ACT Government and non-government services in Canberra to treat and support people with alcohol and other drug problems. More information and statistics on alcohol and other drug topics in the ACT can be found on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's alcohol, tobacco and other drugs webpage.¹

Collaboration and partnerships

The close collaboration and co-design between the ACT Government and non-government organisations, including the specialist alcohol and other drug treatment and support sector, has been critical to achieving the milestones described in this report. During 2019 and early 2020, the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) worked with the following directorates and external organisations to deliver Drug Strategy Action Plan priority action items:

- ACT Policing
- ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB)
- Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA)
- Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA)
- Canberra Health Services (CHS)
- Capital Health Network (CHN)
- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)
- Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform (FFDLR)
- Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)
- Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) of the ACT
- Hepatitis ACT
- Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS)
- Mental Health Community Coalition ACT (MHCC)
- Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety
- Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services.

The Drug Strategy Action Plan Advisory Group is a key mechanism for collaboration across the ACT Government and the non-government sector. The Advisory Group ensures the ACT Government makes informed decisions on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions in the *Drug Strategy Action Plan*.

¹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/introduction>

Progress on priority actions

Alcohol

Alcohol is the most widely used drug in our community. In 2015, 4.5 per cent of the disease burden in Australia was due to alcohol use, making it the sixth leading risk factor for preventable illness, injury and death.

While the ACT's drinking levels are near the national average, a significant proportion of people in our community continue to drink at levels that put them at risk of harm. In the ACT, alcohol is the leading risk factor for preventable disease, injury and death among men aged 15–24 years (13.0 per cent), and men aged 25–44 (12.0 per cent). Alcohol is also the second leading risk factor among females aged 15–24 (5.8 per cent).²

The most recent data from the Driving Change Project on all ACT emergency department presentations on Friday and Saturday nights (8pm–6am) between 20 May 2019 and 19 July 2019, showed that people had been drinking alcohol in the previous 12 hours in 3.1 per cent of presentations at Calvary Hospital Emergency Department, and 11.5 per cent of presentations at the Canberra Hospital Emergency Department. The alcohol consumed was more likely to have been purchased at an off-licence venue such as a supermarket or bottle shop than at a licenced venue, such as a pub or club.

Our achievements: alcohol

✓ *Awarding of Healthy Canberra Grants*

The ACT Health Promotion Grants Program offers grants to community-based organisations to improve the health of Canberrans and minimise the risk of chronic disease.

In 2019, the ACT Government awarded more than \$2 million in grant funding for new projects to reduce harms from alcohol use. The funded projects include work to:

- promote safe drinking guidelines and publicise the long-term effects of alcohol use
- reduce the risk of alcohol overdose and trauma among young people.

Other grants aim to reduce harms among specific higher risk groups including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- pregnant women
- lesbian, gay, transgender, intersex, and/or queer people
- men
- people in, or leaving, correctional centres.

Further information about specific Healthy Canberra Grants, including the total funding amounts, are in Appendix 2.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019). *Australian Burden of Disease Study: Impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2015*. Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/c076f42f-61ea-4348-9c0a-d996353e838f/aihw-bod-22.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

✓ *The 'I need you to say no' campaign*

The ACT Government, through the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, ran the campaign *Alcohol. Think Again 'I need you to say no'*. This was adapted from materials designed and delivered by the Western Australian Government.

The campaign aims to reinforce that most parents don't provide alcohol to their children, and that, given teenagers' vulnerabilities to the effects of alcohol and the longer-term potential for damaging outcomes, it is best for teenagers to delay alcohol use until at least 18 years of age.

The campaign was launched online and on television in December 2019 and finished in February 2020. An evaluation will be completed in 2020 to gain insight into how the campaign was received and its effectiveness.

Looking forward: 2020 actions on alcohol

✓ *Driving change research study*

'Driving Change: Using Emergency Department Data to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harm' (Last Drinks) is an Australian multi-site national study led by Deakin University. The study identifies the most common sources of alcohol-related incidents resulting in emergency department presentations, which can then be targeted through public health interventions.

The Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital emergency departments began collecting data in August 2018 and the project is due to finish in 2020.

Data from the first 12 months indicates that most ACT emergency department admissions following recent alcohol consumption are linked with alcohol purchased at off-licence outlets.

At the end of the Driving Change research project, the ACT Government will consider policy options informed by the findings.

✓ *National Alcohol Strategy 2019–2028*

The National Alcohol Strategy was finalised in late 2019. It provides a national framework for local policy action to reduce alcohol-related harms in the ACT.

The ACT Government's commitments under the *Drug Strategy Action Plan* and the *Preventive Health Plan* are consistent with the aims of the National Alcohol Strategy. This includes the goal of reducing harmful alcohol consumption by 10 per cent.

In 2020, the ACT Health Directorate will review evidence of links between alcohol use and domestic and family violence, with a view to informing future policy actions.

The ACT Government will consider further actions in future years.

✓ *Alcohol Responsible Promotion Guidelines review*

A review of the Liquor (Responsible Promotion of Liquor) Guidelines 2012 will be led by Access Canberra in 2020. These guidelines provide direction on what constitutes unacceptable advertising or promotions for alcohol products by licensees or permit holders in the ACT.

Tobacco and related products

The decline in tobacco use Australia-wide and in the ACT is a significant public health success. Fewer young people are now taking up smoking than at any time since official surveys began in the early 1980s.³ Despite this success, however, tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death, both in the ACT⁴ and Australia-wide.⁵

Currently 1 in 10 Canberrans smoke. However, people who experience more social or personal disadvantage, including people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, or those who have a mental illness or addiction, smoke at much higher rates.

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and vaping continue to be a controversial topic in Australia. While some argue that e-cigarettes could be useful to support people to stop smoking, there are also concerns that e-cigarettes may act as a gateway into nicotine use and tobacco smoking, as well as causing high levels of health damage in their own right. Although it is illegal in Australia to sell vaping products that contain nicotine without a licence, recent research has shown that many products advertised as 'nicotine-free' do in fact contain nicotine.

Our achievements: tobacco and related products

✓ *Smoking rate of 10 per cent*

The National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019 (published in July 2020) reported a smoking rate of 10 per cent in the ACT, making the ACT the first Australian jurisdiction to reach this milestone. The daily smoking rate, not including occasional smoking, was 8.2 per cent in 2019. The extent of the decline in daily smoking in the ACT is shown by the fact that in 2001 the daily smoking rate was 18.4 per cent, more than double the current rate.

✓ *Smoke-free places*

The Smoke-free Public Places (Public Transport Interchanges) Declaration 2019 came into effect on 18 October 2019. This Declaration makes the new Gungahlin Bus and Light Rail Interchange smoke-free, extends the smoke-free boundary at the City Bus Interchange to include the light rail platforms and new bus platforms, and includes the new light rail platforms at Dickson Interchange. This Declaration replaces the Smoke Free Public Places (Public Transport Stops) Declaration 2017.

³ <https://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au/chapter-2-consumption/2-3-self-reported-measures-of-tobacco-consumption>

⁴ ACT Health. *ACT Chief Health Officer Report 2018*.

⁵ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/burden-of-disease/impact-risk-factors-burden-disease/data>

✓ *E-cigarette policy*

In March 2019, the ACT Government asked the Australian Government Department of Health to expand the scope of federal tobacco legislation to include e-cigarettes.

On 13 September 2019, the ACT Chief Health Officer joined with other State and Territory Chief Health Officers and Australia's Chief Medical Officer to issue a statement about e-cigarettes, and an emerging link between their use and lung disease.

At the November 2019 meeting of the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Health Council, health ministers reaffirmed their commitment to maintain existing restrictions on nicotine vaping products. Ministers agreed to refer the safety of non-nicotine vaping and e-cigarettes to Chief Medical Officers for urgent review.

The Australian Government updated its 'Principles that underpin the current policy and regulatory approach to electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in Australia' on 20 December 2019. The principles state that 'any change to regulation of e-cigarettes in Australia will have the primary focus and goal of protecting children and young people, with a second key goal of protecting the health of existing adult cigarette smokers'.

The ACT Health Directorate has also been closely monitoring the United States' outbreak of severe lung illnesses related to vaping.

In May 2019, the ACT Government published a new consumer information sheet to help Canberrans better understand the health effects of e-cigarettes and vaping products.⁶

Looking forward: 2020 actions on tobacco and related products

New funding for programs to tackle tobacco

The successful applications for almost \$900,000 in funding for Healthy Canberra Grants: Focus on Reducing Smoking-Related Harm were announced on World No Tobacco Day, 31 May 2020. The successful projects commence in 2020–21 and continue for up to three years.

The successful grant recipients are:

- Directions Health Services, which will receive \$289,591 over the next three years for its Butt it Out! smoking support program for people with alcohol and other drug dependency and comorbid mental illness.
- The Worldview Foundation, which will receive \$325,696 for its Pre-Release Non-Indigenous Supplement along with its Post-Release Activity Support program at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. This program aims to address issues associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to support a more successful reintegration of detainees into the community, along with improvements to their health and wellbeing.
- The Cancer Council ACT, which will receive \$284,000 for its Tackling Tobacco program to address smoking in disadvantaged communities in partnership with not-for-profit community sector organisations, to increase their capacity to support people to stop smoking.

⁶ <https://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-05/Electronic%20cigarettes.pdf>

E-cigarettes

In 2020, the ACT Health Directorate will continue to work with other states and territories and the Australian Government to identify options for a national approach to regulation of e-cigarettes, and to actively monitor emerging evidence regarding the health risks of e-cigarettes and other new tobacco-related products. The ACT Government will consider if a legislative approach is needed to address identified risks.

National Tobacco Strategy

A national public consultation on the draft National Tobacco Strategy is expected during 2020, although the consultation has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ACT Government will consider how to respond to the National Tobacco Strategy once it is completed.

Heated tobacco products

The ACT Government has made a submission to the Therapeutic Goods Administration consultation process, objecting to an application to amend the Poisons Standard to permit heated tobacco products to be sold in Australia. The ACT's submission raised the issues of the lack of evidence of health benefits for such a step, safety concerns for users and bystanders, and the likely negative impact on reducing tobacco use in Australia.

Illicit and illicitly used drugs

Illicit drug use is a risk factor for about 2.6 per cent of the total disease, injury and death (burden of disease) in the ACT.

Since 2016, wastewater testing has been carried out three times a year on sewage from around Australia to help compare the quantity of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs that are consumed across different areas of the country. The testing has shown how drug use in Canberra resembles that of other capital cities in some ways, but in others it more closely resembles regional drug use patterns.

The following table summarises how estimated personal use of different types of drugs in the ACT compares with estimated rates of use in a) other state and territory capitals and b) other regional areas. The information is based on wastewater collection during December 2019. It is important to bear in mind that wastewater testing provides information only on average levels of consumption. If the testing indicates that 100 units of a drug have been consumed, for example, it cannot tell whether this is the result of 100 people each consuming one unit, or 10 people each consuming 10 units. Results and interstate comparisons can fluctuate between testing periods.

Comparison of average levels of per head drug use as indicated by wastewater testing, December 2019

Drug	ACT compared with Australian average	ACT compared with capital city average	ACT compared with regional average
Alcohol	Higher	Higher	Similar
Fentanyl (an opioid pain killer)	Similar	Similar	Lower
Oxycodone (an opioid painkiller)	Higher	Higher	Lower
Heroin	Lower	Lower	Higher
Cannabis	Higher	Higher	Similar
Cocaine	Higher	Higher	Similar
Ecstasy	Similar	Similar	Lower
Methamphetamine	Lower	Lower	Lower
Nicotine	Higher	Higher	Lower

Our achievements: illicit and illicitly used drugs

✓ Viral hepatitis and HIV screening and treatment at the Canberra Hospital Alcohol and Drug Service

People who inject drugs are most at risk of contracting the potentially fatal liver infection, Hepatitis C. New treatment medications that can cure Hepatitis C were made available on the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in 2016. The new treatments are easier to take, have fewer side effects, and are more effective for most people.

In 2019, to ensure clients have streamlined access to the new Hepatitis C treatments, Canberra Health Services introduced direct access to screening, assessment and Hepatitis C treatment within the Alcohol and Drug Services. Patients can also be screened for other blood-borne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis B.

✓ *Launch of the Drugs and Poisons Information System (DAPIS) Online Remote Access*

The DAPIS Online Remote Access portal is a secure realtime prescription monitoring website that allows prescribers and pharmacists to look up information about a patient's use of controlled medicines, particularly opioid medications that have a high risk of overdose. The new ACT-based platform was introduced in March 2019.

✓ *Commitment to national real-time prescription monitoring*

In May 2019, the ACT became the first jurisdiction to formally commit to the national Real-Time Prescription Monitoring system. In June 2019, the ACT Government allocated \$2.114 million to adopt this new national platform. It will provide practitioners with enhanced features and functionality to further support care of patients requiring treatment with monitored medicines that could be subject to non-medical use.

Information displayed will be sourced from the National Data Exchange, which includes dispensing data sourced from other jurisdictions for ACT residents, in addition to ACT pharmacy dispensing data. Information will also be displayed for ACT Chief Health Officer approvals held by a prescriber to prescribe controlled medicines for a patient.

✓ *New opioid treatment medication*

In September 2019, a new opioid treatment medication, long-acting buprenorphine, was made available on the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to people with an opioid dependency.

A benefit of long-acting buprenorphine is that it can be administered weekly or monthly, rather requiring a person to attend a clinic or pharmacy every 1 to 2 days.

Canberra Health Services carried out an introductory longacting buprenorphine program in late 2019 in both its Alcohol and Drug Services and the Alexander Maconochie Centre. In December 2019, long-acting buprenorphine also become more widely available in the ACT, with three practices in central and southern Canberra (Interchange General Practice, Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and Directions Health Services) approved to provide longacting buprenorphine—providing a valuable treatment option for many people receiving opioid treatment.

✓ *Successful pill testing trial at Canberra music festivals*

Pill testing is a harm reduction service that analyses the contents of drugs and provides targeted, evidence-based drug information to assist people to avoid potential harms associated with drug use.

The ACT is the first and only Australian state or territory to conduct festival-based pill testing (at the 2018 and 2019 Groovin the Moo music festivals). These pill testing trials were conducted within the supportive policy environment provided by the ACT Government, in line with the Government's commitment to innovative approaches that prevent and reduce harms associated with drug use. Harm reduction is one of the three key pillars of the Australian national harm minimisation approach to drug policy.

The second pill testing trial was run by Pill Testing Australia, a harm reduction consortium, at Groovin the Moo on 28 April 2019. More than 200 festival patrons participated in the trial.

The ACT Government funded Australian National University-affiliated researchers to evaluate this second trial. The evaluation aimed to determine the value of pill testing as a harm reduction initiative.

The evaluation found an overwhelmingly positive response to pill testing by festival patrons, and concluded that pill testing is an effective health intervention that can have a significant impact reducing the potential harms associated with the use of illicit drugs.

Key findings included:

- all patrons who had particularly dangerous drugs identified (N-ethyl pentylone) disposed of the drug in the amnesty bin provided as part of the service
- on leaving the service, 28 per cent of patrons said that they would use less of the drug than planned
- 97 per cent of patrons said the information they received was very clear, and consistently reported that their interaction with the service increased their knowledge on how to reduce harm, particularly for novice users
- 98 per cent of patrons rated the service very highly
- 95 per cent of patrons said they would use the service again if available.

Patrons who were interviewed said that they would change their behaviour to reduce harm by taking less of the drug, spacing out their use, drinking water, and being less reluctant to seek medical assistance.

In December 2019, the ACT Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, released the Australian National University evaluation report to the COAG Health Council.

✓ *Drug and Alcohol Court*

The ACT Drug and Alcohol Court is an ACT Government election commitment and a key commitment of the Drug Strategy Action Plan. It aims to divert offenders to treatment programs instead of incarceration where the offending is substantially related to drug or alcohol use. Offenders voluntarily decide to take part and must plead guilty to be eligible.

The court officially started operating on 3 December 2019. Assessment of potential participants for their suitability for a Drug and Alcohol Treatment Order (DATO) also began in December 2019. The ACT Health Directorate has funded non-government organisations to provide treatment to participants, and will manage these contracts. Participant numbers are expected to increase over time as the service develops.

✓ *Safer Families*

The Safer Families measure in the 2016–17 ACT Government Budget funded a range of initiatives to address domestic and family violence.

In 2019, the ACT Health Directorate ran a targeted procurement process for a consultant to conduct a baseline assessment of the capacity of the alcohol and other drug sector to respond to domestic and family violence. The final report was delivered to ACT Health Directorate in December, 2019.

In 2020, ACT Health provided \$250,000 to the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT to undertake an additional stage of the Safer Families project, to improve the capacity of the alcohol and other drug sector to identify and respond effectively to domestic and family violence. This funding is enabling capability uplift for the alcohol and other drug sector consistent with the ACT Government Domestic and Family Violence Training Strategy and the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

✓ *The 'What Would They Think?' campaign*

The 2019–20 'What Would They Think?' campaign was launched in December 2019. The campaign encouraged people to plan how they would get home safely during the holiday season. It emphasised that driving under the influence of illicit substances is against the law and that this would not change under the ACT Government's new cannabis legislation.

Looking forward: 2020 actions on illicit and illicitly used drugs

National Real-Time Prescription Monitoring system

The ACT will continue to prepare to adopt the national Real-Time Prescription Monitoring system by June 2021, to help prevent access to dangerous quantities of addictive drugs.

Opening of a new opioid treatment facility in north Canberra

A new opioid replacement treatment clinic is expected to open at Belconnen in Canberra's north in October 2020. In the 2019–20 ACT Budget, the ACT Government allocated \$3.014 million in new funding over four years to establish and operate the service. Planning work was undertaken in 2019 and refurbishments during early 2020. The service will offer access to doctors who can prescribe opioid treatment medications, and to on-site opioid treatment dosing.

Medically supervised injecting facility

The *Drug Strategy Action Plan* committed to investigating the feasibility, need, effectiveness and appropriateness of establishing a medically supervised drug consumption facility (supervised injecting facility) for the ACT.

The ACT Health Directorate has engaged the Burnet Institute, in partnership with the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy, to undertake this study. The work has a research focus, investigating current and future drug usage patterns, risk behaviours, and drug-related health problems, to determine whether there is a need for a medically supervised drug consumption service in the ACT.

The key objective is harm reduction for individuals who use drugs in the ACT, with a focus on reducing overdose-related morbidity and mortality. The study will consider appropriate methods of achieving this objective, including potentially establishing a medically supervised drug consumption facility.

The final report is due in the second half of 2020. Along with ACT Health Directorate advice, the study will inform the ACT Government's consideration of the appropriateness of a medically supervised drug consumption facility in the ACT.

Naloxone

Naloxone is a drug that reverses overdoses due to opioids including heroin, and pharmaceutical drugs such as oxycodone or fentanyl. In the 2019–20 ACT Budget, the ACT Government provided additional ongoing funding of \$300,000 annually to expand the reach of Canberra's naloxone program, which makes naloxone available to community members for immediate use in an emergency.

During 2020, the ACT Government will continue to work with service providers, including the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy, to expand access to take-home naloxone in the ACT.

Festivals Pill Testing Policy

Following the release of the independent evaluation of the second ACT pill testing trial, the ACT Government developed a Festivals Pill Testing Policy. The policy was intended to be trialled at the Groovin the Moo Festival in April 2020, but the festival was cancelled due to COVID-19 and the policy has yet to be implemented.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Residential Rehabilitation Facility

In the 2019–20 ACT Budget, the ACT Government provided \$300,000 to inform the development of a culturally appropriate residential service supporting drug and alcohol rehabilitation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

The ACT Health Directorate engaged Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services to develop a culturally appropriate Model of Care for the proposed service. Winnunga has completed a draft Model of Care and is consulting on the draft with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The ACT Health Directorate is continuing to work with Winnunga on the development of this facility. The Model of Care will be finalised in 2020–21, with consideration of design and construction work to follow.

The facility is intended to complement existing services, including the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm.

Funding to improve the diversion system

In the 2019–20 ACT Budget, the ACT Government committed \$2.9 million over four years to improve support for people diverted from the police and court systems for personal drug use. This will help respond to community need and allow for more responsive early intervention services.

Diversion can involve police diverting people to education or treatment early in their contact with the criminal justice system, as well as the courts diverting people for assessment and referral for appropriate treatment.

Alexander Maconochie Centre Drug and Blood-Borne Virus Strategy 2020–2024

The Alexander Maconochie Centre Drug and Blood-Borne Virus Strategy 2020–2024 will be finalised in 2020.

This strategy will guide how ACT Corrective Services and the Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services division at Canberra Health Services address drug use by detainees. The strategy will encompass communicable disease prevention and control relating to blood-borne viruses and sexually transmittable infections.

In the 2019–20 ACT Budget the ACT Government invested an additional \$1.075 million over four years to expand the opioid maintenance treatment service and provide a range of additional drug and alcohol services at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. Additional nursing staff have been recruited with this funding to help reduce waiting times for alcohol and drug consultations, and to provide earlier access to interventions for detainees to support their treatment and recovery from addiction while in custody.

Alcohol, tobacco and other drug education in schools

Drug and alcohol education is a key component of the Australian curriculum for students in Years 3 to 10. While the Australian curriculum outlines the learning outcomes for students in those years, it is not a syllabus.

To ensure schools are using the best resources currently available, in 2020 the ACT Health Directorate will work with educators to identify and disseminate a range of evidence-based resources for use in ACT schools to support the Australian curriculum.

Emerging issues, data and reporting

The *Drug Strategy Action Plan* allows for responses to emerging priorities that could not be identified at the time the plan was developed. The plan includes commitments to improving ACT data on alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues. Data, and appropriate data sharing, is key to tracking emerging issues, and guiding policy and treatment development.

Our achievements: emerging issues, data and reporting

✓ *Findings of the 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey*

The National Drug Strategy Household Survey is the major national survey of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in Australia. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare conducts the household survey every three years. Data was gathered in all states and territories during 2019, with findings published on 16 July 2020.⁷

Because the ACT has a relatively small sample size compared with the larger Australian jurisdictions, statistically significant changes between the three-yearly surveys can be difficult to detect, but clearer trends may emerge over longer periods. The findings of the 2019 survey are summarised below.

Tobacco

- Tobacco smoking in the ACT remains the lowest in any Australian jurisdiction. Daily smoking in the ACT was 8.2 per cent in 2019 (age 14 or older) compared with the national average of 11.0 per cent. There was an apparent fall in the ACT daily smoking rate from 9.5 per cent in 2016, however, this was not statistically significant.
- The overall smoking rate in 2019 in the ACT, including occasional smoking, was 10.0 per cent compared with 11.6 per cent in 2016. The Australian overall smoking rate was 14.0 per cent, four percentage points higher than in the ACT.
- The rate of daily smoking more than halved in the ACT between 2001 (18.4 per cent) and 2020 (8.2 per cent).

Alcohol

- Between 2016 and 2019, there was no statistically significant change in the proportions of Canberrans drinking daily, weekly, monthly, or less often than monthly over the previous 12 months. There was also no statically significant change in the proportion of ex-drinkers.
- There appears to be a gradual decline in short-term risky drinking in the ACT, from 28 per cent in 2007 to 21 per cent in 2019. There may be a trend to a decline in short term-risky drinking at least monthly between 2016 (22.7 per cent) and 2019 (20.7 per cent), but this was not statistically significant.
- The ACT has the lowest proportion of lifetime risky drinking over the past year, at 14.1 per cent compared with the national average of 16.8 per cent. The rate of lifetime risky drinking in the ACT has fallen over the longer-term from 21.7 per cent in 2007.
- Between 2016 and 2019 there were significant decreases in the percentage of people in the ACT who reported being victims of alcohol-related verbal abuse (21 per to 15.9 per cent) or physical abuse (5.3 per cent to 2.0 per cent) in the previous 12 months. However, in 2019 Canberrans were still more than twice as likely to be a victim of an alcohol-related incident as a drug-related incident (21 per cent compared to 9.1 per cent).

⁷ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/national-drug-strategy-household-survey-2019/contents/table-of-contents>

Illicit drugs

- The ACT had the lowest rate of recent illicit drug use of any Australian jurisdiction in 2019, at 14.6 per cent. This was despite a recent apparent (but not statistically significant) increase in illicit drug use from 12.9 per cent in 2016.
- Methamphetamine (ice) and amphetamine (speed) use appears to have fallen to very low population levels in Canberra. The 2019 household survey records meth/amphetamine use as 0.3 per cent in the ACT in 2019, compared with 1.1 per cent in 2016, and 4.5 per cent in 2001.
- Nonetheless, in the ACT in 2018–19, 22.6 per cent of non-pharmacotherapy-based treatment episodes provided by government-funded services were to help with meth/amphetamine use. This is likely to indicate that people who continue to use methamphetamine are more likely to be higher level users experiencing significant problems than previously.

Pharmaceuticals used for non-medical purposes

- The non-medical use of painkillers and opioids by people in the ACT in 2019 (1.5 per cent) was lower than the national average (2.7 per cent). There appears to be a trend towards a (non-significant) decline in reported non-medical use of opioid painkillers in the ACT (down from 2.9 per cent in 2016 to 1.5 per cent in 2019). This parallels a statistically significant national decline (down from 3.6 per cent in 2016 to 2.7 per cent in 2019).

Public views on policy

Support for pill testing among Canberrans was the highest in the country in 2019, at 70 per cent. The majority of Australians also support pill testing (57 per cent).

Around two-thirds of people surveyed in the ACT support harm reduction measures for injecting drug use, such as needle and syringe programs (72 per cent), opioid maintenance treatment (68 per cent), access to take-home opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone (63 per cent) and regulated injecting rooms (65 per cent).

For the first time in 2019, more Australians support the legalisation of cannabis (41 per cent) than oppose it (37 per cent).

Only 22 per cent of Australian adults now believe that possession of cannabis for personal use should be a criminal offence. The majority of Australian adults (55.3 per cent) support a caution/warning or no action against people found in possession of cannabis, with the next most popular option being referral to treatment or education (27.3 per cent). A total of 13 per cent support a fine, and only 7.3 per cent support community service, weekend detention or prison.

The data collected from this survey provides key information on current alcohol, tobacco and other drug trends in the ACT, helping to guide future directions of the Drug Strategy Action Plan.

✓ Cannabis decriminalisation

In response to a Private Members Bill, the ACT became the first Australian jurisdiction to remove criminal penalties for adult personal possession offences.

The *Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Act 2019* passed in September 2019 and came into effect on 31 January 2020. The operation of the new law will be reviewed after three years. From mid-January 2020 to mid-March, the ACT Government implemented an evidence-led communication campaign to inform Canberran adults about the new cannabis legislation. This included radio advertisements, social media, and web content. As part of the government communication campaign, the ACT Health Directorate delivered public health information about the health impacts of cannabis use. The information provided was tested with Canberrans first to ensure it was clear and easy to understand.

In addition, a new 'Cannabis and Your Health' webpage was established on 14 January 2020, and information was provided to stakeholders, intermediaries, drug and alcohol services and public health staff.

The ACT Health Directorate will continue to provide information to the community on the health impacts of cannabis use as part of business-as-usual activities.

ACT wastewater testing results did not indicate an increase in cannabis use across the territory in February 2020, after the legislation came into effect. There was also no increase in cannabis-related emergency department presentations from February to April 2020 compared with the previous quarter.

✓ *Better data on alcohol use in pregnancy*

New questions about alcohol use in pregnancy were added into ACT perinatal data collection in 2019 to ensure a better understanding of the extent and nature of this issue in the ACT.

Looking forward: 2020 actions on emerging issues, data and reporting

COVID-19

The ACT Health Directorate is partnering with key health service providers to maintain continuity of access to critical medicines, treatments, health services (including harm reduction services) and residential facilities during the ACT emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Work has also been undertaken to source personal protection equipment, such as masks, for organisations delivering essential services.

On 6 May 2020, the ACT Government announced \$1.7 million to support a range of non-government organisations in the health sector to respond to COVID-19, including \$518,000 specifically allocated to support alcohol and other drug services. This includes \$200,000 of flexible funding to support alcohol and other drug services to respond to demand pressures or to innovate in the way their essential services are delivered.

The peer-based service Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy also received \$25,000 to support staff to provide services remotely and respond to client isolation and changing patterns of drug use. Allocation of this funding involved close collaboration with the sector and assessment of demand for services and opportunities to do things differently.

The ACT Government has also allocated additional funding of up to \$250,000 to ensure safe continuity of opioid maintenance treatment services during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey

The ACT Health Directorate was due to collect Canberra schools' data for the three-yearly Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey in 2020. However, this national survey has been postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Implementation of *Drug Strategy Action Plan* actions 2019 to July 2020

Note: The *Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025* was published in 2019 and spans action items 1 to 13 (alcohol and tobacco).

This table is not intended to capture all routinely delivered alcohol and drug treatment services in the ACT. Rather, it emphasises new initiatives.

Alcohol action items

Alcohol action item	Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Build community knowledge and change acceptability of use		
1. Conduct evidence-informed alcohol public education and social marketing campaigns, including those that aim to: increase public knowledge of links between alcohol use and chronic disease, including cancer and cardiovascular disease; increase public knowledge of safe drinking guidelines; increase the knowledge of young people, including school students, of the short and long-term harms of risky drinking, and also of issues relating to secondary supply of alcohol to peers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded more than \$2 million through Healthy Canberra Grants to alcohol public information and support initiatives. Funding includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » \$170,577 to the Australian Red Cross Society for the save-a-mate (SAM) program for young people to respond to alcohol and other drug related emergencies » \$762,940 to the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education for the <i>Preventing Alcohol Related Chronic Disease</i> campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence and continue implementation of Healthy Canberra projects focused on alcohol.
2. Implement initiatives to reduce alcohol promotion and use in ACT sports and other community settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided \$184,468 to the AIDS Action Council of the ACT for a program to reduce risky drinking in the lesbian gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer communities. Provided \$79,021 to the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education for the pilot program <i>Reaching Men in the ACT</i>. Provided training to junior sport clubs to develop sponsorship guidelines and engage healthier sponsorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence and continue implementation of Healthy Canberra projects focused on alcohol. Healthier Choices Canberra Junior Sport to continue to work with junior sport organisations to increase their capacity to engage sponsorship that does not promote unhealthy products. Access Canberra to review the ACT Liquor (Responsible Promotion of Liquor) Guidelines 2012.
3. Investigate initiatives to reduce promotion of alcohol on government premises, consistent with preventive health commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published the <i>Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025</i>. Finalised agreement to avoid promotion of alcohol on light rail vehicles and the light rail corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action will be prioritised in 2021.

Alcohol action item	Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Supporting research and building and sharing evidence		
4. Develop policy options for the implementation of activities that address risky drinking and alcohol-related harms, with a focus on: links between alcohol use and domestic and family violence; the impact of enforcement measures on risky drinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not progressed during 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action item to be progressed later in 2020 (domestic and family violence) and 2021 (enforcement measures). Develop policy options to respond to domestic and family violence.
5. Once sufficient data is available, consider actions to address the findings of the Driving Change study into the impact of alcohol use on ACT Emergency Departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published Driving Change reports for Canberra emergency departments in July 2019, December 2019, and April 2020. Key findings included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> alcohol consumption was linked to a greater number of emergency department attendances than illicit drug use a greater proportion of ACT emergency department presentations were linked to packaged alcohol bought from off-licence premises such as supermarkets and bottle shops than on-licence premises such as pubs and clubs. Driving Change researchers wrote to on-licence venues linked to alcohol-related emergency department presentations to draw their attention to this link as part of the intervention phase of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional findings to be published during 2020 and shared with the Liquor Advisory Board. The ACT Government to consider appropriate responses to the findings.

Alcohol action item		Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Compliance and Enforcement			
6.	Conduct educational activities for licensees regarding compliance with alcohol licensing legislation and regulations and use an appropriate escalated enforcement response on a case-by-case basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted education sessions for liquor license holders including seminars, site visits and emails. Completed follow-up inspections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Protection Service and Access Canberra to be at all major events to regulate liquor licenses.
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder			
7.	Implement appropriate actions at Territory level to support the national <i>Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategic Action Plan</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the National FASD Action Plan committee. Provided Healthy Canberra Grant of \$181,801 to the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education for the Pregnant Pause (Be a Hero Take Zero) project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched the Pregnant Pause Project in June 2020. Ministers approved mandatory pregnancy warning labels on alcohol containers in July 2020 as part of a national initiative. Release the peri-natal data set findings for 2019. Continue to develop responses to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in line with the national <i>FASD Strategic Action Plan</i>.
Age restrictions			
8.	Identify and implement measures to reduce secondary supply of alcohol to minors, including by family members and over-age friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ran the <i>Alcohol. Think Again 'I need you to say no'</i> campaign encouraging parents not to supply their under-age children with alcohol from December 2019 to February 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the <i>Alcohol. Think Again 'I need you to say no'</i> campaign.

Tobacco action items

Tobacco action item		Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Targeted approaches to priority populations			
9. Further develop approaches to reduce smoking rates among highrisk population groups in the ACT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published the e-cigarettes factsheet. Published the <i>Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025</i>. Tabled the Healthy Prisons Review in the ACT Legislative Assembly. Opened the Healthy Canberra Grants: Focus on Reducing Smoking-Related Harm funding opportunity in December 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) Drug and Blood-Borne Virus Strategy. Participate in finalisation of the National Tobacco Strategy. Announced successful applications for Healthy Canberra Grants: Focus on Reducing Smoking-Related Harm in May 2020. 	
10. Use learnings from evaluations of relevant existing and previous programs relating to smoking, including the Smoking in Pregnancy program, to inform future program planning and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluated the Smoking in Pregnancy Program. Published the Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learnings informed selection of Healthy Canberra Grants: Focus on Reducing Smoking-Related Harm. Implement the Healthy Canberra Grants: Focus on Reducing Smoking-Related Harm. 	
Safer Settings			
11. Consider the need for additional smoke-free areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered options for additional smokefree public places is ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement smokefree areas of light rail public corridor including legislation. 	
12. Continue to enforce tobacco and smoke-free legislation in the ACT by conducting compliance programs focusing on tobacco retailers and smoke-free public places and responding to complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to action community complaints regarding breaches of smoke-free legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct smoke-free legislation Compliance Project. Publish revised Guide to Sale of Smoking Products in the ACT. 	
13. Continue to monitor the emerging evidence regarding the health risks associated with the use of electronic cigarettes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided submission to the review of Commonwealth Tobacco Legislation, focusing on e-cigarettes and vaporisers, particularly by children and young people. Published the e-cigarettes factsheet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in public consultation on the National Tobacco Strategy (delayed due to COVID-19). Completed a submission to the Therapeutic Goods Administration regarding heated tobacco products in February 2020. 	

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action items

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item		Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Safer injecting and prevention of blood-borne infections			
14. Review current information and identify gaps in order to improve access to sterile injecting equipment and sharps disposal in the ACT.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed the <i>Australian Needle and Syringe Program Survey: National Data Report 2014–2018</i>. Reviewed the <i>Needle Syringe Program National Minimum Data Collection Report 2019</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replaced two of the four sterile equipment dispensing machines in the ACT with larger capacity machines. Provided larger equipment packs from Needle and Syringe Programs during the COVID-19 emergency response to reduce the number of trips required by clients to Needle and Syringe Programs. Provided sterile equipment to public housing areas during the COVID-19 emergency response. Maintain continuity of access to sterile injecting equipment during the COVID-19 emergency response.
15. Increase access to prevention, screening, testing and treatment for blood-borne viruses, particularly hepatitis C, and sexually transmitted infections among people who use drugs, including in treatment settings, and increase access to vaccinations for types of blood-borne viruses where vaccines are available.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed draft Alexander Maconochie Centre Drug and Blood Borne Virus Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the Alexander Maconochie Centre Drug and Blood-Borne Virus Strategy. Review, update and implement the workplan under the ACT Sexually Transmitted Infections / Blood Borne Virus Health Advisory Committee: in 2020 the work plan focuses on youth sexually transmitted infections and viral hepatitis.
Overdose prevention			
16. Implement a real-time prescription monitoring remote access portal, DAPIS Online Remote Access (DORA), by March 2019.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully implemented the ACT DORA portal in March 2019. The system includes real-time prescription dispensing information for ACT patients including from interstate pharmacies. Invested \$2.114 million over two years to adopt the national Real-Time Prescription Monitoring system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt the national Real-Time Prescription Monitoring system by June 2021. Consult on expanding the list of medicines in the system to include some schedule 4 medicines.

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item		Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Overdose prevention (continued)			
17. Explore further opportunities to expand on pill testing at events in the ACT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed second pill testing trial at the Groovin the Moo festival in April 2019. Published independent evaluation report by the Australian National University in December 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Festival Pill Testing Policy was developed in early 2020. Implement the policy as and when the circumstances caused by COVID-19 response restrictions permit. 	
18. Investigate the feasibility, need, effectiveness and appropriateness of establishing a medically supervised drug consumption facility (supervised injecting facility) in the ACT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invested \$200,000 for research to determine whether there is a need for a medically supervised injecting facility in the ACT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a Medically Supervised Injecting Facility Working Group in early 2020. Commissioned the Burnet Institute to conduct a needs analysis. The Burnet Institute expected to report to ACT Government in the second half of 2020. 	
19. Develop and implement actions relating to opioids including those that address or expand overdose prevention and response; access to naloxone; access to opioid maintenance treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided Budget funding of \$300,000 annually to increase the supply of naloxone and prevent overdoses in the ACT. Provided Budget funding of \$3.014 million over four years to increase the availability of opioid replacement treatment in Canberra's north. Provided grant funding of \$170,577 to the Australian Red Cross Society for the save-a-mate (SAM) program to respond to alcohol and other drug emergencies, targeting young people and parents. Canberra Health Services began prescribing new opioid treatment, long-acting buprenorphine. The new medications have also been made available through three GP clinics in central and southern ACT. Directions ACT began providing take home naloxone through needle and syringe programs, with funding from ACT Health Directorate. Began providing take-home naloxone through Canberra Health Services Alcohol and Drug Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced opioid maintenance treatment contingency guidelines during COVID-19 to maintain patient access to medications during the pandemic. Increased annual funding to the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy by \$159,590 to expand the take-home naloxone program. Maintain continuity of access to take-home naloxone during the COVID-19 pandemic. Open new northside opioid maintenance treatment clinic in October 2020. Expand access to opioid maintenance treatment, including long-acting buprenorphine. 	

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item	Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Prevent, stop, disrupt or reduce production or supply of illicit drugs		
20. Disrupt and dismantle the networks and facilities involved in the production, cultivation, trafficking and supply of illicit drugs and pre-cursors—particularly targeting organised crime groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Policing continued to target drug manufacturing and distribution networks through its works targeting serious and organised crime. In May 2019, ACT Policing seized 5 kilograms of cocaine, worth approximately \$1.5 million, the largest cocaine seizure in the ACT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Policing to continue to target drug manufacturing and distribution networks through its works targeting serious and organised crime.
21. Target the financial proceeds and confiscation of assets from illicit supply activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Policing continued to focus attention on confiscated assets deemed to be proceeds of crime. This was assisted by the ACT Government signing up to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Unexplained Wealth, and work progressed on developing an ACT specific unexplained wealth scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Policing to continue to target the financial proceeds derived from criminal activity and confiscate those assets. This work involves a close working partnership between the ACT Criminal Investigations Financial Investigations Team and the ACT Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.
22. Develop a regulatory framework for pre-cursor drugs and equipment that mirrors the Australian Government framework to regulate the sale of substances and key equipment used in the preparation of illicit drugs. This will include, but will not be limited to, an end-user declaration framework for prescribed substances and key pieces of equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Policing continued to work with the Commonwealth on an Australia-wide regulatory framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As this project relies on the outcomes of current work by the National Precursor Working Group, ACT Policing to continue to monitor National Precursor Working Group progress.
23. Maintain and enhance cooperation and collaboration between law enforcement and forensic agencies, across jurisdictions—particularly New South Wales and Victoria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work was ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Policing to continue to maintain and enhance cooperation between law enforcement agencies across Australia.
24. Gather intelligence and monitor trends to identify new drugs or supply chains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work was ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Policing to continue to gather information and monitor trends in relation to new drug types or supply chains.

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item	Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Treatment		
26. Work with primary, secondary and tertiary AOD services, peak bodies, and the Capital Health Network, to improve two-way pathways between alcohol and other drug treatment and primary care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be progressed in 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT Health Directorate will work to explore sustainable solutions to make primary care more accessible to disadvantaged population groups, including people with substance use disorders Expansion of the Directions Health Services Mobile Outreach Clinic to improve primary care access for vulnerable individuals.
27. Collaborate with non-government organisations to implement the National Quality Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services and the National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Quality Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services released in December 2019. National Framework for Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Treatment, 2019-2029 released in December 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with non-government organisations to implement the National Quality Framework and the National Drug Treatment Framework. Align online treatment directories to emerging national requirements.
28. Develop specialty service plans for ACT Health treatment services and review/develop appropriate models of care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be progressed in 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress service plans and Models of Care within the context of the broader Territory-Wide Health Services Plan.
29. Undertake co-design processes to: agree on principles for prevention and treatment of co-occurring alcohol and other drug and mental health conditions, including suicide prevention; and then develop an implementation plan for responding to co-occurring mental health and AOD conditions, which could include: development of guidelines; multi-agency responses; outcome reporting, and indicators of integrated service access; and consider the implications of the co-design process for other co-occurring conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered the draft Productivity Commission report Mental Health (October 2019), which makes particular reference to the comorbidities that exist between mental health and substance use, including exploring joint funding between the two sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the findings of the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health. Progress service planning within the Government health services system that further considers the relationship between mental illness and alcohol and other drug use behaviours.

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item		Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Treatment (continued)			
30. Identify and implement initiatives to support the development of a skilled and diverse alcohol, tobacco and other drug workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted staff training for implementation of the ACT Drug and Alcohol Court. Expanded staff training for treatment and harm reduction services in providing naloxone to clients. Carried out product familiarisation at Canberra Health Services Alcohol and Drug Services and Alexander Maconochie Centre to support introduction of long-acting buprenorphine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement expansion of training for staff of treatment and harm reduction services in providing naloxone to clients. Provide staff training and upskilling to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. 	
31. Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, mainstream specialist Alcohol and Other Drug services (AOD) and other stakeholders to determine specialist AOD implementation priorities, including residential rehabilitation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invested \$300,000 for co-design work for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug rehabilitation program. Provided \$476,200 grant over two years to Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community services to establish a program to prevent the uptake of excessive alcohol consumption, provide community-wide education about risky drinking, and reduce harm associated with such drinking. Provided grant funding of \$170,577 the Australian Red Cross save-a-mate (SAM) alcohol and other drug program, which will work in Collaboration with Canberra Institute of Technology's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit to equip young people and persons at risk with the knowledge and skills to prevent, recognise and respond to alcohol and other drug related emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winnunga has completed a draft Model of Care. The Model of Care will be finalised within the 2020-21 financial year. Continue implementation of Winnunga Nimmityjah alcohol grant project. Implement the Australian Red Cross save-a-mate (SAM) program. 	
Criminal justice system			
32. Deliver a comprehensive strategy that will describe actions to be undertaken to address alcohol, tobacco and drug and blood-borne viruses issues in ACT correctional centres until 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a draft Alexander Maconochie Centre Drug and Blood-Borne Virus Strategy, and understood two rounds of key stakeholder consultation on the draft. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed the final round of key stakeholder consultation on the Alexander Maconochie Centre Drug and Blood-Borne Virus Strategy early in 2020. Finalise the Alexander Maconochie Centre Drug and Blood-Borne Virus Strategy. 	

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item		Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Criminal justice system (continued)			
33. Design and deliver a range of interventions using a number of models to meet the diverse needs of people involved in, or at risk of being involved in, the criminal justice system. This includes exploring ways to increase diversion and treatment and support options available as part of an integrated system in the ACT, through either policy or legislative reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided Budget funding of \$1.075 million over four years to expand alcohol and other drug services in the Alexander Maconochie Centre. • Provided a Healthy Canberra Grant of \$233,787 to the Worldview Foundation for the program 'Smoke, Booze and Drug Free Prison Post-Release' to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates. • Fully decriminalised minor personal cannabis use and possession offences for adults, to reduce potential contacts with the criminal justice system. • A University of New South Wales report published in 2019 highlighted that the ACT had the second highest rate among Australian states and territories of diversion from the criminal justice system for minor drug offences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited nursing staff to treatment positions at the Alexander Maconochie Centre to expand the range of services offered. • Provided a grant of \$325,696 to the Worldview Foundation for pre and post release support for alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues for non-indigenous inmates. • Continue to implement the Worldview Foundation pre and post release grant projects for indigenous and non-indigenous clients. • Routinely providing naloxone to relevant detainees upon release from the Alexander Maconochie Centre. 	
34. Implement an ACT Drug and Alcohol Court within the term of the ninth Assembly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT Drug and Alcohol Court commenced operations in December 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug and Alcohol Treatment Orders commenced in early 2020. 	
Domestic and family violence			
35. Integrate more effective responses within Alcohol and Drug Services for people who either experience domestic and family violence or are at risk of using it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants 360Edge completed a baseline assessment of ACT treatment services' capacity to respond to issues of domestic and family violence. • Allocated Budget funding to continue work to integrate more effective responses to domestic violence in alcohol and other drug treatment services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Health provided \$250,000 to Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT to undertake an additional portion of the Safer Families project, to improve the capacity of the alcohol and other drug sector to identify and respond effectively to domestic and family violence. • Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT to work in collaboration with the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety and the ACT Health Directorate to embed the ACT Government domestic and family violence capacity building approach within the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug sector. 	

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item		Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Road Safety			
36. Implement actions to increase the safety of ACT road users including: Develop and implement an ACT Drug Driving Strategy. Continue existing road safety strategies that address impaired driving, e.g. roadside breath testing, roadside drug testing. Address the findings of the independent evaluation of the ACT alcohol interlock program. Conduct activities to educate road users to be unimpaired and alert.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ran the <i>Drug Driving: Don't Risk it</i> campaign over the summer season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed the summer holiday period drug driving road safety campaign <i>Drug Driving: Don't Risk It</i> in February 2020. Complete the evaluation of the ACT Interlock Program. Complete recommendations in response to interlock evaluation. 	
Build community knowledge and change acceptability of use			
37. Implement evidence-informed programs in community settings such as sporting clubs and workplaces to prevent and reduce harms of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarded more than \$2 million on behalf of the Healthy Canberra Grants. Renewed funding for the Canberra Night Crew to reduce alcohol and drug related harms in Canberra City at night. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a new 'Cannabis and Your Health' webpage on 14 January 2020. Provided information to stakeholders, intermediaries, drug and alcohol services and public health staff. Ran social media advertisements on the health risks of cannabis from 31 January to 19 March 2020. ACT Health Directorate to continue to provide information to the community on the health impacts of Cannabis use as part of business-as-usual activities. Continue to implement Healthy Canberra Grants projects focused on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, taking into account the COVID-19 context. 	
38. Identify a range of evidence-based educational resources that can be used by ACT schools and ensure schools are informed about these resources and know how to access them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted the Student Well-being Hub. Provided \$154,400 to Canberra Health Services to expand the Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth program for students aged 15–16 years, through outreach to schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicised the Positive Choices website to teachers as a key resource for schools. Continue implementation of the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y) injury prevention program by outreach, COVID-19 circumstances allowing. 	
39. Leverage opportunities to inform the public about the contents of illicit drugs and how they are manufactured, including findings from pill testing and drug seizures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published pill testing evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how to secure substances disposed of at festival-based pill testing services for later testing at government laboratories. 	

Illicit and illicitly used drugs action item	Progress in 2019	Progress and priorities in 2020
Monitor emerging drug issues		
40. Monitor interventions in other jurisdictions and overseas in relation to the supply of alcohol, including the implementation of minimum unit pricing in the Northern Territory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Alcohol Strategy 2019–2028 was released in November 2019. This strategy indicates the Australian Government does not intend to increase alcohol taxation. ACT Health Directorate carried out active monitoring of alcohol supply interventions, including minimum pricing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider findings of the first evaluation report, released in April 2020, on the impact of alcohol minimum pricing in the Northern Territory.
41. Consider emerging issues, and identified gaps, in alcohol, tobacco and other drug control and respond as required, including participation in national initiatives, during the lifetime of the <i>Drug Strategy Action Plan</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACT Legislative Assembly passed amendments to the Drugs of Dependence Act to fully decriminalise adult use of cannabis at home, in September 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invested more than \$518,000 in stimulus funding for non-government treatment services to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Maintained continuity of access to essential treatment and harm reduction services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Maintain the safety of clients and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Amendments to the Drugs of Dependence Act on personal cannabis use to come into effect on 31 January 2020.
42. Implement initiatives to improve data collection, management, reporting and analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested additional ACT analyses for ACT National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019 from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2019 National Drug Household Survey was released in July 2020. Additional analyses for states and territories were included in the release and state and territory factsheets were provided with key findings.
43. Refer to learnings from national pilots and explore the implementation of a local early warning system to ensure timely use of data to monitor and respond to emerging drug trends and harms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings from national projects early warning pilots were not released in 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider participation in the National Centre for Clinical Research in Emerging Drugs Prompt Response Network project. Monitor emerging conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic using available data and respond accordingly.

Appendix 2:

Table of Healthy Canberra Grants, alcohol and tobacco focused

Action Item	Project	Organisation	Description	Amount Funded
1	Addressing the Booming Booze culture among ACT women: combining innovative technology with an awareness raising campaign	Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Limited	This health promotion program aims to reduce alcohol harm among women in the ACT using a brief intervention program coupled with a targeted awareness raising campaign. The program aims to develop and test an innovative technology using an online platform sending information and hyperlinks to smartphones to motivate women aged 45–64 to reduce their alcohol consumption. This program was first funded 2018–19 financial year.	\$397,086
1, 19	save-a-mate (SAM)	Australian Red Cross Society	save-a-mate (SAM) is an alcohol and other drugs (AOD) education program, which aims to equip young people and persons at risk with the knowledge and skills to prevent, recognise and respond to AOD emergencies through a harm reduction framework. SAM is unique in its combination of AOD education with basic first aid overdose response training.	\$170,577
1	Preventing alcohol-related chronic disease	Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education	The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education will develop and evaluate a public education campaign to raise awareness of the long-term harms of alcohol consumption. The campaign will use television, radio, and digital media to target adults aged 25–65 in the ACT.	\$762,940
1	Not So Straight Up	AIDS Action Council of the ACT	The AIDS Action Council of the ACT will deliver a multi-faceted campaign aimed at reducing risky drinking behaviour and lifetime alcohol related harm within LGBTIQ communities in the ACT. The campaign is designed to complement and leverage whole-of-community strategies by providing tailored messaging and delivery methods with proven resonance and reach into LGBTIQ communities.	\$184,468
1, 36, 38	Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y.) Canberra Outreach	Canberra Health Services	The P.A.R.T.Y. Outreach program is an in-school injury prevention strategy aimed at senior high school students aged 15–16 years in the ACT. It will include up to 16 programs per year with a reach of approximately 1600 students annually.	\$154,400
1, 31	Winnunga AHCS: Reducing alcohol-related harm for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services will establish a program to prevent the uptake of excessive alcohol consumption, provide community-wide education about risky drinking, and reduce harm associated with such drinking.	\$476,200

Action Item	Project	Organisation	Description	Amount Funded
1, 33	Smoke, Booze and Drug Free Prison Post-Release	Worldview Foundation	Through the Smoke, Booze and Drug Free Prison Post-Release program, the Worldview Foundation will provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. In particular, intensive support will be provided pre and post release to address issues associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.	\$233,787
7	Pregnant Pause (Be A Hero, Take Zero)	Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education	This program aims to build on the current Pregnant Pause—swap the pub for your bub campaign to create an environment where women are supported by the whole community to have alcohol-free pregnancies. This will be achieved by increasing overall community awareness of the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and by refocusing the campaign to the general ACT population.	\$181,801
1	Reaching men in the ACT	Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education	'Reaching Men' aims to identify the most effective methods to influence men's risky drinking habits and encourage them to consume alcohol within the Australian Guidelines to Reduce the Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol.	\$79,021
9, 10	Butt it Out! Smoking Support Program	Directions Health Services	Directions aims to implement an evidence-based program for addressing tobacco dependency in a busy Alcohol and Other Drug treatment and primary care practice, leading to sustained practice of tobacco use intervention and increasing clients' success in quitting smoking.	\$289,591
9, 10	Tackling Tobacco in the ACT	The Cancer Council ACT	Tackling Tobacco is an integrated program to reduce health and social inequalities through addressing smoking in disadvantaged communities. Cancer Council ACT will work with identified not-for-profit community sector organisations to increase their capacity to address smoking and to provide their clients with support to stop smoking.	\$284,000
9,10	Pre-release non-indigenous supplement along with post release activity support	Worldview Foundation Limited	The Worldview Foundation currently conducts a pre and post release program for indigenous detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), which includes smoking cessation components. Through this new grant, the Worldview Foundation aims to extend the smoking cessation components of the existing program to non-indigenous detainees at the AMC.	\$325,696

