



UNSW
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Medicine

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre

**National Drug & Alcohol
Research Centre
University of New South Wales**

Strategic Plan 2012 - 2017



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Preamble

The whole of the NDARC staff have actively and generously contributed to this planning process through a range of approaches and have generously given of their time to develop a cohesive plan that outlines ambitious aspirations for the coming five years. NDARC is a highly productive research centre which has grown substantially in the past five years.

The wide range of work is a testament to the skill and creativity of all the staff and their commitment to the highest possible standards of research. This is the 25th year since the official opening of NDARC. The long term funding of the National Research Centres has enabled Australia to achieve some of the highest and most productive outputs in drug and alcohol research outside of the United States, where over 80% of the world's drug and alcohol research is undertaken. This indicates the success of the DOHA strategy for building research capacity and enabling Australia to have a very strong commitment to evidence based policy development.

NDARC is committed to continuing the strong growth and high quality of research, and considerable success in obtaining National Health and Medical Research Council funding for a wide range of innovative projects. Through such competition the whole drug and alcohol field benefits through the high quality research conducted in the National Research Centres.

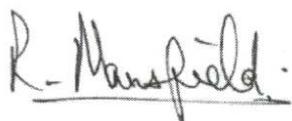
The future is hard to predict and one does not wish to be presumptuous but the size of the alcohol and other drug problems in Australia makes it imperative that we continue to invest and research this major public health burden and continue to improve both prevention and treatment interventions in order to reduce the burden of ill health from such problems.

NDARC through the Advisory Board and through staff at all levels of the organization remain strongly committed to improving all options for better prevention and treatment for people with alcohol and drug problems.

The development of a significant number of large cohort studies within NDARC will hopefully provide important information on the risk and protective factors for young people and develop new options for prevention and for understanding the natural course of such problems

This plan is a living document that will be monitored and regularly reviewed. It reflects the needs and expectations conveyed to us by our staff and stakeholders, including our funders, and aims to guide the activities of the NDARC over the next five years.

Signed



Mr Bob Mansfield
Chair, NDARC Advisory Board



Professor Michael Farrell
Director, NDARC



Relationship of this Strategic Plan with Annual Work Plans

This Strategic Plan is intended to identify key outcomes for the next five years, together with the objectives behind those outcomes, and strategies to achieve them.

Depending on the resources available and the priorities of NDARC Board and other stakeholders, parts of the Strategic Plan will be given priority at different times during the next five years.

Every year, NDARC will develop an annual work plan and budget. As part of the annual business planning process, the Centre will identify particular outcomes, objectives and strategies in the Strategic Plan that will take priority over the next twelve months.



National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre

NDARC Strategic Plan

2012 to 2017

Our mission

The mission of NDARC is to conduct and disseminate high quality research and related activities that increases the effectiveness of responses to alcohol and other drug related harm.

Our values

To achieve our mission and carry out our purpose we are committed to:

- Maintaining intellectual independence and acting in the public interest
- Scientific rigour
- Originality and creativity
- Public accountability, communicating evidence openly
- Ethical behavior
- Articulating and reflecting on the assumptions in AOD research and public discourse
- Contributing to closing the gap in avoidable AOD related morbidity and mortality and service access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people living in rural and remote settings
- Producing research that maintains a consumer, community, policy and scientific focus
- Meaningful engagement with research participants
- Contributing to both Australian and international efforts to reduce alcohol and other drug related harm
- Building an organisational culture that supports professional development and the generation of new ideas.

Key outcome areas

The areas of work where we will seek to achieve outcomes are:

- The development and testing of new and existing interventions
- Improving the understanding of the nature and extent of AOD use and harm
- Building research capacity in the sector
- Conducting policy research
- Communicating the outcomes of research



1. Through the development and testing of new and existing interventions we aim to:

- Increase information on the efficacy and effectiveness of existing interventions
- Improve the capacity for evidence-informed practice and policy
- Improve and increase intervention options available to prevent and respond to alcohol and other drug use/harms in the community
- Assess the cost effectiveness of interventions
- Improve the cultural safety, appropriateness and uptake of AOD interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Develop and trial models of care suitable for populations with special needs

Strategies to achieve these objectives will include –

- Using best-practice methodologies for evaluating efficacy and effectiveness and cost effectiveness of interventions
- Contributing to routine process and outcome monitoring of interventions and services
- Building international collaborations in clinical trials
- Building collaborative research networks with relevant sectors, e.g. clinicians, police, education and policy makers to identify needs, opportunities and partners
- Conducting high-quality systematic reviews of evidence for existing interventions
- Advancing theories behind interventions
- Continuing to build the cultural competence of the NDARC research workforce
- Collaborating with experts and communities to develop and evaluate new interventions and models of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Developing and using reliable and valid measures for intervention research
- Assessing the costs and benefits of alternate policy interventions (e.g. health, social, criminal justice)
- Identifying and promoting opportunities for natural experiments during policy development and implementation

2. Through improving the understanding of the nature and extent of AOD use and harm, we aim to:

- Improve understanding of the factors that contribute to the use of alcohol and other drugs and related harms
- Provide valid and up-to-date information on AOD prevalence, patterns of use and harms
- Identify emerging AOD issues
- Increase knowledge regarding the natural history of AOD use and harms
- Increase understanding of the burden and costs of AOD use and understanding of drug supply and drug markets.

Strategies to achieve these objectives will include –

- Conducting prospective longitudinal research especially in children, adolescents and young adults and their families
- Contributing to the analysis and improvement of population surveys and routine data collections (e.g. NIDIP)
- Seeking opportunities for increased research with disadvantaged populations
- Forming inter-sectoral multidisciplinary collaborations
- Continuing existing monitoring (e.g. IDRS, EDRS)
- Exploring opportunities for greater involvement in data linkage efforts
- Conducting systematic reviews of the relationship between AOD use and harms/consequences
- Advancing theories around nature and extent of AOD use and harms
- Participating in global studies in mental health and drug and alcohol trends and determinants of drug and alcohol use and harm

3. Through building research capacity in the sector, we aim to:

- Produce the next generation of specialist AOD researchers
- Attract and retain the best researchers to the AOD field and to NDARC
- Build the research competence of clinicians working with AOD clients
- Build the research literacy of policy makers

Strategies to achieve these outcomes will include –

- Providing clear and supportive career pathways for NDARC research staff building strong internal teamwork and external collaborations
- Becoming an employer of choice through providing a supportive and attractive workplace
- Developing incentives to attract develop the research leaders of the future to the AOD field
- Improving the quality and availability of mentorship and supervision within NDARC and with collaborating research clinicians
- Providing a Visiting Fellows program
- Further developing and branding an NDARC PHD program
- Implementing a formal post-doctoral program and international post-doctoral links
- Enrolling indigenous students/developing indigenous cadet positions
- Providing part time or jointly funded positions for clinicians at NDARC
- Maximising the potential of conjoint appointments through more active engagement with them.
- Running research training workshops on a cost recovery basis
- Providing teaching within UNSW about AOD research methods and processes.

4. Through policy research we aim to:

- Close the gap between research and policy and policy and practice
- Improve the quality of policy making and policy research
- Make explicit and test the underlying assumptions of policy
- Contribute to the development of evidence based approaches to the analysis of alcohol and other drug markets and substance use.

Strategies to achieve these objectives will include –

- Conducting policy research
- Developing Inter-disciplinary collaborations that focus on translational research
- Conducting research into cost-effective strategies to translate research into policy and practice
- Trialling research translation strategies (e.g. mentoring models)
- Advancing theories of policy processes
- Evaluating training guideline implementation
- Developing “translational research” guidelines

5. Through communicating the outcomes of research we aim to:

- Provide the best evidence based advice to government in the public interest
- Promote informed debate about AOD issues and solutions
- Support continued interest in the field by current and potential researchers
- Promote philanthropic interest in AOD research
- Assist in the diversification of the funding base of the centre

strategy

Strategies to achieve these outcomes will include –

- Developing an NDARC communication framework which includes a communication plan for every project
- Providing expert members for national and international policy advisory groups
- Creating international communities of interest around the key research questions addressed by NDARC projects
- Increasing networking opportunities for research staff to meet with all levels of government and the community by offering targeted policy briefings
- Maintaining and exceeding current performance in relation to peer reviewed papers, articles and reports
- Presenting findings at national and international conferences, seminars, key national forums and committees
- Maintaining a user friendly up to date website and engaging with social media
- Monitoring and evaluating the penetration and reach of NDARC research in the mass media
- Providing an Annual 'state of play' announcement of 'what's happening with alcohol and drugs' targeting government and community members
- Convening and providing briefings to business/industry and key community groups