

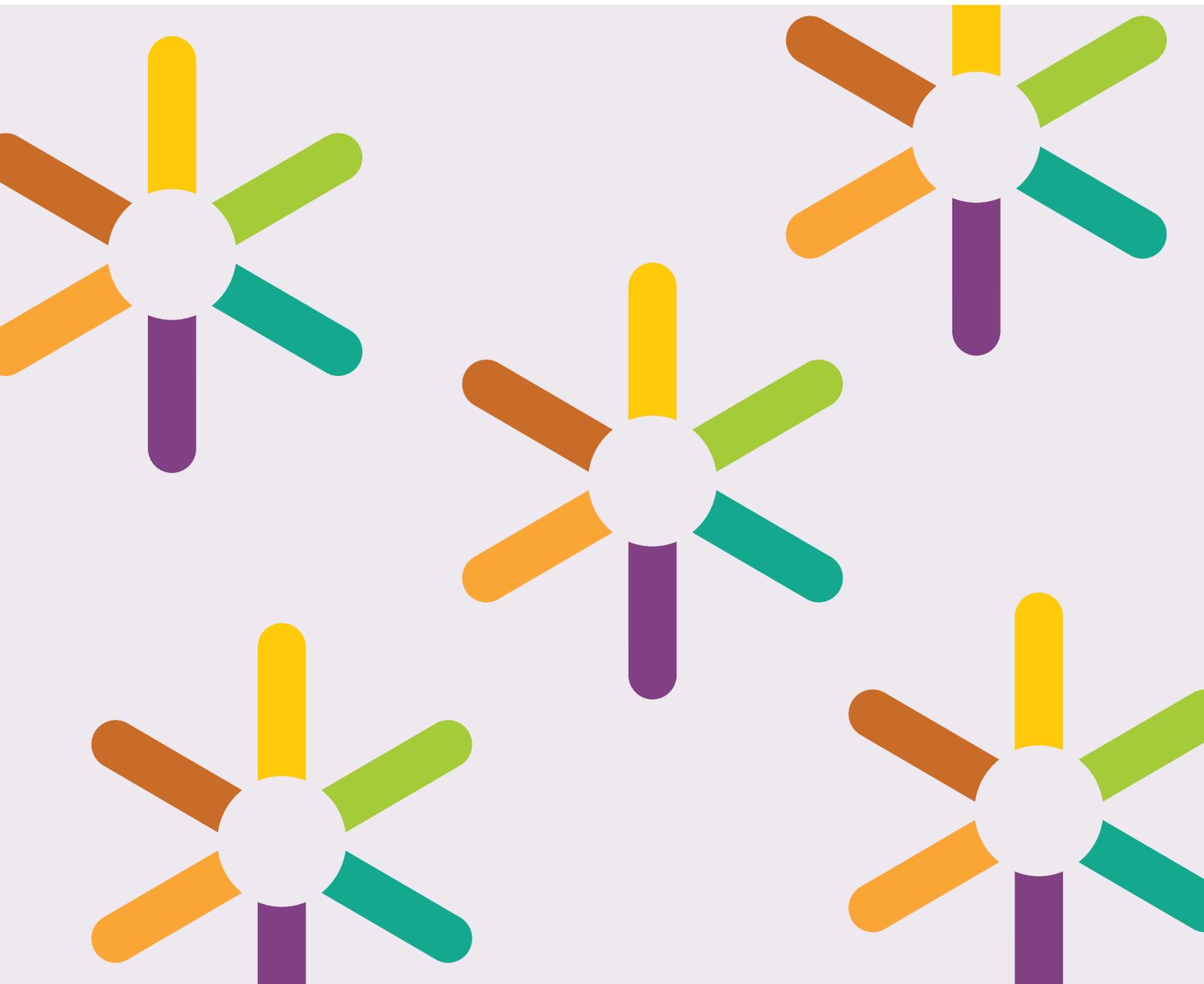


Mental Health Commission
Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Strengthening Alcohol and Other Drugs Governance in Western Australia

A summary implementation plan

May 2024



Background

In January 2022, the State Government commissioned an independent governance review of the *Health Services Act 2016* (Independent Governance Review) to examine the operational and practical effectiveness of governance structures and their impact on patient experience and outcomes.

In response, the Minister for Mental Health, the Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA (Minister), announced a packaged of reforms in August 2023 to improve leadership, accountability, collaboration and coordination of the mental health and alcohol and other drugs systems.

At this time, the Minister committed to further considering optimal governance arrangements for the alcohol and other drugs system, in consultation with the sector and relevant stakeholders.

To inform optimal governance arrangements, an Alcohol and Other Drugs Governance Working Group (Working Group) was convened in October 2023 with membership consisting of peak body, sector and consumer representatives, and representatives from the Mental Health Commission (Commission) and Department of Health. The Working Group considered strategies to elevate alcohol and other drugs within the broader system, aligned to a set of agreed guiding principles.

On 12 March 2024, the Minister announced that alcohol and other drugs governance would remain with the Commission through a dedicated domain. This was to capitalise on opportunities between the mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors and systems and ensure strong coordination across the care continuum (see overleaf).



The guiding principles of the Working Group reflected the desired future state of alcohol and other drugs governance in Western Australia



1. Dedicated domain for the alcohol and other drugs system, with sustainable, accountable, transparent and impactful leadership.



2. System-wide leadership and strategic coordination of alcohol and other drugs strategies and services within the wider system, including prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, treatment and support.



3. 'Alcohol and other drugs' being in the title of the government body responsible for alcohol and other drugs governance.



4. Alcohol and other drugs expertise, and capability to translate evidence into policy and systems and services planning.

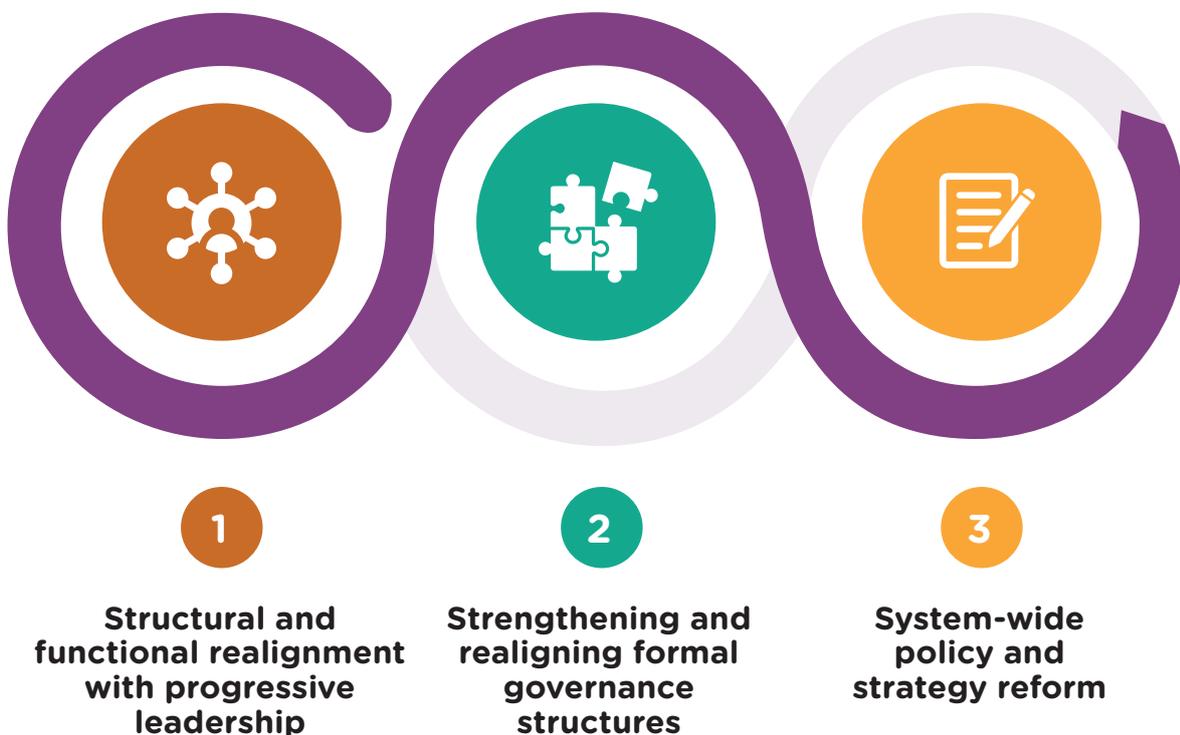


5. Capacity to partner with the sector and consumers to achieve best system and service outcomes for the community.

Commitment to reform

The Commission is committed to delivering internal, sector and system-wide reform to accelerate and sustain ongoing action to prevent and reduce harms from alcohol and other drugs in the Western Australian community.

A suite of strategies will be delivered by the Commission to discharge the principles of the Working Group and elevate the focus on alcohol and other drugs issues and improve outcomes for all Western Australians. These strategies are aligned to three overarching themes.



A summary of the overarching themes and related strategies are outlined overleaf.



Structural and functional realignment with progressive leadership

Structural and functional alignment and enduring leadership are recognised as fundamental enablers to delivering the Government’s commitment to elevating the focus on alcohol and other drugs within the Commission and the broader health system. The Commission will implement a number of strategies to realign its internal structure and functions to increase coordination and focus on reform initiatives.

This will include the establishment of a dedicated Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs (Office) to lead system-wide strategic policy efforts, intergovernmental relations and systems and services planning across the State with the support of dedicated performance, monitoring and evaluation functions to provide stronger oversight of alcohol and other drugs system performance.

Alongside the newly formalised leadership positions relevant to the establishment of the Office, the Commission will on board a senior advisor to be known as the Assistant Commissioner for Alcohol and Other Drugs, to provide strategic, expert and contemporary advice, as part of a broader strategy to build organisational capacity and capability.

The Commission will review its key performance indicators to identify opportunities to refine and create more meaningful, transparent and accountable reporting, including establishing internal operating targets to monitor progress.



Strengthening and realigning formal governance structures

The Commission acknowledges the importance of effective state and national governance arrangements and interagency, sector and community partnerships to elevate alcohol and other drugs within the broader system and progress meaningful action.

Leveraging other Independent Governance Review reforms, the Commission is working with the Minister’s Office and Department of Health to ensure new system-wide governance arrangements, including the Mental Health, Wellbeing and Alcohol and Other Drugs Joint Leadership Group and supporting Clinical Advisory Group and Lived Experience Advisory Group, include specific alcohol and other drugs expertise and strategic focus.

These actions will place alcohol and other drugs issues on the agenda for senior leaders across the health system, and aim to ensure decision making at the highest level is informed by contemporary and expert advice.

The Commission will also consider other governance related opportunities to elevate the strategic focus and progress coordinated action, including through the Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Deputies Group and strengthening of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board.

As part of broader efforts to strengthen governance arrangements, the Commission will increase efforts to support sector, consumer, and community representation wherever appropriate, and work proactively with peak bodies to support and engage in the delivery of priorities.



System-wide policy and strategy reform

The Commission has commenced work to strengthen its approach to system-wide policy and program and services reform. Development of the new Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy 2025-2030 is well underway, which will form Western Australia's overarching guiding document, identifying whole-of-system priorities for alcohol and other drugs programs and services.

This will be supported by a person-centred Outcomes Measurement Framework, which will serve as the primary framework for monitoring and reporting system-level outcomes for the community and selecting outcomes and indicators to effectively monitor, evaluate and report on the impact of publicly funded services for consumers, families and carers.

Following release of the Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy 2025-2030 and Outcomes Measurement Framework, the Commission will prioritise the development of a dedicated framework that outlines evidence-based policies, programs and services required as part of a comprehensive public health approach to address alcohol and other drugs issues in Western Australia.

The Commission is committed to ensuring strategy and policy development, and systems and services planning is underpinned by contemporary, best practice evidence, and will work with tertiary organisations and other stakeholders to facilitate translatable alcohol and other drugs research.

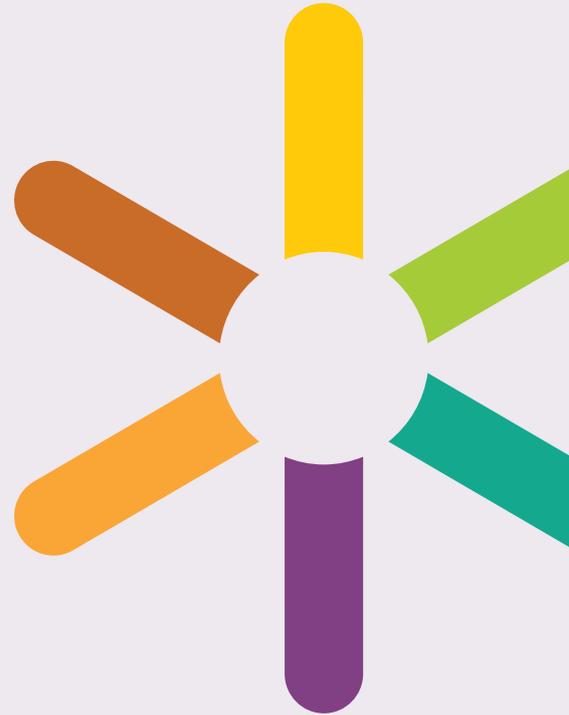
Consistent with outcomes from the Independent Governance Review and the State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services (2022), the Commission is reforming its approach to commissioning services to one that is more strategic and proactive and recognises the need to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to plan, and deliver holistic, integrated, and sustainable services for the community. With a significant proportion of alcohol and other drugs services and supports delivered by the community services sector in Western Australia, adherence to the Agency Commissioning Plan and its underlying principles is paramount.

Strategies

The following provides an overview of the strategies to be delivered, in alignment with the three overarching themes and guiding principles of the Working Group.

The Commission will establish formalised governance arrangements to provide oversight of progress against delivery of the strategies.

Annual progress will be formally reported in the Commission's Annual Report, with a summary report prepared by the end of 2027.





1.0 Structural and functional realignment with progressive leadership

		Guiding Principles				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.1	Establish an Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs with dedicated responsibilities for alcohol and other drugs policy and strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1.2	Develop an official Government logo for use in association with the Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs			✓		
1.3	Formalise Senior Executive Service positions to lead the Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs	✓	✓			
1.4	Establish the Assistant Commissioner for Alcohol and Other Drugs as an independent advisor to the Mental Health Commissioner	✓	✓		✓	
1.5	Review key performance indicators and operating targets to improve transparency and accountability	✓	✓			
1.6	Strengthen internal performance, monitoring and evaluation functions to improve oversight of alcohol and other drugs alcohol and other drugs system performance	✓	✓		✓	
1.7	Build a skilled and competent internal workforce with subject matter expertise in alcohol and other drugs to support organisational capacity and capability	✓	✓		✓	✓



2.0 Strengthening and realigning formal governance arrangements

		Guiding Principles				
		1	2	3	4	5
2.1	Strengthen interagency, sector and community coordination, engagement, and collaboration through the Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs and agency-wide ways of working	✓	✓		✓	✓
2.2	Ensure new mental health and alcohol and other drugs governance arrangements include specific expertise and strategic focus	✓	✓		✓	✓
2.3	Consider other state-based governance arrangements to identify opportunities to elevate the alcohol and other drugs strategic agenda	✓	✓		✓	✓
2.4	Strengthen the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board	✓	✓		✓	✓
2.5	Advocate to reinstate progressive and accountable national alcohol and other drugs governance mechanisms	✓	✓		✓	✓



3.0 Strategic and coordinated system-wide policy, program and services reform

		Guiding Principles				
		1	2	3	4	5
3.1	Develop a five-year, system-wide Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy to commence in 2025 (the Strategy)	✓	✓		✓	✓
3.2	Develop a system-wide mental health and alcohol and other drugs Outcomes Measurement Framework	✓	✓		✓	✓
3.3	Develop dedicated alcohol and other drugs interagency framework in alignment with the Strategy	✓	✓		✓	✓
3.4	Facilitate and translate research and evidence into policy, strategy, and systems and services planning through engagement with tertiary organisations and local, national and international experts	✓	✓		✓	
3.5	Adhere to the principles outlined in the Commission's Agency Commissioning Plan		✓		✓	✓



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