



Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Alcohol and Other Drugs Ministerial Advisory Panel – Communique Meeting 10 December 2025

This communique provides stakeholders with information and outcomes from the meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Panel (MAP) held on 10 December 2025.

The MAP provides direct feedback to the Minister for Health; Mental Health (Minister) about system performance and reform progress. This advice contributes to the delivery of a system that adopts a person and family-centred approach and encapsulates whole of system priorities. It also includes the transition to more community-based services that provide prevention, earlier intervention, and diversion away from acute in-patient services to achieve better outcomes for individuals, families, and the Western Australian community. The MAP is also the forum through which the Minister provides updates to the mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors on strategic priorities.

Minister's Update

The Minister confirmed that the topics raised by members at the previous meeting will guide the agenda of future meetings, with nominated members to lead the majority of discussions. The Minister advised that new or emerging issues may be considered to ensure timely advice is sought on key matters. The Minister also advised members that a review of the Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs governance structures is in progress, in line with the Terms of Reference. The review will focus on recognised best practice principles for public sector governance, including group function, governance and committee effectiveness.

Alcohol and other drugs – Prevention across the lifespan

Members discussed and provided advice on strengthening prevention and harm reduction approaches through strategic planning, policy development and program design and delivery. A member paper was provided for this item with the following considerations highlighted to support member discussion:

- Prevention has benefits for individuals and the wider community.
- Community engagement and community-based prevention complements broader population approaches.
- Prevention must be delivered in a way that does not reinforce stigma and discrimination.

Key discussion points informing advice to the Minister included:

- A comprehensive approach to prevention should include whole-of-population strategies, interventions with individuals in higher-risk contexts, and more targeted approaches to prevent and reduce harm amongst those who use alcohol and other drugs.
- A balanced approach is one that addresses demand reduction, supply reduction and harm reduction.
- Community awareness activity regarding the impacts associated with alcohol and other drugs use must be responsive to contemporary trends.
- The role of the community sector plays a key role in supporting awareness and engagement activities, and delivery of place-based responses.
- Engaging peer led services to support those most at risk of harm is important, including targeted support for individuals in custodial settings.

Alcohol and other drug services for children discussion paper

Members considered a discussion paper regarding alcohol and other drugs use and services for children under the age of 12, including case studies which were developed based on engagement with service providers.

A summary of key issues discussed by members, which informs advice to the Minister included:

- The impacts of alcohol and other drugs use in childhood are significant and potentially life-long.



- There is under reporting of substance use amongst this cohort, and alternative sources of information should be considered to support informed approaches.
- Prevention and harm reduction approaches should address contemporary and emerging trends including mode of consumption, and supply methods, including online purchasing options.
- Integrating public health prevention strategies through school settings, including primary schools requires consideration.
- For this age cohort, substance use may be a coping mechanism in the context of co-occurring issues, including mental health concerns or unmet needs.
- Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (or suspected) and associated cognitive impairment are at greater risk of substance use. A cross-sector response is required to address issues regarding poor diagnosis and appropriate support options, to prevent and reduce risk taking behaviours.

Alcohol and Other Drugs – Capability to address intersecting issues

Members discussed and provided advice on how to support appropriate alcohol and other drug capability in the mental health sector (and vice versa) and across generalist and non-specialised workforces.

A member paper was provided for this item, including a draft co-occurring capability review tool, developed by the Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) and the Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAHM).

The following considerations were highlighted to support member discussion:

- Alcohol and other drugs issues intersect with many health and social sectors (e.g. mental/physical health, housing, justice, child protection, education, employment) and requires all related human services to be person-centred and responsive to alcohol and other drugs concerns.
- Effective and sustainable capability building requires coordinated action at individual, organisational and systems levels to achieve improved outcomes.

Key discussion points informing advice to the Minister included:

- A sector-wide approach to capability development would support common barriers and enablers to be addressed through collective, whole-of-sector improvement initiatives and shared learning.
- Recognising and leveraging the intersections between alcohol and other drugs related harms, and key government priorities such as Family and Domestic Violence and reducing ambulance ramping is required.
- Building sector capacity and addressing stigma and discrimination are key enablers for supporting capability.
- Engaging with training organisations, colleges and tertiary institutes will enhance the capability of the future workforce, including specialist service providers, and all disciplines across the wider sector.

Joint Leadership Group Update

Members noted a brief update from the Joint Leadership Group meetings held on [9 October 2025](#).

The next MAP meeting is scheduled for 5 March 2026.

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