

Context

DASSA commissioned the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) to undertake a mid-term review of the SA AOD Strategy's progress against its:

- 5 overarching Objectives
- 18 Key Performance Objectives (KPOs)
- 90 Actions.

The review involved qualitative interviews with 22 key stakeholders, analysis of relevant quantitative data¹, and a synthesis of findings in a comprehensive report². A brief overview of key findings is provided here.

Strategy progress to-date

As at September 2019, most Actions were complete (37%) or in progress (56%) (Figure 1). Greatest progress had been achieved for Actions within Objectives 1 (Alcohol) and 3 (Illicit drug use), with least progress made against Actions within Objective 5 (Evidence) (Figure 2).

The South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2017-2021 aims to reduce the harms caused by alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems to the South Australian community.

Its five Objectives are to:

1. Reduce alcohol-related harm
2. Reduce the impact of AOD problems on young people and families
3. Reduce the harms associated with the use of illicit drugs and the harmful use of pharmaceutical drugs
4. Reduce the harms of AOD problems to Aboriginal people
5. Improve access to evidence that informs practice.

Figure 1. Overall progress on Actions

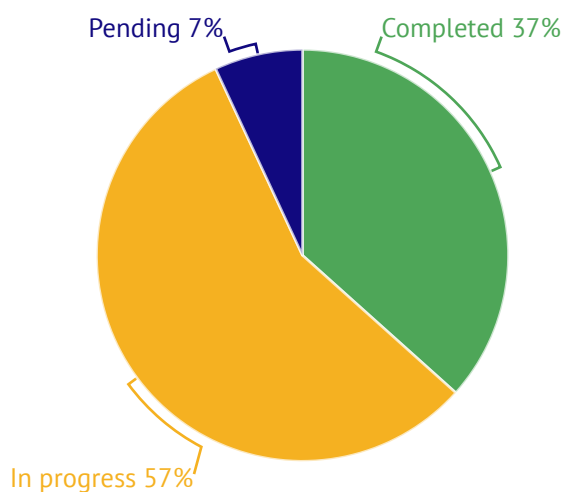
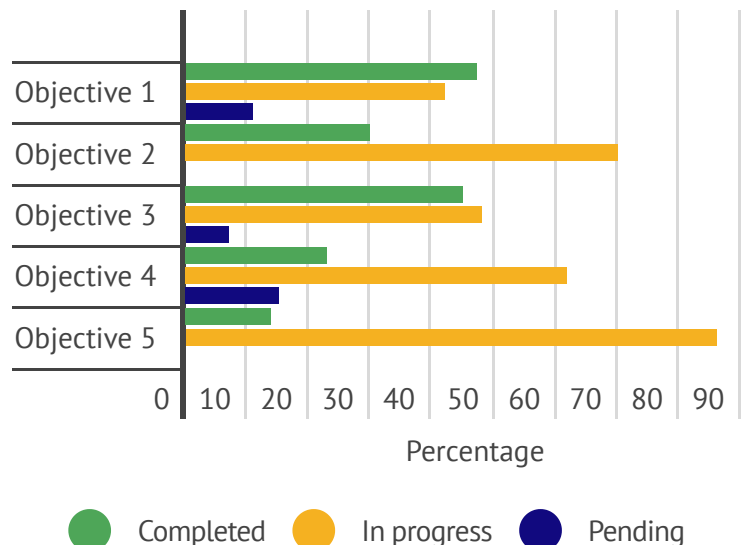


Figure 2. Progress on Strategy Actions by Objective



Interview results

Identified theme	Description
Underpinning principles	There was consensus that the Strategy's underpinning principles (i.e., harm minimisation, focus on vulnerable populations, evidence-based practice) were its core strength.
Funding & resourcing	Lack of specifically designated funding for the Strategy, and the absence of additional resources earmarked for its implementation, were noted as an impediment.
Governance, collaboration & communication	The Steering Group overseeing the Strategy was perceived positively, however scope for greater involvement of the non-government (NGO) sector was noted.
Utility	The Strategy was highly regarded and perceived to be of great practical utility. However, the large number of specific Actions and insufficient scope/flexibility to address emerging issues were noted as limitations.
Specific Actions	The implementation of place-based approaches to reduce alcohol-related harm in vulnerable areas (Action #13), and information sharing for acute needs and to support intergovernmental communication (Action #27) were applauded as significant value-adds to the Strategy.
Measuring outcomes	The challenges associated with measuring the Strategy's outcomes were noted.

Potential next steps

- Clarify & expand the role of NGOs
- Develop & implement an Action Plan
- Formalise intergovernmental collaborations
- Promote Strategy successes & collaborations
- Revisit the measurement of outcomes & feasibility of establishing an evidence-building framework
- Engage targeted populations in the measurement of outcomes
- Emphasise the role of social determinants in AOD use
- Ensure the next Strategy iteration is sufficiently flexible to incorporate emerging issues of concern.

Strategy's key strengths

- Emphasis on harm minimisation
- Use of holistic approach
- Collaboration between partners
- Focus on evidence-based practice
- Focus on vulnerable South Australians

1. Data sources included: National Drug Strategy Household Survey, Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug survey, Adelaide Wastewater Analysis, Australian Needle and Syringe Program survey, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, South Australian Police, Department of Education, Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

2. A full copy of the Strategy can be accessed at: sahealth.sa.gov.au. For more information about the Strategy or the mid-term review, contact DASSAHealthPolicy@sa.gov.au.