



Have we got it right?
*A critical reflection on the SA Illicit
Drug Strategy Initiatives*

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Strategic framework for illicit drugs

National Drug Strategy 2004-09

- *Mission*: prevent the uptake of harmful drug use and reduce the harmful effects of licit and illicit drugs.
- *Strategy*: Improve access to treatment programs and services (inc diversion) in the CJS Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative

SA Drug Strategy 2005-10

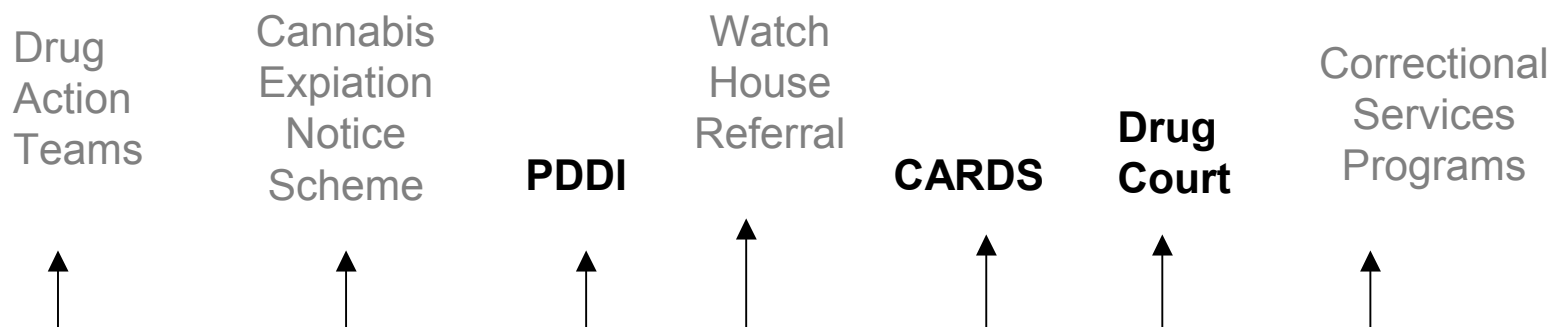
- *Goal*: ...prevent the use of illicit drugs...
- *Strategies*: Expand access...to treatment inc. programs that divert users away from the CJS...
 - : Through the CJS provide timely intervention points to divert users and direct drug dependent offenders into effective treatment and intervention programs.

Justice Portfolio Illicit Drug Strategy 2001-06

- *Principle*: ...provide offenders with appropriate and timely intervention at their earliest contact with the CJS. And
- drug using offenders will be encouraged to enter appropriate treatment at all points of the CJS continuum.

SA Illicit Drug Initiatives

Program requirements and expectations



	Offences	Program
PDDI	Simple possession (excl cannabis for adults)	1 assessment (brief intervention)
CARDS	Summary and minor indictable. No history of violence.	1 assessment and 4 treatment sessions
Drug Court	Minor indictable (likely to receive a custodial sentence)	12 month case plan

Fit between target group and actual participants

PDDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8/10 adults had at least one prior criminal event• 1/3 of adults had 4 or more criminal events• Almost 4/10 adults had a criminal event which included a drug charge as the major charge• 2/10 adults had a period of imprisonment in the 5 years prior
CARDS	<p>In practice CARDS is working with some clients on some major indictable offences and some offenders with a history of violence</p>
Drug Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Average of 18 priors per person• 94% had at least one theft or related offence• Low numbers of prior illicit drug offences

- 15% of those referred to PDDI have also participated in the Drug Court

Tailoring treatment to criminal justice sanctions

- ‘legal structures matter’ – there are limits to flexibility
- Entry to a particular initiative is on the basis of the offence type, rather than the level of intervention required by the initiative
 - Leverage of the CJS into treatment must match the nature and seriousness of the offence and the usual consequence faced by the offender.
- Reluctance to impose program participation as a condition of bail/bond because it sets up the individual for further CJS involvement if they don't comply (CARDS specific)
- Opposition in some agencies to working with ‘non-voluntary’ clients
- Service agreements, funding models and resources impact on treatment

Responding to needs

At a minimum, each initiative links the individual with health treatment.
However:

- 40% CARDS and 70% Drug Court participants fail to complete
- Difficult to get some treatment providers to work beyond the specific requirements of the initiative.
- Levels of participation / compliance lowest amongst:
 - Indigenous individuals (PDDI 7.6%, CARDS 18.6%, Drug Court 7.2%)
 - Females
- Relatively high non-completion rates amongst individuals with highest or most complex needs

What does this tell us about CJS based interventions?

- CJS and health can work effectively together, but has required cultural shifts on a number of levels.
- Shared objectives achieved by health (opportunity to engage a client) and CJS system (addressing criminogenic need) (win-win)
 - Next steps – continued evolution, based on communication, critical analysis, research, debate and reaching ‘shared understandings’

What does this tell us about CJS based interventions?

- That therapeutic jurisprudence is effective for some individuals.
- CJS referral to treatment is more effective than traditional CJS responses
- It often doesn't work due to :
 - Individual not ready for change
 - The threat/incentive is not persuasive
 - The treatment does not match to individual's needs
- Next Steps: continue learning and application of learning on what works for whom

What Does This Tell Us About CJS Interventions

The CJS is bound by a fixed legal framework, that dictates the level of intervention

Next steps:

- be clearer about these limitations and what can be achieved
- Develop increased flexibility and capacity to respond to criminogenic needs, via policy and legislative changes in the CJS and increased flexibility and options in the treatment sector
- Develop realistic and appropriate measures of success
- Engineer initiatives to be more effective by promoting change.