

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The incidence of cigarette smoking, harmful alcohol consumption, sedative use and opiate use is high in Australia. Problems caused by drugs are especially common among youth, the socially isolated, the socio-economically disadvantaged and minority groups such as Aborigines and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

These "risk factors" for drug and alcohol problems are higher in South West Sydney than in the rest of Sydney. It is clear therefore that drug and alcohol problems are having and will continue to have a great impact on the population's health and consequently on hospital and health service utilisation.

Currently, the Area Health Service provides drug and alcohol services in Community Health Centres and runs two public Methadone Programs. In addition, a medical consultancy service is provided for inpatients at Liverpool, Campbelltown and Fairfield Hospitals. The staff of the SWSAHS Drug and Alcohol Centre conduct outpatient clinics at Liverpool and Campbelltown. The SWSAHS Drug and Alcohol Centre provides co-ordination of Area services, develops policies, and co-ordinates education, training, evaluation and research.

The major gaps in services are the lack of detoxification beds, and the lack of services for persons with Alcohol-Related Brain Damage. In community health services there is a need for further prevention and early intervention strategies.

Drug and Alcohol Services are funded under the budget Program 2.2. Funding under this programme is to be used exclusively for drug and alcohol services.