



*A National
Approach for
Reducing Access
to Tobacco in
Australia by Young
People under
18 Years of Age*

Appendix C: Information Strategy

August 2000

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ISBN 0 642 73539 5

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Publications approval number 2840

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Information strategy

The report, 'A National Approach for Reducing Access to Tobacco in Australia by Young People Under 18 Years of Age' has been developed following an examination of the evidence provided by a range of Australian and international studies, from consultations with key stakeholders and partners in Australia and from reports provided by government officers. The National Approach identifies and discusses relevant issues regarding the sale and supply of tobacco to young people and recommends the adoption of a comprehensive range of programs to address young people's access to tobacco products. The identification of the key elements for a comprehensive and effective sales to minors program and the recommendations for best practice are provided in this report.

In developing the National Approach a number of issues were identified concerning the adoption of best practice recommendations by jurisdictions in Australia. These issues were examined further at a National Sales to Minors workshop held in June 2000 involving government officials and officers responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of sales to minors programs in Australia. It was agreed that an information kit would assist jurisdictions in adopting the best practice recommendations provided by the National Approach and should therefore be a component of the National Approach package.

The following kit therefore is designed to:

- provide policy officers and other senior officers working within States and Territories with supportive information that explains key issues relating to the best practice recommendations presented in the National Approach;
- provide these officers with appropriate responses to some commonly asked questions regarding these issues; and
- provide information that will assist jurisdiction in the preparation of briefs and reports on sales to minors issues for key stakeholders.

The information provided in this kit is based on:

- an examination of the evidence provided by Australian and international studies and discussed in the report, 'A National Approach for Reducing Young People's Access to Tobacco in Australia';
- a review of resources currently available in Australia such as Policy and Procedures Manuals, State-based protocols and guidelines and associated information pamphlets; and
- the agreed responses to key questions relating to the adoption of best practice and implementation issues identified at the National Sales to Minors Workshop held in August 2000.

The National Sales to Minors Project recognises that many local community project managers and government officers in Australia have undertaken considerable efforts in the development of comprehensive and effective sales to minors programs. They serve as a valuable resource for those jurisdictions planning to instigate new sales to minors initiatives and strategies. Case study examples from Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria are provided in Appendix B of the National Approach package.

As well, a range of resources has been produced in conjunction with these programs and they are listed in Appendix D.

It is envisaged that in adopting best practice recommendations States and Territories will work closely with key stakeholders within their jurisdictions and that this information kit will assist them to formulate effective strategies for the implementation of best practice within current and new program areas.

Information Kit

The National Approach to Reducing Young People's Access to Tobacco in Australia

All governments in Australia have identified the need to develop strategies that will reduce young people's use and access to tobacco products. The report, 'A National Approach for Reducing Access to Tobacco in Australia by Young People Under 18 Years of Age' has been written to enhance the development of a coordinated national approach to reducing children's access to tobacco. The National Approach has been developed in response to the reported high levels of adolescent smoking rates in Australia and the relative ease that children have in obtaining cigarettes. It has been developed collaboratively by the National Tobacco Policy Officers Group and the National Expert Advisory Committee on Tobacco.

It is the goal of the National Approach to provide a framework that will enhance coordination and partnerships between States and Territories, the Commonwealth and Non Government Organisations in Australia and in so doing, contribute to a reduction in young people's access to tobacco.

The National Approach identifies six key elements for a comprehensive and effective sales to minors program. They are:

- legislation;
- monitoring and enforcement;
- prosecution;
- education and training;
- community action; and
- evaluation.

The National Approach also provides recommendations for best practice for an effective state-based sales to minors programs. Best practice recommendations have been developed following consultations with a range of key stakeholder organisations within each Australian State and Territory and from an examination of Australian and international research literature.

Why is the National Approach important?

Throughout Australia, youth smoking rates are causing increasing concern and research has confirmed that the decline in adolescent smoking rates seen in the late 1980's has stopped. This trend is not unique to Australia and reflects the trend in other western countries (Hill 1999). It has been estimated that more than 276,000 secondary school students in Australia were current smokers in 1996 and if they continue to smoke throughout their life, 138,000 will die prematurely (Hill 1999).

An important contributor to the increase in adolescent smoking rates as seen in Australia and other Western countries in recent years is easy access to cigarettes (US Surgeon General 1994).

This has occurred despite the fact that since the late 1980's there has been substantial developments in youth access laws and policies that involve age restrictions for selling tobacco in these countries (Altman 1992).

In 1996, it was reported that 38 per cent of Australian students who smoked obtained their own cigarettes through illegal sales from retail outlets such as milk bars, corner stores, petrol stations and supermarkets (Hill 1999). In Australia, several studies have reported the relative ease to which young people have been able to purchase cigarettes despite the introduction of laws that make it illegal to sell tobacco products to young people (eg. Andrews 1994; Chapman 1994; Carruther 1995; Wakefield 1992; Sanson-Fisher 1992). As well, most jurisdictions have laws that make it illegal to supply cigarettes to young people yet high proportions of young people who smoke have reported obtaining cigarettes from family members and friends.

Research studies conducted in Australia and in other countries have also confirmed that legislation alone banning the sales of cigarettes to minors will not achieve any substantial effect on young people's ability to purchase cigarettes. A comprehensive program involving education and training, active enforcement and monitoring, prosecutions, publicity and community action is needed to support the legislative program and to ensure that retailers are deterred from selling cigarettes to young people.

How is the National Approach related to the National Tobacco Strategy?

The development of a national best practice model for reducing young people's access to tobacco products was nominated as a priority under the National Tobacco Strategy endorsed by Ministers in 1999 (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care 1999).

The National Tobacco Strategy 1999 to 2002–03 identifies two concepts relating to the availability of tobacco products, accessibility and affordability. Where and how tobacco products are sold, along with the cost of purchasing them, are factors that determine the overall availability of these products in the community (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care 1999).

The National Tobacco Strategy recommends future strategies to address these issues including providing regular increases in the price of cigarettes, reviewing the feasibility and potential public health benefits of registration schemes for tobacco outlets and the development of a best practice model in sales to minors programs. Other strategies included in the National Tobacco Strategy focus on reducing tobacco promotion and regulating tobacco and provide a comprehensive approach to future tobacco control.

How is the issue currently being addressed in States and Territories in Australia?

In recent years activities to address young people's access to tobacco in Australia have included legislative initiatives and the development and implementation of enforcement and monitoring programs, community and retailer education strategies, training programs and evaluation studies.

To date, most of this activity has occurred at the state and territory level with individual jurisdictions having responsibility for developing and implementing legislative strategies. Whilst all jurisdictions have been active in developing support programs for their legislative programs such as enforcement, monitoring, education, training and evaluation, there are variations in the nature of these activities and the extent to which they have been undertaken.

A summary of State and Territory activities is provided in Appendix A of the National Approach package.

Does limiting young people's access to tobacco reduce adolescent smoking rates?

Research studies have shown that there are many factors that influence young people to start and to continue to smoke. Programs that only limit access are not sufficient to reduce smoking prevalence among young people. It is important that there are mutually supportive interventions that target both the demand and supply for tobacco products by young people in order to reduce tobacco use. As well, evidence suggests that educational interventions are undermined when young people are easily able to purchase tobacco (Altman, 1992).

An important contributor to the increase in adolescent smoking rates as seen in Australia and other Western countries in recent years is easy access to cigarettes (US Surgeon General 1994). This has occurred despite the fact that since the late 1980s there has been substantial developments in youth access laws and policies that involve age restrictions for selling tobacco in these countries (Altman, 1992). Limiting young people's access to cigarettes through legislation that restricts the sale of tobacco products is an important strategy in the prevention of adolescent smoking behaviour (Forster 1998). The strongest effects of legislation are likely to be on those (mostly adolescents) who are on the threshold of regular smoking. Making access to cigarettes more difficult for young people might limit the progression of cigarette smoking uptake or increase self-initiated adolescent smoking cessation (Forster 1998; Tang 1997).

There have been some studies that have reported reductions in smoking prevalence as a result of comprehensive sales to minors initiatives. These have been achieved in communities where there has been very high to complete compliance by retailers of local tobacco access laws and ordinances (Jason 1991; DiFranza 1992; Tutt 2000).

In an Australian study conducted in a community of New South Wales, it was reported that maintaining the rate of retail compliance with sales to minors legislation at 90 per cent or better over a number of years reduced adolescent smoking rates for all age groups in that community. It was found that in the short term, high retail compliance rates impacted mainly on the smoking rates of young age groups (12–13 year olds). The study concluded that substantial effects on the smoking rates of older age groups would only be achieved if retailer compliance were sustained at a high level over a period of years (Tutt 2000).

Two American studies have also reported reduction in smoking prevalence following programs involving active enforcement, penalties, publicity and education programs. These programs reported reductions of 69 per cent in daily tobacco use among younger smokers (Jason 1991) and 44 per cent in smoking rates by young people (Di Franza 1992) and very high to complete compliance rates.

There is also evidence that suggests that sales to minors programs can impact on the number of cigarettes smoked by young people (Laugesan 1999). Young smokers who experience more difficulty in buying cigarettes (due to the effects of enforcement on retailers), do not, as a result, buy or smoke as many cigarettes as those who have less difficulty in purchasing cigarettes.

Is the supply of tobacco products to young people an important issue?

There is evidence that sales to minors programs need to incorporate specific strategies that address the supply of cigarettes from other sources. Hill et al (1999) reported that in Australia decreases in purchasing cigarettes by young people corresponded with increases in the proportion of young people obtaining cigarettes from friends and family members. As over the counter purchases become more difficult, other sources (eg adults, older children, single cigarettes) become increasingly important as alternate sources of cigarettes for young people (DiFranza 1996; Wolfson 1997).

Programs that effectively reduce access to cigarettes through over the counter sales should therefore be accompanied by strategies that address the supply of cigarettes from other sources such as friends and family.

Why is it important to have a comprehensive program?

Strategies that address the demand for cigarettes by young people will be undermined if there is unlimited access to cigarettes and if there is complacency within the community and among retailers in relation to the sale of cigarettes to young people.

Comprehensive programs that involve the collaboration and support of retailers, the community, schools, enforcement agencies and the media are needed in order to reduce the sale of cigarettes to young people. It is important as well that there are strategies that address the supply of cigarettes from other sources such as vending machines, friends and family.

Research studies have confirmed that legislation alone banning sales of cigarettes to minors will not achieve any substantial effect on young people's ability to purchase cigarettes. For legislation to be effective in terms of reducing illegal cigarette sales to minors it is important that there are programs that provide retailers with a good understanding of the law and an understanding of the consequences associated with their failure to adhere to it. Research has found that it is important that there are strategies that harness the community's support for the presence of these programs and that this support will impact on retailer's actions in terms of selling cigarettes to a person aged under 18 years. Other strategies and in particular, publicity programs are also needed which will ensure that enforcement and prosecution are perceived as a real threat by retail outlets and deter retailers from selling cigarettes to young people.

In many States and Territories in Australia sales to minors programs have achieved substantial reductions in sales rates of tobacco to young people within short timeframes. In New South Wales and Western Australia where comprehensive programs have been present since the mid 1990's, a continual decline in sales rates has been reported.

What are the recommendations for best practice provided in the National Approach?

The following provides a summary of best practice recommendations provided in the National Approach:

1. The inclusion of the following elements within the legislative programs of States and Territories:
 - significant penalties for retailers who sell tobacco to young people (for example, greater than \$5,000);
 - proof of age card or equivalent photographic ID scheme for tobacco purchases;
 - identification of the authority responsible for enforcement;
 - provision for the prosecution of the seller, owner and/or manager (license holder);
 - inclusion as an offence, the supply of tobacco to a person under the age of 18 years; and
 - penalties for those who supply tobacco to minors.
2. States and Territories to indicate their intention to prosecute retailers who sell cigarettes to young people.
3. The phasing out of self service cigarette vending machines.
4. The implementation of routine compliance monitoring of tobacco retailers involving children in test purchases to monitor the rate of illegal sales of tobacco to young people.
5. The development and implementation of an education strategy for the general public to raise awareness about the issue and to promote community participation in local strategies to reduce children's access to tobacco.
6. The development and implementation of retailer education strategies that informs them of their obligations not to sell tobacco to young people under the age of 18 years.
7. States and Territories to indicate their commitment to:
 - providing resources and training programs for the agencies responsible for implementing effective enforcement strategies;
 - ensuring regular publicity and public relations programs are included as integral components of their enforcement strategies;
 - ensuring that adequate capacity is provided for their enforcement and monitoring program; and

- providing training programs for relevant enforcement bodies in collaboration with key stakeholders, enforcement agencies and health authorities.
8. The development of strategies that address the supply of cigarettes to young people and are designed to compliment and operate in tandem with those aimed at reducing the sale of cigarettes to minors.
 9. The monitoring of the National Approach by the National Tobacco Strategy and National Expert Advisory Committee on Tobacco.
 10. The coordination of a review of the National Approach by the Commonwealth Government to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy and that a comprehensive report is provided to Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy.

Information Kit

Key elements for effective sales to minors programs

1. Legislation

Strong legislation underpins an effective strategy to reduce the sale and supply of tobacco to young people. This legislation should:

- define the age at which a person can legally be sold or supplied with tobacco products;
- enable formal proof of age to be requested;
- identify the authority responsible for enforcement;
- provide for the prosecution of the seller, owner and/or manager (license holder);
- provide for significant penalties to encourage retailer compliance; and
- include offences for sale and supply of tobacco to young people.

The prohibition of self-service vending machines has been stated as a recommendation of the National Tobacco Strategy 1999 to 2002–3 (Commonwealth Department of Health and Human Services 1999). It is supported by the evidence and recommendations provided in the report ‘A National Approach for Reducing Access to Tobacco in Australia by Young People Under 18 Years of Age’.

By stating that the employer (and in some cases where a licensing system is in place, the holder of the tobacco license) is liable for prosecution if an employee contravenes the legislation and sells tobacco products to young people, ensures that the instruction and conduct of employees in tobacco retail outlets is the responsibility of employers and license holders.

It is important that all authorised officers responsible for the enforcement of the legislation are specified and that they are nominated on all warning notices and signage displayed in shops and other appropriate areas within the community. This informs retailers and the community of whom is responsible for the investigation of complaints of breaches in local communities and how breaches can be reported.

Legislative programs also require the support and integration of other strategies particularly those designed to inform the community, retailers and enforcement agencies about the legislative program, their responsibilities under the legislation, and the penalties that will be incurred and action that will be taken for breaches of the legislation.

Should the age of the seller be restricted?

Research has shown that a number of demographic factors including the age of sellers are associated with sales of cigarettes to minors. However, restricting the age of sellers may adversely affect small, family operated businesses, as it is often the children of the shop

owners who work for them. As well, the employment opportunities of young people seeking to obtain work and experience in the retail industry may be adversely affected. Therefore legislators seeking to include this clause should work with retail organisations to design strategies for addressing this issue.

Why isn't it an offence for minors to purchase cigarettes?

Some organisations including retailer organisations and the tobacco industry have called for an offence for purchase, possession and use of tobacco by young people to be included in legislation. There is concern that this would have little public health benefit and would redirect limited resources available for enforcement efforts from the adult community to young people.

What are good examples of proof of age requirements?

A number of studies have reported on the importance of education and legislative programs that encourage retailers to make requests for minors' age and/or identification (proving themselves old enough to purchase cigarettes). Studies have also reported that the success of sales to minors programs with retailers can be improved when retailers are required or instructed to make requests for appropriate proof of age identification.

Proof of age should be objective, photographic, and familiar to retailers. To avoid illegal reproductions it should be of a style that is tamper proof or hard to counterfeit. Many existing legislative programs in Australia recommend photographic driver's license, alcohol proof of age card or a passport as suitable proof of age tools.

What are appropriate penalties for legislative programs?

Significant penalties are necessary to ensure that retailers and others are deterred from selling and supplying cigarettes to young people. A number of studies in Australia have reported strong community support for ensuring strict enforcement of penalties for the sale and supply of cigarettes to young people. Fines of more than \$5,000 should be considered as well as penalties associated with the loss of licenses to sell tobacco where a licensing scheme is in place.

2. Monitoring and enforcement of the legislation

Legislation alone will not ensure that young people's access to tobacco is reduced. The National Approach recommends the development and implementation of a system of routine compliance monitoring of tobacco retailers as a strategy for monitoring the rate of illegal sales of tobacco to young people under 18 years of age. Regular compliance checks involving the participation of young people are the most effective, least costly and practical means of monitoring illegal sales of tobacco to young people, a position endorsed by authorities in the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, and most states and territories of Australia.

What does compliance monitoring entail?

In many states of Australia, throughout the United States of America and the United Kingdom, the process used for monitoring retailers' compliance with sales to minors legislation and in many cases for gathering evidence to validate a reported breach of sales to minors legislation has involved young people in test purchases. This practice (compliance monitoring) entails young people entering a retail outlet to attempt to purchase cigarettes and is conducted under the supervision of enforcement officers who wait outside. The participation of young people in compliance monitoring activities has been shown to be the most effective strategy for the identification of retailers responsible for illegal cigarette sales to young people.

In 1996 36 per cent of young people who smoked reported obtaining cigarettes by purchasing them from a retail outlet. These selling rates render impractical and expensive other enforcement activities such as observational enforcement whereby enforcement officials stakeout shops, waiting for such incidents to occur.

It is important to note that over a period of time it may be necessary to make changes to the way these activities are carried out such as using this activity to follow up on reports of breaches etc.

How frequent should compliance monitoring be undertaken?

Compliance monitoring is viewed as an ongoing process. International evidence suggests that illegal rates tend to rise again over time, once time-limited interventions run their course. It has been recommended that compliance monitoring should occur at least once or twice a year as an integral part of routine attention to maintaining reductions in cigarette sales to minors in local communities.

Is it illegal to involve young people in compliance monitoring studies?

There has been much discussion and concern expressed regarding the enforcement of sales to minors legislation and the issue of entrapment.

The High Court case of *Ridgeway v The Queen* held that in Australian law there is no substantive defence of entrapment. A person who purchases tobacco does not commit any offence. The fact that one person purchases tobacco for a Health Department or other responsible authority just like other people under 18 years of age without any assistance, encouragement or incitement (other than the purchase) is not illegal nor entrapment.

Evidence of an offence or an element of an offence can be excluded if the breach has been brought about by unlawful conduct on the part of law enforcement officers. However, in relation to the participation of young people in compliance monitoring activities a person under the age of 18 years who purchases tobacco does not commit any offence nor are young people aiding and abetting an offence that is there for their own protection. Therefore the conduct of the law enforcement officers and the people acting on behalf of the law enforcement officers is legal.

As well the involvement of a person under the age of 18 years who is instructed to tell the truth when asked by the store owner and does nothing more than ask for and purchase a packet of cigarettes should not involve a degree of harassment nor manipulation inconsistent with the minimal standards for acceptable police (or other responsible enforcement officer) conduct.

Therefore, the participation of persons under the age of 18 years in enforcement and monitoring activities must be in accordance with agreed standards and practices set out in policy and procedures guidelines prepared as part of the development of compliance monitoring activities by jurisdictions. Some states in Australia have developed policies, procedural guidelines and protocols which outline recommended processes for the selection, training, use and recruitment of young people in compliance monitoring activities and for obtaining parental consent. These procedural guidelines and manuals are also included in the training programs for enforcement agencies and community education programs and are listed in Appendix 3. (Eg NSW Health Department (1996) Policies and Procedures for the Enforcement of Section 59 of the *Public Health Act 1991*; Tobacco Act Enforcement Protocol (Department of Human Services, Victoria).

In Tasmania, the *Public Health Act 1997* contains a provision allowing the Director to authorise persons to carry out approved activities to monitor compliance with the tobacco control provisions of the Act. This provides legislative recognition of the role of compliance monitoring and will hopefully assist in preventing legal challenges to the use of children in Tasmanian compliance monitoring.

What was the outcome of the Victorian case Rice v Tricouris in relation to the involvement of a child in compliance monitoring activities?

In March 2000, the Victorian Supreme Court upheld an appeal against a magistrate's decision concerning the involvement of a child in a test purchase on public health grounds.

This case involved a test purchase undertaken by a 15 year old girl involved in compliance monitoring activities for a local council in Victoria. The consent of the parents and the child had been granted for the child to be involved in the test purchase. The retail owner in this case claimed that the evidence of the girl and the Council's Environmental Health Officer should be excluded on the grounds of public policy. In this case, *Rice v Tricouris*, the magistrate found that the child was 'induced' to act by a person in authority and that the child could be liable for 'aiding and abetting'. The magistrate claimed that putting a child in such a position was a 'misconceived endeavour' and that there was public interest in protecting children from engaging in unlawful conduct. An appeal was lodged and the case was referred to the Victorian Supreme Court.

The Judge convening the appeal at the Victorian Supreme Court held that there are no other viable or practical alternatives to the involvement of children in compliance monitoring for the successful prosecution of those selling cigarettes to children. The Judge held that the magistrate had failed to take into account the need to:

- protect children from the hazards of smoking, now and in the future;
- deter retailers from selling cigarettes to children; and
- highlight the difficulty of obtaining evidence and the absence of viable alternatives to make a prosecution.

The Judge concluded that the community would support the view that test purchasing was ‘ a most satisfactory way of attempting to stamp out the illegal sale of tobacco products to minors’. (Justice Beech, 14 March 2000, Supreme Court of Victoria. Practice Court No. 7297 *Rice v Tricouris*)

How are young people recruited?

Experience to date has shown that there have been few difficulties in recruiting enthusiastic young people in compliance monitoring activities and in obtaining parental permission. Youth groups, local schools and the children of co-workers have been utilised by many local programs in Australia as a way of recruiting children for these activities. Young people have been compensated for their involvement by direct payments or gift vouchers.

How can you address the problem for rural areas in terms of the participation of local young people in test purchases?

Experience from a number of local communities within Australia involved in regular compliance monitoring activities has shown that for rural areas it is important to recruit young people from adjoining or nearby communities rather than young people who are easily recognised by local shop keepers.

How important is it that all areas are committed to regular compliance monitoring activities?

Evidence has suggested that young people will learn to acquire cigarettes quickly from alternate sources such as retail outlets known to be illegally selling cigarettes to young people in neighbouring communities. Some studies have reported that when sales rates have decreased in one area there has been no change in young people’s perceived access to tobacco products and their smoking behaviour has remained unchanged as they have been able to obtain cigarettes from shops in nearby communities. As well, studies have also confirmed the difficulty of restricting young people’s access to tobacco products in today’s mobile youth market. Therefore a commitment to regular compliance monitoring by all areas is important to ensure that retailers in neighbouring communities are also adhering to legislative guidelines and are not selling cigarettes to young people.

What are key considerations in the recruitment, training and monitoring of young people in test purchases?

A comprehensive recruitment and training process utilising agreed policies and procedural guidelines should ensure that parents and young people give informed consent to participate in these activities and that young people are provided with appropriate briefing and de-briefing information and supervision by an authorised officer. It is important as well that parents and young people are aware that they may be required to attend court if an illegal sale is reported and the retailer pleads not guilty. However, by adhering to policy and procedural guidelines this can be avoided if the supervising enforcement officer/s observe the purchase and immediately interview the seller.

Important elements of the recruitment and training process are:

- discussing with parents and obtaining the written consent of the parents as well as the young people;
- explaining to parents and the young people that there is nothing illegal about the activities;
- providing information about the legislative program to the parents and young people;
- informing the parents and young people about the details of the procedures such as working in pairs, not conducting activities in local areas etc;
- providing instructions to the young people in terms of how they should behave, appearance, processes and responses in relation to the purchase attempt, transport and supervision;
- providing instructions on how to withdraw from the test purchase operation;
- debriefing procedures; and
- grouping young people according to their preference for involvement in test purchases and involvement in second attempt test purchases and subsequent court hearings.

It is also important that procedures are provided that ensure that appropriate monitoring of the young people's activities is being undertaken and that the young person and the parents are informed about these activities. The monitoring of the activities of young people in test purchase activities should include:

- ensuring that young people are aware that they may have to go to court; and
- ensuring that the young person's safety is monitored at all times and that they are protected from any situation that could potentially harm them including during the purchase attempt and while waiting for the supervising officer to conclude their involvement when an illegal sale is made.

How important is publicity in enforcement and monitoring activities?

Many studies have demonstrated that an important component of sales to minors programs is the development and implementation of regular publicity and public relations strategies and programs. These are necessary in order to ensure that retailers are aware of the consequences associated with failing to adhere to sales to minors laws. Significant reductions in sales rates have been reported following interventions that have involved media and community campaigns, ongoing publicity about enforcement, prosecutions and compliance monitoring activities.

As well, publicity programs inform the community of these activities and why they are important. It is important that the community is informed about the issue and the importance of addressing the illegal sale of cigarettes to young people and provided with a clear explanation of the legal issues regarding the involvement of young people in these activities. They should also be provided with information about the rates of illegal sales of tobacco to children in their area and the outcome of the young people's visits. This will counter any negative coverage generated locally regarding compliance monitoring activities.

Who are key stakeholders who require information about enforcement and monitoring activities?

It is important that those officers and organisations responsible for enforcing and monitoring sales to minors legislation are informed about the issues regarding compliance monitoring activities. These may include Environmental Health Officers, local councils, police, health workers, and others identified in the legislation as responsible officers for enforcing the legislation. Magistrates and members of the judiciary system should also be provided with information about compliance monitoring activities, why it is necessary, how it is conducted and the reported achievements in reducing illegal selling rates.

Many key community groups such as schools, parent and friends organisations, non-government health organisations, youth associations and youth groups should be informed about how the issue of youth smoking in their local area is being addressed through compliance monitoring activities and their support and involvement in the programs in the community sought.

The involvement of young people in compliance monitoring activities

The involvement of young people in test purchase operations has generated much discussion in Australia. Whilst there have been discussions concerning the legal issues of involving young people in test purchases there has also been a need to discuss ethical and moral issues.

A key reference for examining these issues is:

Chapman S. When incomes threaten outcomes: a case study of the obstruction of research to reduce teenage smoking. *Health Policy* 1997; 39:55–68.

The following are examples of questions that may be raised concerning these ethical and moral issues and responses:

Are we encouraging young people to smoke by involving them in test purchases?

There is no evidence to suggest that compliance monitoring activities involving young people in test purchase operations encourages young people to smoke and no adverse incidents have ever been reported in the literature on this subject.

Young people already are aware of how you can purchase cigarettes as research studies show that many of their peers already are successful in purchasing cigarettes.

Aren't we “using young people”?

It is often the connotations of the verb ‘use’ that is often raised in objections to compliance monitoring activities involving young people. It is important to avoid this verb in descriptive situations and emphasis voluntarism and the ways in which young people become involved, the parental consent needed, the learning opportunities the experience provides young people and the ‘service to the community’ it affords.

Are we placing young people in a dangerous situation?

There has been concern expressed that aggrieved shopkeepers may harm young people in some way. This concern exists despite the fact that no adverse incidents have been reported in the world of literature on this subject. All protocols and procedural guidelines produced for training purposes by those jurisdictions involved in this type of compliance monitoring activity highlight the importance of undertaking procedures for removing young people from the shop when health officials or other enforcement officers confront the shopkeepers with evidence of the sale.

What do young people think about these activities?

Anecdotal research and evidence from jurisdictions undertaking these activities have reported that young people are keen to be involved in these activities, view them as a learning

experience and that they have positive associations with the activities especially their exposure to the legal system and court room processes.

As well it has been reported that young people view compliance monitoring activities as a positive experience as it involves them in a health issue that directly affects them and that they are contributing in an important way to doing something about it.

Will this sort of activity generate negative publicity for the government?

There is no guarantee that the media will provide the type of coverage that will not reinforce many of these ethical and moral concerns. However, experience has shown that positive media and publicity coverage can be generated when efforts are made to educate and inform local media outlets about the community's support for this type of activity and to provide them with clear and accurate information about sales to minors issues. It is important therefore that reporters and local media contacts are provided with the information regarding:

- why compliance monitoring activities are necessary;
- the issues relating to youth smoking;
- how compliance monitoring works;
- how young people are recruited;
- the need for parental consent; and
- the questions that may be raised and provide the appropriate responses and information.

As well, the support of key stakeholders and community members for these activities is important and should be emphasised and promoted where possible to assist in countering opposition to these activities.

3. Prosecution

Research studies have found that there is a need for prosecutions to occur so that the retailers and the public can see that the law is being enforced. Prosecutions demonstrate that governments are serious about reducing illegal sales of tobacco to young people. As well, it is important that retailers have a negative perception of the consequences of not adhering to the law. Community surveys conducted in Australia have found high levels of community support for action to be taken when breaches of sales to minors legislation have been detected. Prosecutions should also be supported by other strategies such as the issuing of warning notices and providing education programs that target the judiciary system, retailers and the general community.

What is the role of warning notices?

Warning notices can be a useful tool for complementing compliance monitoring activities as they can explain to retailers why they are breaking the law and how they can avoid doing this in the future. Warning notices have been used in situations such as following a complaint by a member of the public, following an illegal sale observed by an authorised officer, or following routine compliance monitoring and enforcement procedures. They are usually signed by the appropriate authority and include the following information:

- specific details relating to the time, date and nature of the alleged breach;
- an explanation of the purpose of the warning notices and the consequences of continual non compliance with the legislation; and
- instructions for proper action in relation to correcting the alleged breach.

It is important that the warning letter is issued as soon as practicable following investigation of a public complaint or a test purchase where an illegal sale was made. Warning notices are also useful for providing evidence for a prosecution against a retail employer that previous breaches of the legislation have occurred.

What do you need for a successful prosecution?

There are a number of issues that must be addressed in order to prove that a retailer has illegally sold cigarettes to a minor. They are:

1. Proof of the age of Young Person. This must be provided to show that the young person who successfully purchased cigarettes was under 18 years of age. Acceptable forms of proof of age are a birth certificate or a statement provided by a parent in court.
2. Proof of the purchase. This must be provided in order to prove that the purchase occurred and that the seller was the person responsible for the sale. Proof that is required includes the packet of cigarettes bought, a receipt of the purchase if supplied and evidence of the young person involved.
3. Proof of the person who sold. It is important that the seller is identified as the person who sold the cigarettes to the young person. This can be addressed by having two young people work together in compliance monitoring activities and requires evidence being given by the young person in the court hearing.
4. Proof of the employer—company or individual. It is recommended that legislation should provide for the employer or license holder to be responsible for illegal sales of cigarettes conducted by employees of their business. It is therefore important that evidence is obtained that shows who the employer is and whether they are a company or an individual.

What resources are helpful?

In order to successfully prosecute a case a brief should be produced. This brief should contain evidence for the prosecution to present to the magistrate. Important inclusions in a brief are:

- references to previous court decisions concerning young people’s participation in compliance monitoring activities;
- information to explain that conducting test purchases in this way does not constitute entrapment; and
- information that explains that compliance monitoring activities do not involve young people in an illegal act or that it is an abuse of the process or that the young person is liable for ‘aiding and abetting’.

As well, successful prosecutions in Australia have also been assisted by the provision of policies and procedural guidelines to enforcement officers, training programs for enforcement officers and education programs involving judiciary officers. The specific information needed for a successful prosecution should be detailed in these guidelines as well as information for young people who have participated in compliance monitoring activities and who are required to go to court.

It has been found that young people benefit from practice sessions prior to having to testify in court such as being exposed to a courtroom, being involved in a mock court room hearing and instructed on how to give evidence

4. Training programs

Comprehensive sales to minors programs should include training programs for those officers responsible for the enforcement of the legislation. Training programs should be supported by other educational programs and information resources that aim to inform these officers and other key groups in the community about the issue, the legislation, specific issues relating to sales to minors programs, procedures for appropriate enforcement activities and for ensuring that immediate and appropriate action is taken when non-compliance is detected.

What are the key components of training programs?

Training programs should be designed to support those responsible for the enforcement of the legislation and to generate interest and enthusiasm for the issue in taking action. Training programs should seek to provide information and training that will equip enforcement officers with the necessary skills to appropriately and effectively investigate related offences and to undertake prosecutions when necessary.

A range of training programs and associated resources and information kits has been produced in Australia and New Zealand. These are listed in Appendix D of the National Approach package.

Key elements for training programs are:

- discussion and information about general issues and background regarding the need for programs to address young people’s access to tobacco;

- presentation of the health issues relating to smoking, the impact of smoking on young people health and the likelihood of progression to regular smoking behaviour;
- specific details of the sales to minors legislation;
- specific details about compliance monitoring activities, its rationale, procedures for recruitment and training and issues for young people;
- providing an understanding of the interview process involving someone who is believed to have committed an offence;
- providing sample interview questions to assist with undertaking investigations;
- information for undertaking prosecutions such as instructions for gathering evidence;
- training and instruction on court room procedures and behaviour; and
- information about previous prosecutions.

What information is necessary for gathering evidence?

Successful prosecutions are dependent on:

- the availability and presentation of evidence that support the prosecution to prove that an offence has taken place; and
- how the evidence is obtained.

It is important therefore that training programs provide information on the gathering of appropriate evidence and sample materials for the following activities:

- positioning of officers in order to observe the offence if practicable and/or possible;
- recording conversations between the seller/shop owner and the enforcement officer/s;
- interviewing the seller/shop owner;
- obtaining the necessary information for acquiring statements from the young person and the enforcement officer;
- providing an understanding of the sequence of action in terms of the request for a sale by the young person, the response of the seller, the purchase itself, the evidence of the purchase and the reporting to the supervising enforcement officer of the purchase;
- obtaining a signed photograph of the young person showing clearly who they are and evidence of their appearance at the time of the purchase;
- providing information such as warning letters about previous similar offences

committed by the seller/retailer.

How can training programs prepare officers for court?

Many officers are familiar with courtroom activities and processes. However, training programs should be offered to ensure that those who have not had involvement in court activities receive some instructions concerning the court process. Training programs should therefore include the following activities:

- introducing officers to the processes and proceedings of a court through a mock court;
- providing officers with an understanding of questions that may be asked, how to give evidence, cross-examination and re-examination;
- ensuring that witnesses have good notice of hearings, why they need to be present, assistance if required in their transport and presence at the court-room;
- providing officers with information regarding the mention date (when the defendant informs the court whether they intend to plead guilty or not guilty) and when their presence and involvement is required; and
- providing information and a brief for the prosecutor in order for them to prove the case against the defendant.

How else can sales to minors issues be integrated into the activities of other agencies?

States and Territories are encouraged to work with key agencies responsible for the enforcement of sales to minors legislation in identifying other opportunities and training programs whereby officers can be provided with key information and skills that will effectively assist them to enforce the law. Education and training programs for police cadets and environmental health officers programs, health worker seminar programs and local government education and training programs should be targeted. In this way the issue and responsibility for addressing illegal sales to young people is considered an important component of the training and staff development programs of agencies and personnel involved in enforcing sales to minors programs. As well, officers are provided with opportunities for updating their knowledge and understanding of the issue, their role in addressing the issue and are provided with feedback on their activities and successes achieved.

What resources are needed for training program managers?

Jurisdictions planning on undertaking the development and implementation of training programs for enforcement officers should be aware of the range of existing training resource manuals and information packs currently available within Australia and New Zealand. A list of training resources provided in Australia are listed in Appendix D. As well training program resources should include resources that detail the processes and procedures for recruiting and training young people for compliance monitoring activities.

It is important that resources produced provide samples of letters, questions for investigating reported offences, examples of questions and responses for interviewing suspected offenders, check lists for the collection and compilation of evidence and requirements for court appearances.

As well, program managers should ensure that enforcement agencies and other key groups in the community are updated regularly regarding details of new developments, legislative amendments, new training program initiatives and current prosecutions and recent outcomes.

5. Education programs

For legislation to be effective in terms of reducing illegal cigarette sales to minors it is important that retailers have a good understanding of the law, have a favourable attitude towards it and a perception of the negative consequences associated with failure to adhere to it. In Australia, it has been found that despite positive attitudes towards sales to minors legislation by retailers, there has been a general perception of low enforceability of the legislation, low perceived compliance by other retailers with the legislation and low likelihood of enforcement or prosecution for breaches of the legislation. As well, it is important that legislative programs have the support and involvement of the general community to ensure effective enforcement and adherence to the law. Strategies that address the demand for cigarettes by young people will be undermined if there is unlimited access to cigarettes and if there is complacency within the community and among retailers in relation to the sale of cigarettes to young people.

Comprehensive programs that involve the collaboration and support of retailers, the community, schools, enforcement agencies and the media are needed in order to reduce the sale and supply of cigarettes to young people.

Education programs should therefore target a range of persons and organisations in the community. They are:

1. Retailers who sell tobacco products

Studies in Australia and overseas have demonstrated the importance of targeting retailers with information about sales to minors legislation, the importance of restricting young people's access to tobacco products and their requirements in terms of complying with the legislation.

Education programs should provide retailers with clear information for ensuring that their employees are aware of the laws, have an understanding of them and what specific actions they should take if a request for a purchase is made by a minor and for the appropriate display of warning signs on shop premises. Owing to the high proportion of non-English speaking background retailers in some areas of Australia, education programs should include translated information. Education programs should include instructions for employees concerning making requests for proof of age and for viewing recommended documentation when the age of the person is unclear.

As well, education programs should include information for retailers regarding impending compliance monitoring activities, the outcome of these activities and prosecutions in their area.

2. Community members and groups

Research has also highlighted the need for community support for programs to reduce illegal sales of tobacco to young people. Community attitudes towards the sale and supply of tobacco to young people will impact on retailers' actions in terms of responding to a minor seeking to purchase cigarettes. Studies conducted in Australia have found very strong community support for programs to restrict the sale of cigarettes to young people.

It is important that the community is aware of the actions of the government in terms of addressing the illegal sale and supply of tobacco to young people. As well, in order for the community to play an active role in addressing the issue locally they need to have information about:

- the level of young people's access to tobacco in their area;
- issues relating to the supply of cigarettes from non-retail sources such as family members, relatives and friends;
- an understanding of the legislation;
- an understanding of the issues relating to the participation of young people in compliance monitoring activities;
- who the responsible enforcement agencies are;
- how to report breaches; and
- what other action they can take.

Key groups in the community include schools, parent and friends organisations, local youth agencies and organisations, church groups and community centres.

3. Young people

Education programs that target children and young people should be undertaken both within the school and the general community. These programs are important as they provide young people with information about existing laws regarding the sale and supply of cigarettes to minors, tobacco control and public health issues and information on how to report breaches of the law and support enforcement strategies.

4. Key members of the judiciary system

Education programs should provide information for magistrates and prosecutors to ensure that they have a good understanding of public health issues relating to young people and smoking, youth access issues, compliance and monitoring practices and the community's attitude and support for effective enforcement of sales to minors legislative programs. Experience in Australia has shown that efforts in this area have contributed to successful prosecutions in many cases and in particular they have proven useful for ensuring an understanding of the legal position of involving young people in compliance monitoring activities.

What are examples of education strategies?

Most States and Territories have adopted comprehensive education and information programs that have utilised a range of resources and tools. These are detailed in Appendix A of the National Approach package.

The following are examples of education resources and strategies used in Australia in sales to minors programs.

- Pamphlets and stickers for shops specifying the law and that proof of age will be asked if a person suspected of being a minor attempts to purchase cigarettes. These are provided to retailers through local visits and inspections by enforcement officers and health workers.
- Articles in newsletters for retailers.
- Television, radio and print advertising which aims to raise awareness of the legislation, the consequences of selling or supplying cigarettes to minors and the actions that can be taken by members of the public.
- Letters to retailers.
- Letters and information for school newsletters.
- Inclusion of specific information and classroom activities in school tobacco teaching resources.
- Information sessions, forums and kits for community members and groups.
- Pamphlets and verbal briefings for key magistrates and other members of the judiciary system.

What are important considerations for the development of education programs and resources?

Education programs provide an opportunity to inform a range of community members about the issue, the legislation and the action they should take. However, program managers should be aware of the specific needs of the range of community members in terms of their understanding and acceptance of the information. Therefore it is important that efforts are made to examine and discuss the specific resource needs of different groups in the community and to ensure that the information and programs are packaged in such a way that they will be read, listened to and understood. This can be achieved by focus testing advertising materials and information resources with the relevant target groups.

Issues to be aware of include:

- language and terminology used in written and audio/visual materials;
- appropriately portraying characters representing community members in resources being produced including television materials, written materials and audio resources;
- providing materials in translated formats; and
- examining effective dissemination strategies.

It is therefore important that key stakeholders and members of the general community are involved in the development and implementation of education programs and the information resources produced for these programs. These include:

- retailer organisations;
- young people;
- parent groups;
- schools;
- environmental health officers;
- police;
- health workers; and
- the general public.

What is the role of publicity in education programs?

A number of successful sales to minors programs in Australia have effectively utilised the media for regular coverage and discussion about key issues relating to the sale and supply of cigarettes to young people. Publicising information about local access issues and statistics, impending compliance monitoring activities and the consequences of retailers being caught selling cigarettes to minors has effectively deterred many retail outlets from breaching the law. As well, effective publicity strategies will promote the issue and program activities locally to key groups in the community including health workers, local enforcement officers, local retailers and the general community and assist in harnessing their support for the program and action being taken.

Local program managers are encouraged to develop strategies that ensure regular publicity is an important component of all their activities.

Strategies that have been used include:

- local media coverage through newspapers, television and radio as a result of the dissemination of media releases;
- the placement of articles in newspapers that specifically target key groups in the community including non-English speaking background community newspapers;
- the involvement of local news and current affairs programs in stories on youth access issues and the involvement of young people in compliance monitoring activities and related issues; and
- direct mail to community groups and retailer organisations.

6. Community action and advocacy

Why is community support and involvement important in reducing young people's access to tobacco?

It is important to obtain community support for local initiatives that seek to reduce young people's access to tobacco in order to impact on the perceptions of retailers in terms of adhering to the law. As well, the efforts of the enforcement agencies will be adversely affected if the community does not support their activities.

Community action provides an opportunity to reach and involve key groups in the community including leading community figures, non-English speaking background community leaders and those representing disadvantaged groups. The support and involvement of key groups and individuals is important for ensuring that:

- a commitment is given to the program's activities;
- assistance will be provided to the program in areas such as preparing information appropriately for community members, disseminating information and resources and providing appropriate supportive comments to the media; and
- the community's interest and involvement in the issue is encouraged and maintained.

There are programs conducted in States and Territories that are designed to provide local project workers and community officers with the skills necessary for designing and developing community action strategies and encouraging appropriate advocacy programs in the local community.

What strategies have been used in Australia?

A number of community action approaches have been used successfully in Australia. These include:

- Community Action Committees developed with the purpose of undertaking specific tasks within the community that aim to address young people's access to tobacco. Representatives may include local health services, police, councils, parent and friends associations, schools, non-Government organisations, retailers, and young people. Tasks may include conducting a congratulatory scheme for those retailers not selling to minors, assisting the program's information strategy in terms of disseminating resources and information, encouraging positive media coverage and visiting local retailers.
- Community Action Forums have been undertaken by some jurisdictions with the purpose of presenting the issue to the local community and to provide community members and groups with information about the law, compliance monitoring activities and practical advice about reducing young people's access to tobacco. However, reports from some of these areas has indicated that the effort required for organising such a strategy has not been rewarded in terms of attendance and participation.
- Community Information Networks have been shown to be effective strategies for ensuring information is disseminated locally to key groups and for raising the awareness of community members of the importance of the issue of young people and tobacco use. It ensures that local action is publicised and that information is edited to suit the readership of different groups in the community.

How important is publicity in community action strategies?

The media is a key resource for influencing the community and key community members and enlisting their support and involvement in the program. Publicity activities are an important component of community action strategies as they ensure the promotion of leading community members in the issue, localise the problem and promote the involvement of community groups in local strategies and action.

Key components of publicity strategies are:

- publicising the issue and making it relevant to the local community. This can be achieved by including local information about non-compliance, local statistics and youth smoking rates;
- publicising the partnerships formed in the community and the importance of these partnerships;
- publicising the activities of the local action groups and committees formed.

As well, it is important that local media releases and stories are forwarded to key community members such as politicians in order to inform them about the issue in their local community and to provide information regarding the sales to minors program.

7. Evaluation

Sales to minors programs are only one component of a comprehensive approach to reducing youth smoking. Limiting access alone is unlikely to reduce smoking prevalence among young people. The implementation of mutually supportive interventions that target both the demand and supply for tobacco products by young people are needed to reduce tobacco use. The 1994 Report of the US Surgeon General *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People* identified the following components for a comprehensive strategy to reduce tobacco use among young people:

- enforcement of minors' access laws—to reduce the availability of tobacco to young people;
- tobacco tax increases—to influence the real price of tobacco, as young people are particularly sensitive to price changes;
- youth oriented mass media campaigns; and
- School based education programs—to inform young people about the facts and the health risks relating to tobacco use.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the range of strategies employed for the purpose of reducing youth smoking rates is a critical long-term outcome.

What are important indicators for measuring the achievements of the program?

The effectiveness of comprehensive sales to minors programs should be evaluated against both immediate and long-term goals. Important indicators of the achievements of the goals of these programs are:

1. Regular measurements of:
 - youth smoking rates;
 - youth access to tobacco products through illegal tobacco sales and supply;
 - the sources of cigarettes supplied to young people;
 - the number of cigarettes smoked; and
 - the number of sales through vending machines.

2. Regularly monitoring the illegal selling rates of tobacco to young people.
3. Assessing the opinions of retailers, young people and the general community about specific issues.

How important are process measures?

The effectiveness of specific interventions of the sales to minors program should be assessed in order to track the influence they have on the overall program and to assess the successes of the program in meeting specific objectives. It is important that pre and post measures are recorded and any changes noted.

Process evaluation activities of sales to minors programs undertaken in Australia have included measurements of the:

- number of prosecutions;
- number of compliance checks undertaken by enforcement agencies;
- number of training programs conducted;
- number of resources produced and disseminated;
- impact and reach of the resource materials;
- usage of resources and education programs by schools, retailers and community groups;
- level of publicity coverage; and
- involvement of the public in local community action strategies.

What role can the Australian School Students' Alcohol and Drugs Survey (ASSAD) play in evaluating sales to minors programs?

The Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer conducts regular surveys of school students from all Australian States and Territories in Years 7–12. These surveys are conducted every three years and they provide an opportunity to monitor a number of issues, behaviours and attitudes relating to the use of and access to tobacco products.

Information is provided to each State and Territory for the purpose of informing them of current trends and levels of smoking behaviour of students in their jurisdiction. As well, information is provided concerning students' access to tobacco products within each jurisdiction, and other related information such as sources of purchase, other sources of supply, the sale and supply of single cigarettes and access to cigarettes from vending machines.

States and Territories can negotiate with the evaluation team responsible for administering the ASSAD for including questions relating to specific program areas such as sales to minors programs and for expanding the number of students involved in the survey.

What other key evaluation tools have been used for measuring the effectiveness of a sales to minors program?

A range of evaluation tools have been used in Australia for measuring the impact of sales to minors programs, assessing community opinions about specific issues and monitoring retailers' compliance with the law.

1. Representative population surveys

These provide a useful measurement of the public's opinion about specific issues such as the inclusion of mandatory checking proof of age in legislative programs, the imposition of penalties on retailers who break the law, the allocation of government spending on revenue from illegal tobacco sales to young people and the use of young people in compliance monitoring activities.

2. Regular compliance monitoring surveys

These surveys are viewed as the best available measurement of the illegal sales rate of tobacco to young people. It is recommended that monitoring illegal sales should occur at least once or twice a year and form an integral part of all sales to minors programs. Australian and international evidence suggests that illegal selling rates tend to rise again over time, once time limited interventions are concluded. In New South Wales it has been recommended that 10 per cent of retailers randomly selected in a local area should form the sample for these surveys. This also assists in the formation of an effective database of local retailers.

A manual has been produced by the New South Wales Department of Health which outlines the policies and procedures for compliance monitoring activities and it is listed in Appendix D.

3. Compliance monitoring and process measures for measuring specific program interventions

Evaluation programs incorporating a number of evaluation tools have been used to measure specific sales to minors interventions. These programs provide managers with information on the immediate and short-term impact of an intervention. As well, many evaluation programs have been designed to include control sample/s to assess the impact of pilot studies conducted in local areas.

Evaluation strategies for measuring the impact of specific interventions have included:

- Compliance monitoring surveys to measure the rate of sales to young people prior to, during and following the period of the intervention;
- Public opinion surveys to measure the attitudes of the community regarding specific issues of sales to minors programs prior to and following the period of intervention;
- Surveys of retailers, young people and the general community following a communication intervention to measure the recall of advertising messages relating to the sale of cigarettes to children, the purpose of the advertising message and the impact of the advertising program on the intentions of the target groups; and

- Various process measures undertaken following the intervention that provide information on specific components of the program such as the measurement of media coverage, industry activity, reach and impact of resources produced and reach and impact of training and education programs.

4. Evaluation of the program's implementation

This will assist in determining the success of implementation strategy, the efficacy of the program, the identification of any problems with the program and recommendations should be developed for providing improvements to the overall program.

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