

Background

The project, *Your Mental Health and Alcohol: Managing the Mix*, was a government – general practice – community partnership.

It was developed by ADGP and funded by the AER Foundation, with additional funding from DoHA and DVA.

Managing the Mix aimed to implement initiatives to improve the knowledge, skills and capacity of the general practice sector in the prevention and management of comorbid alcohol misuse and high prevalence mental health problems.

The project was officially launched in November 2004, with division work concluding in April 2006.

Nineteen local projects were delivered, comprising a mixture of solo divisions and consortia projects involving up to four divisions. In total, 33 divisions participated, covering diverse regions from inner city metropolitan to expansive remote regions.

At a national level, ADGP coordinated activities such as developing resources and approved education and training, evaluating and promoting the project, and developing this Resource Kit.

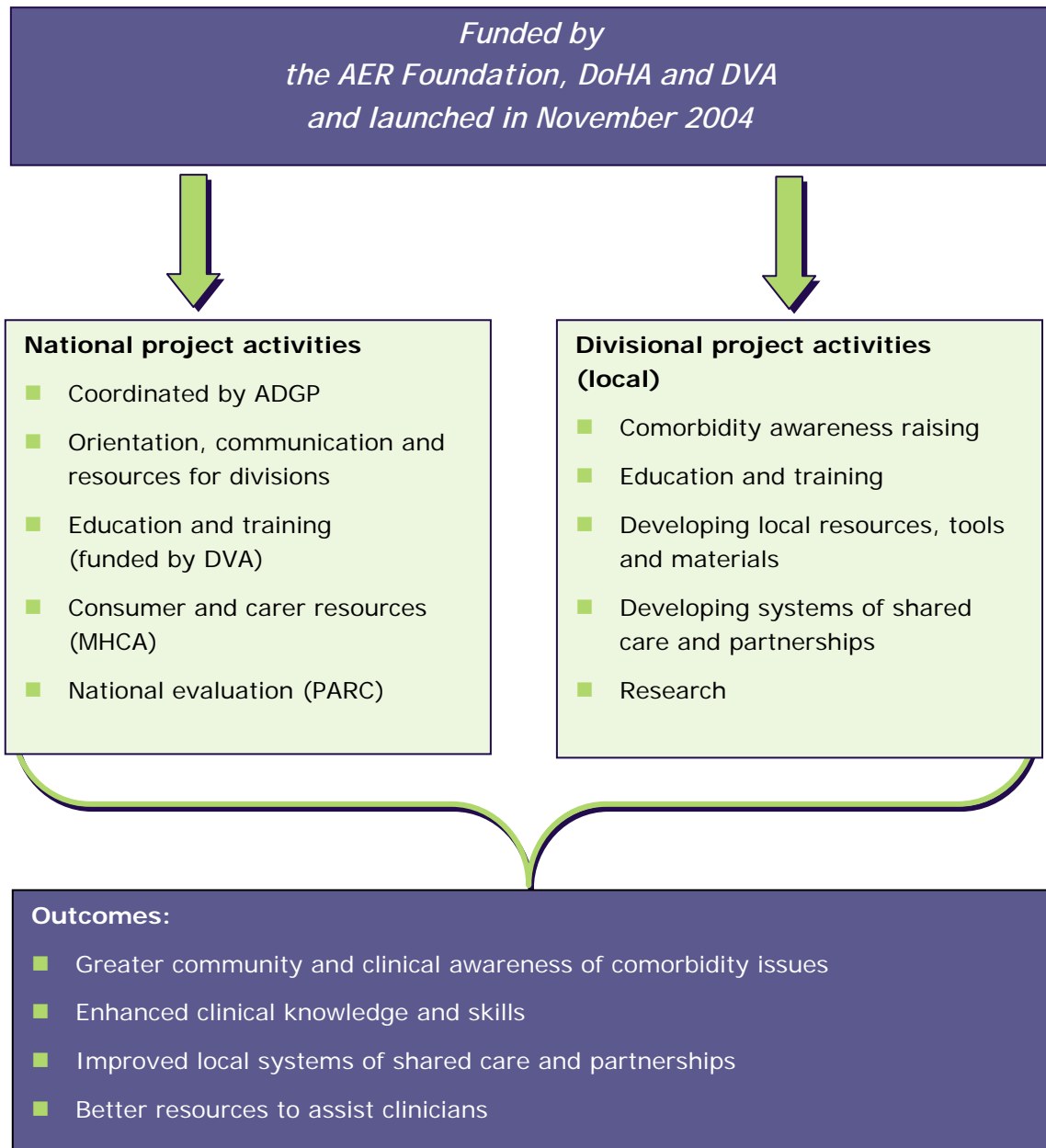
Through the course of the project and in this Resource Kit the term 'comorbidity' refers to co-existing mental health and substance misuse problems. In the context of this project, 'comorbidity' refers to common mental health problems (such as depression and anxiety), co-existing with alcohol misuse in particular.

While general practitioners were the focus of the project, *Managing the Mix* involved partnership initiatives with a range of other professions and health care providers, including the allied health, alcohol and drug agencies and mental health services.

Managing the Mix is linked to key government policy initiatives, health priorities and programs including:

- Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care program (BOiMH)
- National Comorbidity Initiative
- National Alcohol Strategy (NAS).

Snapshot



Objectives

- 1 Raise awareness of the burden of disease associated with alcohol misuse and common mental health comorbidities.

- 2 Improve the knowledge, skills and capacity of the general practice sector in the prevention and management of these comorbidities.

- 3 Build a critical mass of GPs and practice staff competent in the prevention, management and referral of alcohol and mental health comorbidities.

- 4 Enhance the range of resources and tools for the prevention and treatment of comorbidity within the general practice setting.

- 5 Improve local coordination, infrastructure and systems for shared care for patients with these conditions.

- 6 Support GPs and divisions to provide resources to consumers and carers.

Components

Managing the Mix program of work

Managing the Mix sought to improve the position of GPs and their capacity to better treat people with comorbid alcohol and mental health problems.

The Managing the Mix program of work therefore included:

- developing education and training aimed at enhancing skills and confidence

- providing opportunities for GPs to access incentive payments upon completion of patient review under the BOiMH three-step process through its direct link to the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care program

- building local relationships between GPs, other agencies and professionals to provide more opportunities for shared care, joint working, and greater knowledge of referral pathways and options for support

- developing strategies to increase GPs' awareness of alcohol issues, and to normalise the notion of screening alcohol use

- developing consumer and carer resources and local health promotion activities that enhanced community understanding of comorbidity. This, in turn, encouraged people to present to doctors where people may have had concerns.
