



What is the ice problem?

What impact does ice have on individuals and the community?

The use of ice has psychological and medical consequences for users, disrupts families and communities, is linked to violence and property crime, and damages the environment.

Ice users are at increased risk of a range of health-related harms, most notably psychosis and mental illness. Long-term use can result in memory loss, aggression and increased risk of stroke and heart failure. As a consequence ice use places a long term burden on the health care system.

In 2013, 8.3% of the population had been a victim of an illicit drug-related incident such as verbal and physical abuse.

The manufacturing of ice produces hazardous waste that poses immediate risks to partners and children of ice users and manufacturers, local residents and emergency personnel.

How common is the use of ice?

In 2013, the use of methylamphetamine was reported at 2.1% of the population. The reported use of ice by methylamphetamine users

has more than doubled – from 22% in 2010 to 50% in 2013.

Not only are more methylamphetamine users using ice, but they are also using it more frequently. In 2010, 9.3% of methylamphetamine users took ice daily or weekly – by 2013 that number increased to 15.5%.

Why is ice a growing issue in Australia?

Ice is usually the most pure form of methylamphetamine and the purity of methamphetamine has tripled in some jurisdictions since 2010.

Australian illicit drug users pay a premium price for most illicit drugs compared to prices in key foreign markets. This makes Australia an attractive marketplace for the manufacture and importation of ice.

Like other forms of methylamphetamine, the ice market is unique among Australian illicit drug markets because there is significant domestic manufacture and importation of the drug. More than 60% of Australia's most significant organised criminal groups are involved in the methylamphetamine market.

What is 'ice'?

Methylamphetamines is a term used to identify a group of powerful stimulant drugs that include speed, base and crystal also known as 'ice', with ice usually the purest form.

Ice can cause psychosis and long term psychological issues and is linked to violent criminal attacks against innocent bystanders, risk taking behaviour, road deaths, robberies and vicious assaults against frontline health workers and law enforcement responders.

There appears to be an increase in the availability and use of methylamphetamine, in particular ice, in areas where the drug has not been previously prevalent – particularly regional, rural and disadvantaged communities.

Law enforcement efforts indicate that the problem is only getting worse. Global seizures of methylamphetamine have grown each year since 2010. From 2011 to 2012, the weight of methylamphetamine seized by law enforcement increased by 15% to 144 tonnes. As the proceeds of the ice market continue to rise, the problem will continue to grow.