

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014**

**Ref No:** SQ14-001240

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** National Drug Strategy Household Survey

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Xenophon, Nick

**Question:**

In the Budget Estimates, I asked questions around the 2013 UN World Drug Report which found that drug use in Australia is rising or already at high levels in several areas, including the use of cocaine, cannabis, amphetamine-type stimulants (or ATS) and new psychoactive substances (NPS). I was advised that the 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey indicated that the overall use of illicit drugs including misuse of pharmaceuticals was “stable”. What percentage of use is considered as “stable”? What percentages would be considered as “high” in the Survey?

**Answer:**

- a) The stability of the prevalence of illicit drug use in Australia as reported in the 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey refers to evidence of change over time rather than a specific percentage. There was no statistically significant change in the proportion of people aged 14 years and older using illicit drugs in the 12 months prior to survey between 2010 and 2013.
- b) The Department of Health does not determine threshold ratings for low, medium or high prevalence of illicit drug use. In the 2013 United Nations World Drug Report, illicit drug prevalence is assessed as ‘high’ across several high-income countries relative to global averages.