

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014

Ref No: SQ14-001242

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Methyl Amphetamine Use

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Xenophon, Nick

Question:

How does the Department respond to comments by acting ACC head Paul Jevtovic who described crystal meth as a “national concern” and likened it to the crack cocaine scourge in the US in the 1980s? Does the Department consider methyl amphetamine use as “stable”?

Answer:

Amongst those who used meth/amphetamine there was an increase in the use of ice (or crystal methamphetamine) from 22% in 2010 to 50% in 2013.

Available national data from the 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) indicates that the proportion of all people aged 14 years or older who used meth/amphetamine in the last 12-months has remained at 2.1 per cent between 2010 and 2013, having declined gradually since 1998 (Source: 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, AIHW 2014).

People also used meth/amphetamines more frequently in 2013, with 25.3% of ice users taking it daily or weekly compared with 12.4% in 2010.

The AIHW’s annual Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Service National Minimum Data Set (AODTS-NMDS) has reported that alcohol remains the principal drug of concern for seeking treatment, but the proportion of treatment episodes for amphetamines increased from 7% in 2009-10 to 14% in 2012-13. In 2012-13 around 108,000 clients received about 162,400 treatment episodes, representing a 6% increase in treatment episodes since 2010-12.