

name: pat

message: Hi Steve

I wanted to add my perspective to the synthetic drug inquiry.

I have used a wide variety of recreational drugs in Brisbane during the last ten years. Currently i still like to use MDMA and LSD on occasion, however I have used speed (meth and base) many times in the past.

I always test my pills using the old reagent tests available in shops. I have never had a pill that was not typical of a MDxx type experience, because i have never eaten a pill that didn't test up. This must be hundreds of times, so I would say that the assertion that pills are often 'cut' - meaning they contain a mixture of speed/k/mdxx (because the reagent will react positively even if MDxx is not the only substance present) is not consistent with my experience.

Also, the days of wet bad smelling 'base' are over. its all Crystal here now. I haven't seen base in years, so i'd say the restrictions on over the counter cold medicine are driving people to concentrate on importing meth from china and canada.

LSD is starting to make a comeback. Quality is returning to late 90's standards and its widely available. I am surprised that its not more widespread however, and i notice there is a fear about it from people a little younger than myself who seemed to miss the period where it was really popular. Its funny because its the same people who go out every weekend and eat 7 + pills in a night, but they fear the acid will make them crazy. In addition it's the smugglers dream - are you aware that a gram of pure lsd crystal will set you back \$50 000, and mess up 20 000 people? You could walk through customs with a gram of anything pretty damn easy i would suspect.

Crystal meth and pills are the easiest drugs to source, there are never times when you can't get them - even pot is seasonal here to some degree, so the market is pretty well sewn up in that respect. After that enormous pill bust last year there was no hiccup in supply, no increase in prices. For a country of 20 million people that is unbelievable. Pills here are now cheaper than ever before, \$20 per unit for 50+ i'm told, and guaranteed good or money back. That is the difference, before the people that were selling them at that price were usually passing off duds or speed/k bombs.

Anyway, I found it interesting that despite having the some of the highest prices and stiffest penalties for MDMA, we lead the world in usage. After 40 years this is the best result they can get for prohibition? Do people realise that in some places in the world - spain, holland etc you would never get in trouble, ever, for eating some pills on a night out, yet here we could be subjected to public searches! and we still eat more.....

Anyway, good luck trying to expose their blatant hypocrisy by not consulting those most affected by their failed and corrupt policies, and please excuse my poor spelling.

name: lachlan

message: in regards to the senate inquiry thing on manufactured drugs, i would love my opinion to be passed on..

i am an infrequent user, but i know people who use on a much more frequent basis, and amongst these groups it seems to me that there is little fear of what damage drugs will do. Most are aware of the dangers but claim either that they 'don't care' or simply that 'some people can handle it and others can't'. They use these drugs because they don't see any real reason not to.

Amphetamines and 'party drugs' are the ultimate hedonistic activity, used in order to ensure a good time. They are an escape from the mundane reality of real life, and especially the day to day monotony of the generally banal positions of employment young people occupy.

While these drugs have a huge stigma amongst mainstream society, for the vast majority of environments that stimulants are used there is no stigma at all. What has been created for both sides is an 'us and them' dynamic, whereby mainstream society perceives drug users as the degenerates in the government ad campaigns, and the users themselves scoff at these portrayals.

While there may be people that are not functional within society because of their habits, this is most certainly not true of the vast majority; and even less true of the users young people encounter, people that form the happy example of drug takers in the minds of potential new users.

Part of the us and them dynamic stems from the duality of what is experienced firsthand: happy users; and the mainstream stereotype: the degenerate. The vast majority of people in clubs are only weekend users, and eventually grow out of their habits without ever really becoming heavy users. The heavier (problem) users are generally less social and are not experienced firsthand.

This duality needs to be combated through a more acceptant, less judgemental education. For example, if people never come into contact with someone whose brain has been 'burnt out', then let one of these people spread the word in schools. Let them spread the word of why they used, why they didn't stop, and what effect drugs have had on their life.

There needs to be a perception of the law as understanding and trying to help, rather than an unnecessary restriction of liberty. The key to this is in not merely providing the reasons against, but also the positive side. People will find out why people use drugs one way or another, it may as well be from a controlled source.

I don't have a problem with occasional users (i only take pills maybe 2 times a year, i am just lucky enough not to have got addicted) in fact i think to a certain extent psychotropic substances can help people understand, or at least acquiesce with their lot in life. If someone needs a release, then i think it is fair enough to give it to them, the problem is when their life becomes a continuous 'release' in the form of an, even weekly, addiction.

Harsher penalties for users will do nothing to deter them, and will only exacerbate the us and them dynamic. Increased prices might somewhat deter, but only in the direction of cheaper, more dangerous drugs. People must not just hear stories of how drugs are bad, they must understand the drugs and what is actually happening, as well as experience firsthand what drugs can do.

name: Phil

message: I'm not a user of synthetic drugs, but i have numerous friends who do use on arecreational and habitual basis. The reason i don't use is because my medical/science degree has taught me a lot about the affects of these and other drugs. However, the education that is aimed at drug users is comical. It is patronising and unrealistic. More often than not my mates come home safely and none of them are addicted to the point it has irreversably damaged their lives. The ad campaigns could be compared to walking down the street in sydney (sober): you could get hit by a car, and it could have devastating affects, but more often than not you will be fine. Relevant, hard hitting yet informative information needs to be targeted at the potential users. Tough laws would not deter any of my mates from using. Those who have stopped have not stopped form persuasion from any government intervention.

name: Bob

message: Hi, I would like to contribute to the synthetic drugs forum. I am a professional person of 32 years age. In my early twenties I took a fair amount of synthetic drugs in the uk. I have found no long term effects whatsoever. I took them because it was fun. I still take them occasionally but I basically grew out of the habit.

My drug of choice was mainly eccstasy. I would really have appreciated testing facilities in venues. When in Amsterdam I used them. I think it is not a good idea to lump all synthetic drugs together. Speed, Ice & GHB are far worse than pills or Acid which I have never had any bad experiences and amongst my friends bad experiences were rare.

Regards

name: IAIN

message: Heard the prog. on drugs yesterday (Fri. 5th) The focus should be changed from a crime issue to a health issue. Educate the punters about the dangers of substances and you will get a better result. It then becomes a personal choice with the consequences somewhat known. Continuing with the focus as a crime issue wastes resources. Has the US curbed Columbian cocaine importation? There would of course still be in place, laws for bulk importation, but lesser amounts for personal use has seen positive effects where it has been put into use. For example, a drop in B&E crimes. I'm not sure that I'm 100% in favour of testing party drugs on site. There would have to be a valid argument apart from the obvious. Or to put it another way, it must be finely tuned.

name: Joanne

message: Sorry, I couldn't find where I write comments about the INQUIRY INTO SYNTHETIC DRUG USE that was broadcast on the hack segment on Friday 5 May 2006.

Firstly, I wish to make a few comments on MOTIVATION for taking synthetic substances such as pills, speed & cocaine - most people including myself find that these types of drugs tend to give you a feeling of being in control, relaxed, happy, content & confident about yourself and your environment, you tend to feel removed from insecurities and concerns that may ordinarily contribute to your day to day living, so these types of substances tend to be used as an escapism from reality albeit that most people wont acknowledge that. People generally feel they have a better time on these drugs because of the confidence and control they seemingly give you as opposed to such things as alcohol. Generally aggression and other negative emotions are not experienced when using these substances and that always alleviates tension or bad experiences. As such, these experiences tend to be a motivating factor when people want to go out and have a good time. One issue with this is that use !

tends to escalate after the first good experience and after some time, people believe that they don't have a good time without taking these substances. Another point I'd like to mention is that most people are unaware of the long term affects of substance abuse and because not much reasearch has been done to substantiate long term affects based on usage, most people are ignorant to the fact that this could harm their future in anyway. Most people also have a tendency to believe that they will grow out of it but whilst they are young and want to have a good time, they will continue to use it - people do not honestly believe that they will be using such substances when they are older, so they are ignorant to any potential health issues that may be a result of using synthetic substances. A further point is that campaigns and laws to deter use are relatively ineffective, people believe what they want to believe and they feel removed from campaigns - they dont represent them -!

and laws do not represent harm to society - people using these substances are generally good citizens and do not harm society whilst on these substances unlike aggressive and distrctive behaviour often associated with alcohol abuse or theft which seemingly tends to be associated with heroin junkies. Most people who use the drugs above are normal, functioning citizens so this tends to send the message to the majority of the population that using these types of substances do not effect your way of life. For some, comparisons are drawn between drinking alcohol or taking drugs when going out for a good time. For me, drinking too much alcohol actually makes me feel relatively sick whereas I tend to control the use of pills and coke better. Hangovers and the come down on pills are similar but for me, the come down from pills is more comfortable than the sickly feeling of alcohol. The difference lies in the fact that the real come down from pills does not hit until a couple of days later when the drug leaves your system whereas the effects from!

alcohol tend to be more short term. Campaigns might be more effective if they looked at painting a story about the manufacture of these substances and the way dealers 'cut' and/or possibly rip off consumers, consumers may be more discerning about using these substances when they are aware about what is in them and what they are paying for.

So thats my ten cents worth. I hope some of this might help with the enquiry.

name: Please do not provide my details

I hope it is not too late to give some input on yesterdays program? Firstly it was fantastic, thank you triple j and to the senator just to know that this is happening is such a great thing. What I would like to add is from my experience with these drugs like many said I used recreationally in my early twenties and grew out of it. The people I did know that had problems were kids I went to school with that played up, were always in trouble etc. One of the main problems was that they were young, stupid and wanted to impress their peers and like a lot of things people do when they are a teenager they did drugs because they were bad and not allowed, they wanted to rebell. My high school was not very good and I can only talk from my personal experience but if there were programs in place to focus on at risk kids and the removal of the 'its wrong because I said so' mentality I believe there would have been a better chance for these children. Instead they were continuously suspended until they dropped out of high school and became hard users.

Another thing is(that may already be happening) is working with and using the input of people that work in the field of drug rehabilitation. Finally also by going into the rave scene itself and talking to people that use drugs, see what it is about, having a better understanding will only lead to better policy.

I really wanted to participate but I have a slight accent from working overseas and my voice is recognisable.

I think the main point you should try to get across at the conference is this; Why are the victims from the war on drugs less tragic than the victims of drugs? People seem to think that the drug war is being waged with the goal of eliminating drugs through supply reduction, and one day some amazing technology will be developed that will identify all users for punishment.....and I hope it will, because that very day the war is over. When rich peoples' kids start fronting up to court, when lawyers and teachers and respectable people are being dragged from their homes like the poor scumbags they usually catch (sit in your local magistrates for 3 hours and you'll see what I mean), people will no longer support it, because they'll see it for what it really is.

The war on drugs is waged to send a message that some drugs are worse than others, and to push the most unfortunate people in society towards the legal alternatives. That is all, even if there was some new technology it wouldn't be used, because it would highlight for everyone to see the pointlessness of it all. What difference is it if I get up every morning and head to the bottle shop for 4litres of wine, and be back before close for another one, or if I get up and inject my cock with half a gram of meth? Well the difference to me is purely surface- Im an addict, I am dying, but the difference to society is huge - one way I'm left alone to kill myself, the other, people are employed full time to find me and stop me, and if they do they'll invest thousands of dollars to charge, try and possibly incarcerate me. Why? to send a message that no-one listens to.

Sit in mags court for half a day, then come back and tell me its a good idea to throw all those people in gaol, how its going to help them, and ultimately everyone by sending such a stern message.

name: Lauren

message: Hi,

I just wanted to add a comment to the discussion concerning synthetic drug use. I used to use ecstasy and speed on occasion, recreationally, from about 18 years of age until maybe a year ago (I'm almost 26). The last few experiences made me consciously weigh up the benefits of using these drugs and whether it was worth the come down. I would become quite depressed and often contemplated hurting myself which is completely against character! I have no moral problems with other people using but I definitely think there should be more education and awareness about the facts of drug use and how the chemicals affect your body and how this may subsequently affect other aspects such as your mental health (obviously!). I don't believe harsher penalties should apply to those who choose to pop pills for fun, and I don't think we should socially demonise drug users. This is not constructive. Use education rather than scare tactics (the facts are often scary enough!), lay out the facts ! and let people decide for themselves. Thanks

name: Nathan

message: Just responding to the senate inquiry relating to illegal drug use. Wow, what a powerful topic. This afternoons hack program was one of the best. So much to say on this subject but I will stick to one point. In all my years of drinking alcohol I have seen the destructive nature of this drug. It is socially excepted and can be easily taxed. But every time me and my friends have been involved in an altercation 9/10 times it is because somebody is intoxicated with alcohol. I have used pills and meth for over 5 years on a recreational basis and have not seen any bad effects. I am a far more law abiding citizen on these recreational drugs than I ever would be while I am on the grog. I know which person is going to behave better, be more sociable and look after their friends better when they are taking a drug and that is always going to be a recreational drug user compared to somebody intoxicated with alcohol. Now that might seem like abit of a cop out to alcohol but it is !

the truth. I don't think that stiffer laws will curb illegal drug use, it will just push it further underground. It certainly would not deter me and my friends any more than it does now. If recreational drugs could be easily taxed would they too be as easy to buy as alcohol and smokes which bring millions in taxes to the goverment every year, but also kill millions because of the health problems that come with these "socialy acceptable and legal drugs". It is time that the people making the decisions at the top experince what is happening at the bottom. The old message that "Drugs Kill" just doesn't hold water any more.

Hello, Thanks to all the hack team for all the great topics and discussions you come up with.

Please forward these comments to the appropriate person in relation to your show on fri 5th may.
I trust my email details will not be forwarded on as well.....thankyou.

To whom it may concern,

Just a suggestion about the topic of pill testing.

Please have a look at the web site www.pillreports.com

I am 29 and have used mdma tablets for several years.

The quality of pills in terms of overall mdma content has slid dramatically in the past few years and i use this web site to help determine the quality of a pill before i take it. This is the best web site i have found in relation to pill testing and documenting these findings.

If you were to create a similar web site that only documented the findings of approved testers or your own testers that documented the pills including.....

-quality photo

-colour

-symbol

-size

-shape...ie rounded edges, sharp edged, bevel line or no bevel line

-hard to break up, easy to break up.....ie quality of actual production

-actual contents of pill and % of each substance

etc etcas much detail as absolutely possible.

You could have a warning page when you first enter the site that documents and highlights dangerous pills (I know all pill are dangerous.....SO IS ALCOHOL... but i mean pills with truly bad effects/contents) that are currently in circulation.

There is an argument that if you rate a certain pill as a good pill there will be imitation pills with other substances in them created to imitate the quality ones. TRUEbut they 99.999999999999999% of the time look different in lots of ways. If you document the pills and provide absolutely all the details You can differentiate between a genuine pill and imitations quite easily.

You could have an address and advertise not only your web site but an address where anyone be it Joe Bloe with one pill or a big dealer can send his pill and you guys can test it for what it is and put it on the site. At least people will know what they are taking and make a choice with more information on hand to assist them.

This idea will only work if the site becomes well known and is ACTUALLY USED AND PROMOTED.

The aim of the game is to save lives and minimise harm and I am all for that. Not put users in jail.

The idea that the majority of people go to a local dealer and buys their pills is wrong. Most people get them from friends as a favour (not to make money) who get them from friends and up the tree to the main dealer. The operative word here is FRIENDS. If you have a site that tells people exactly what is in pills ect....THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO SELL CRAP PILLS TO THEIR FRIENDS.

To sum this up the more an information site is promoted the more people will use it the more effective it would become in harm minimisation.

I truly hope this helps in your judgement of the xtc scene.

Yours sincerely

Concerned Citizen

name: Sam

message: Hi Steve

I managed to catch your interview with Liberal Senator Ian Williams (?) this afternoon and was wondering if you could forward to him some info or provide me with an email address to send him my opinions/experiences re synth. drug use.

I thought it was cool that a Liberal Senator from North Qld (especially strange given some of the slightly backward views that occasionally filter down from up there) was interested in going to a rave to learn more about the issue he is chairing a committee on. As a regular recreational user of synthetic drugs, usually about once a week, I found this afternoon's report extremely interesting.

It is quite easy to stereotype the typical drug user into the junkie mould. Every single person I know takes drugs in one way or another, whether they be synth. or marijuana. I know only few people who are using drugs intravenously and as a whole this group would be less than 1% of people I know who take drugs. Most people I know have good jobs and are studying as well, I myself work 2 jobs both in high profile white collar companies that are arguably at the top of their industries and have done volunteer work with children. I am not saying this for an ego massage, just as an example that not all drug users are blue collar criminals from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

I started using recreational drugs at 17, however this was strictly an experimental thing and didn't start taking regularly until I was 19. I have been using ecstasy primarily almost every weekend for nearly 18 months, and have recently reduced my consumption down from about 3-6 pills a week. I have switched to taking speed and sometimes ice instead, albeit less regularly and in lesser amounts as they do not distort your perceptions anywhere near as much as pills do, and although you are generally grumpier and more depressed for a few days afterwards it does not warp your perception of the environment and people around you in the same way ecstasy does. Having said this, that is not to say ecstasy is bad or should be treated as the worse of the two evils, just that they both have different effects. The thing with taking pills is that it is a social activity, akin to sharing a joint if you like. As "space cadet" like as it sounds, you are actually experiencing the same thing!

as the group of people you are dropping with and this leads to a heightened "social connection" so to speak, as well as genuinely broadening your perceptions of the world. Its more about the experience and doing it with other people than escaping depression and the world, although this does come into it in part.

Having lived through 2 drug raids on my residence and associated court appearances etc, and now watching the crack down being made to appease social concern about the "drug epidemic", it is laughable the impact that police are claiming to have on the drug supply and scene in general. I don't know if you are aware but following a death at a rave recently in brisbane (I attended this event and witnessed the ambulances arrive) there has been a tremendous crackdown by police on fortitude valley clubs and streets to try and show a new, tougher stance. All that will result is that people will stay at home and get fubared as opposed to going out, where they run risk of being searched and scanned by officers and sniffer dogs, who from first hand experience are not nice to deal with. It is disturbing that this is happening, as this sort of activity is what makes events like raves and places like fortitude valley the way they are. Please note I am not condoning widespread public drug u!

se, just that events/areas like this have a certain character and it is possible to enjoy a good night while partying hard in public without going over the top.

If Senator Ian (I genuinely forget his last name) is unable to take up Dr Caldecott's invitation to attend an event in Adelaide, I'm sure many (self included) would be more than willing to give him a guided tour of Brisbane's scene so that he may grasp a better comprehension of the issue at hand. If you wouldn't mind forwarding this to him, and perhaps you could send me an email address where I could directly contact the enquiry or a secretary/researcher who is collecting information and statements for it that would be appreciated. I would like to get the inquiry to hear from people who are involved in these activities as opposed to the fundamentalist types who would do anything possible to instigate a "Zero Tolerance" policy.

Regards
Sam

Dennis

message: Steve, After listening to your program this evening on drug use and this program's submission to the inquiry, I wanted to make a submission as a parent of two young girls. While they are some years away from this issue I hate to think of what social drugs will be like by then. In any case I know I'm not going to be able to keep them away from nightclubs and dance parties. What I hope however is that if they face the choice of taking social drugs they can make an informed decision and seek advice from an independent 3rd Party. I'm referring to drug testing and I find it appalling the government is going to such lengths to stop it. I wanted to lend support to the concept of drug testing by making this submission.

Regards,

Dennis

name: Rhonda

message: Hi Steve, listening to your show about the inquiry going on into drug abuse on friday, i was interested that the use of drugs to deal with depression etc was not raised more. I am not a drug user but i have been tempted many times to try something to escape my depression and just "feel good" for a change. Can you pass this message onto the people conducting the enquiry, it would be very much appreciated. Love your show, thanks Rhonda.

name: Mark

message: RE: Senate enquiry into synthetic drugs.

I am 27 and use drugs such as ecstasy, speed and cocaine (when I can afford it) on occasion though my drug of choice is without doubt marijuana as I've come to dislike alcohol for the most part.

I have come to realise that amphetamines are nothing like the evil, deadly drugs we are told they are in the media. I would never go as far as to inject a drug as I know those to be very serious in consequence. I have also never tried ice/crystal meth as they just seem too strong for my liking. I also don't know enough about them to want them in my body.

I take ecstasy on occasion but never more than 1 in an evening so as to avoid the depressing come-down a couple of days later. I take them because I enjoy the experience of being in an altered state where I can maintain physical and mental control, unlike with alcohol. They put me in a very happy and loving mood which is of absolutely no danger to anyone or anything. Alcohol on the other hand can cause very negative emotions and create many and varied problems.

Speed is similar to ecstasy/MDMA in many ways but is far inferior in my opinion.

Almost everybody I know has at least tried synthetic drugs and most take them either on occasion or regularly. The number of users who do not have negative repercussions from these drugs (aside from the odd come-down or feeling fried or tired the next day) far outweighs those who experience emotional or physical problems or who end up in rehab etc.

I have personally always been careful when taking drugs or even smoking cannabis, but then I try to do the same with alcohol too. These drugs have rarely if ever had a negative effect on my social or working life as I try to only use them on weekends. Only through abuse and misuse would they negatively affect a person's life and in these cases I would suggest it is not the drug causing the problem but some other emotional or mental issue that needs attention. Drugs are just the crutch of choice for these people.

Education is absolutely critical when dealing with ALL drugs. Non-biased education is the only effective route to take though. People need genuine information covering BOTH sides of the drug culture from those that actually take them and not just have the laws and campaigns based on fear tactics and scientific lab research.

Tougher sentencing or police presence etc is a complete waste of time and money and only serves to place the authorities as an enemy in the eyes of everyday users. I feel completely violated when I see police enter a club/pub to search for drugs. I've even seen the police search a club with a video camera which completely infuriated me as I felt it was a breach of privacy.

Police dogs at major events do not deter people. Instead people end up taking all of their drugs BEFORE arriving at the gate and risk overdose. I also feel it is wrong for otherwise harmless people to be arrested and/or given criminal records when they are only trying to have a good time and pose no threat to anybody. The punishment simply DOES NOT fit the crime. The risks just aren't great enough to warrant such strong policing. Alcohol is easily a thousand times more threatening to people and society than light drugs such as ecstasy, cocaine etc.

I also feel that drugs such as cannabis (and other natural drugs), ecstasy, speed, cocaine etc should not be rated in the same category as killers such as heroin. There is a vast gap between these substances and this should be legally acknowledged. I would go as far as saying that the

more common, lower risk drugs (marijuana, ecstasy/MDMA etc) should be seriously considered for decriminalisation.

I would like to see pill testers FREELY available to the public. Nobody would use them if you had to pay for them so in order to be effective they really need to be FREE and no questions asked. If users think they may get in trouble for obtaining or possessing a tester they simply wouldn't use them. But they could help avoid many possible problems with overdoses or bad mixes etc.

In the end, most people use these drugs for harmless fun and recreation and come away with very positive experiences. I could write for hours on this topic as it has frustrated me for some time now. I'm glad to see some honest and open research being done.

Dear Hack team (I've added point forms below to summarise in case you don't have time to read email!!)

I would like to contribute to the reasons for the use of manufactured drugs such as amphetamines and ecstasy. I am 36 years old and have been using drugs since I was 15. I used ice heavily during 2005 and have used every other drug except heroin. I have no addictions, but the closest dependence would have been to crystal methamphetamine but purely because I was going through a crisis and breakdown rather than a physical addiction.

I am currently completing a PhD in Science, I have worked as a Research Assistant and been an Academic. Currently I hold a position in a consulting firm as a senior scientist basically I am a well educated female that owns her own home and has been around the world and takes drugs.

I took/take drugs

because I want to

because of boredom

because I like the confidence it gives me

I do not have the same control on alcohol

I like being around those on drugs as there is less aggression

It heightens my awareness

I can still study off my head

I have also grown bored of them. I took a lot of meth because I needed to dull my emotions to get through what I was going through and meth can do that. But you get saturated and then it gets boring.

As a scientist I am also fully aware of what the drugs are doing and feel I can control them better.

I am not worried about the fact that they are illicit they always have been and we will still get them

I am concerned that there is a generation of young people that do not understand what they are taking and do not understand that they can be detrimental.

An ex partner and a friend have suffered from psychosis it doesn't deter me but I know the harms it can cause others but many are not aware of this

The government needs to allow open educated and honest communication people think it s cool to talk tough and do it cos it is tough. But take them aside and it s different.

Many of the callers already had addictive personalities. We tend to focus on these people as they are the ones that are the least educated in the harms these drugs do I have seen it first hand. People like Paul from the Drug Research & I m sorry forgotten his name and title gave very good information.

Summary!!

I take drugs because I enjoy it but it s only good when it s fun. When they get boring don t take it any more

Harsher penalties will not deter users

Testing of pills is good you can work with what you know you are taking, sometime the bad reaction is from the crap they put in them

Not all users are addicts

Educate!!

Money needs to be placed into rehabilitation and maybe also intervention (get those with addictive personalities prior to them harming themselves)

In the end we all like to have fun and that s what they give us FUN&.some people just draw the wrong card that s all

name: Jonathon

message: Sent a half message under the same name but there's more... sorry.
I believe that the media through which synthetic drug education must be one credible to a young audience. Government funded leaflets are treated with cynicism by youth, the credibility of messages communicated via JJJ or community radio is more believable to youth. Independent media communicating messages backed up by the experiences of people who have already been through the rave scene achieves more than a Drug Aware sign in school, uni and club toilets.

Tankyou for this space, keep up the good journalism. you're my favourite 30 min of radio.

In regards to the synthetic drug forum discussed Friday evening i feel too many of the callers were present users and had biased opinions "FOR" drug use. I think the Government should be aware that it is not just the "bad" people of society indulging in synthetic drug use. It is also the educated, nice, sweet, poor, wealthy, intelligent, innocent people that we see in our everyday lives . I for one have been associated with synthetic drug use during my early 20's and have seen its negative effects. Stepping away from the scene and still socialising with people who are users i have seen how it has affected them over a 4 year period. However it is a slow process and the users i know will often say they are still who they used to be and haven't changed. By change i mean mood, outlook on life, personality, personal goals etc... It is important for users or prospective users to know that they can have permanent effects, even the 1st time you use synthetic drugs. I have had to physically restrain my best friend after he become severely paranoid having taken meth amphetamine at summerdayz in Melbourne. He has since restrained from ever using drugs again however a number of his friends and some family members believe he hasn't ever been quite been the same person he once was. I believe such scenarios in anti-drug advertisements should be aired but in a creative manner to attract attention of the 15 - 30yr olds (eg. animated/cartoon which relates to today's youth and doesn't seem like something dreamt up by a 50yo, soon to be retiring, politician! It is important for users to be informed of the negative affects by past users or other peers. The dramatised "real-life" scenes do not gain the respect of this age group. They still need to communicate realistic scenarios and negative effects but be "cool" to watch at the same time eg. The cartoons on the triple j/abc web site are fantastic and something of a similar appearance could even have some humour thrown in, for further impact. Anti-drug use campaigns need to lure the attention of the relative age group, rather than repel it by seeming to come from an "older and wiser" perspective. Prospective users find all sorts of reasons why the anti-use campaigns don't apply to them. It is these excuses which need to be addressed. For example, a typical wannabe educated user also compares their synthetic drug of choice to alcohol consumption. Generally they come to the conclusion that their drug is a far better option. I too believed this but through my own experiences, mainly seeing how it affected my friends, and educating myself further about the negative effects, i certainly do not think the same way now. Alcohol is a lot cheaper in some countries (due to less taxes), and perhaps that's why there's less synthetic drug use in these places, even though the legal penalties for using are negligible?

Many callers also mentioned that they like the synthetic drugs as they believe they retain **control**, which alcohol takes away. I have seen many people seriously lose control due to amphetamine use. I'm not advocating alcohol, but in some ways it effects on people are more consistent or predictable.

name: Jonathon

message: Not sure if this is the right contact but I wished to add to the senate enquiry into synthetic drugs record and living in WA didn't allow me to call in.

Firstly I wish to say that I don't believe that current education into drug use addresses the long term effects on mental health. I have suffered Anxiety disorders, as has my girlfriend who may well be on medication permanently to cope with this disorder. Medical advice has suggested that previous synthetic drug use may be responsible for the serotonin imbalances believed to cause this condition, despite a period of years having passed since drug use at the time of illness. I find this element of damage to be lacking in the education I have seen, being more interested in pushing the overdose / "freakout" angle.

name: Tristam

message: Re submission to senate enquiry:

Former synthetic and non synthetic drug user's opinion:

I believe that the only real option to improve the current situation is to abandon the "war on drugs" and adopt a harm minimization strategy. The best way I can see to introduce this is via decriminalization & the undercutting of the black market by licensing pharmaceutical companies to produce pure known quantities of XXXXX substances.

Access to these substances should be controlled by a licensing system which would see regular counseling mandatory for all license holders in order to identify and help both users at risk of addiction and users whose drug use is a form of self medication for otherwise untreated mental conditions. Those identified as being at risk should also receive further intense counseling and associated health support.

The taxes collected through such a system would more than adequately fund the much needed mental health services so lacking in our current environment and the early intervention afforded by such a system would save lives and money by treating issues before they progress into worse problems. This in turn would save even more money through a lessened strain on our prison system and perhaps wipe out much of the drug related crime we know today.

I wish you all the best in finding a politician willing to risk lessened popularity by introducing such a policy with the levels of fear of drugs/ drug users instilled into the public by years of "war on drugs" propaganda.

Regards
Tristam

name: carly

message: in response to the discussion about synthetic drugs this evening, i am 22 female from melb and have used before. i had a dope addiction for a year then decided to take a pill one night. at home with my partner, my cousin and his partner (both regular users). we all took the same pills and they had a ball and i never recovered. i was really lucky to be left with a long list of 'disorders' rather than something worse. i have a severe Panic Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Clinical Depression and a decent list of phobias. before the ecstasy, had never experienced real anxiety. the x i took was tested in front of me and was pure MDMA it took 5 months of living hell, while gp's and specialists told me it wasn't likely the x, 4 doctors said was an over-active thyroid condition. in that time i was put on antidepressants and blood pressure medications! i then finally saw someone that said it was just the x (and dope) and have been pretty good ever since on just an an!

ti-anxiety med. the law and enforcement of it will NEVER stop all these drugs getting made and used. i think truthful and realistic education is the only way to make a positive difference. all we hear is 'drugs are bad' not why or how or even that the exact same drug can be taken by 2 people and both can have completely different reactions! we need to target high schools and give kids the REAL information and also where to go when things don't go well, to have help available from people that actually have an idea about all the possible reactions and side effects etc. i attempted suicide more times than i can count and i had supportive parents and a partner helping me the whole way.

name: Jamie

message: Hi Steve,

First of all I would like to thank you and JJJ for giving us, the voters and the end users, the opportunity to have this passed on to the Senate Inquiry into drugs. I attempted to call this afternoon however the JJJ number was engaged, but I heard that you could email in your submission via the website, and I thank you for this opportunity.

My wife and I are happily married adults aged 28 and 29, with two beautiful little daughters, and we are functioning members of society. I have full time permanent employment, and my wife works casually, both in professional positions. We had both used drugs prior to meeting, and we met through sharing joints with mutual friends at uni, as did many of our friends.

We have continued to smoke pot regularly and once a year we go to the Earthcore rave for three days, whilst our kids go away to their grandparents. This gives us the opportunity to go and party like our friends do, and partake of things like speed, ecstasy, and try out drugs in controlled environments with people who have used them before. Having established that taking ecstasy together is a very pleasurable experience very early on in our relationship, consequent use has revolved around making informed decisions - only buying from people that we know aren't going to get us something that will kill us, and more recently, purchasing testing kits from overseas websites to test out the pills we buy.

There are many couples that also take ecstasy together, the experience is a wonderful experience and I urge the senator's who are making these decisions to actually try this with their partner - I promise far better results than Viagra!!! I have worked with many other people who recreationally take these drugs on the weekends, quite regularly, and it has not impacted on their ability to perform their day to day jobs whatsoever. As with any drug (eg. alcohol) overuse can lead to dependence, which is never a good thing, but with proper education and legislation to allow pill-testing at raves, these issues can be overcome.

I have tried most drugs out there, and must say that the fact that these drugs are illegal does not stop me from wanting to try them. Curiosity is a curse in that respect, however to not try these things out and make an informed decision about them myself, when I've seen so many other people having so much fun using these drugs, would be to deny myself some of the most wonderful experiences of my life.

Prohibition DOES NOT work, and despite all the wasted money on anti-drugs campaigns and prohibition, drug use continues to increase, and will continue to be a problem for governments for a long time to come. One way to significantly reduce the problem is to legalise the use of these drugs, in quantifiable doses from quality manufacturers - no longer will there be the problem of a bad batch of something causing people to overdose left right and centre - each tablet would contain a standard ecstasy dose, that would not be a cocktail of speed, ketamine and other chemicals, and instructions printed on the pack about how to take the product in a controlled environment. This additionally removes the black market economy that revolves around these drugs.

Thanks again steve!

name: jaime

message: Re. synthetic drugs show

3 points for the senator

* no amount of policing will stop drugs going into the bodies of people who want to take them.

This is an issue of freedom of choice, and at the moment the choice to take these drugs means breaking the law, and still such large amounts of illegal drugs are consumed every day.

* The illegal drug industry is an unstoppable faceless force that will never go away, it accounts for large amounts of funding for organised crime. Legalisation would not only eliminate this source of income, but would also provide funding for rehabilitation programs and education, real unbiased informative intelligent education. my generation was provided with "drug education" and what a joke it was.

*being able to regulate quality of synthetic consumables will reduce the amount of

-people who develop drug related mental illness, (which there is hardly any funding and support for to begin with).

-or people who simply die.

The way the system is currently existing is not a formula to build a healthy future for our country.

thank you for this opportunity

name: sarah

message: For the story that was on tonight about ecstasy and crystal meth use. Im 19 and will be studying at uni next year, and i come from a happy white collar family background. The reason that I take ecstasy every weekend or second weekend is because its fun, and because its not fattening like alcohol. I've also been into crystal meth, but here in tasmania the quality is poor and it is too expensive, \$40 a point. I did not take drugs for the first time because of peer pressure, stress or depression, but because i wanted to try it. Many girls i know will take ecstasy instead of drinking because it helps you lose weight. Although we were educated in school about the dangers of an overdose, we dont know about the long term effects ecstasy can give you. It is so easy to ignore the dangers. If there were TV ads then we would be constantly reminded. Ecstasy testing would definately stop me from taking many pills. I have taken pills before that have contained ketamine!

, without knowing, and i would never have taken it if i'd had known. It's not that i dont care about my health, because I really do, or my future because i have been accepted to a good university. Ecstasy to me is just an alternative to alcohol. When you're drunk you do and say embarrassing things, but it is not embarrassing to be on pills, if people ask, because it is totally accepted in young society. Friends of mine who have grown to have problems with ecstasy take 2, 3 or even sometimes 4 pills every fri and sat are doing it because they are unemployed or are on apprenticeships and dont see a bright future ahead of them. These people dont know and dont care about what might happen to them. There needs to be more public education on tv and radio so that people are forced to think about it, it is so easy to put it in the back of your head and forget about it. Also a 24hr drug help hotline would be helpful in harm minimisation because there is no number to call if you!

suspect that your friend has overdosed. I have been in that situation and called about 6 different drug hotlines which were all to do with crime stoppers. I ended up ringing the local hospital which was not only rude and disinterested but completely unhelpful. Young people also need to know where they stand when it comes to the law, if you call an ambulance, will the police come?? will the parents find out?? these are the reasons why young people put off ringing for help, and instead, ring other more experienced drug takers who can give advice.

name: w t

message: synthetic drugs forum. i'm 39,& use trips & ecstasy ,meth monthly, & marijuana daily. it should all come down to your choice. Alcohol & tobacco are older generation drugs, pubs, & smoke shops are older generation drughouses yet alcohol/tobacco are all legal. at least if all drugs came down to individual choice, if you were overdosing then you wouldn't feel threatened to speak out to medical people what substances used. government prescribed doses would be much safer & they still profit, crime rates would drop 10fold, as far as driving, [vehicle]meth, even l.s.d. are safer options then the pissed mind behind the wheel. definatley more in control with meth, trips or E's in public [depending on dosages] alot of my mates take these drugs & prefer them to alcohol & they are over 40y.o. moderation is the key with all recreational drugs. dont knock it til you try it.look @ the evidence, what alcohol & tobacco damage has caused anywhere, how much evidance is there of what!

illicet drugs have caused damage.trips & E's make you feel great full of energy & fun to be with in the right locations Bands/clubs etc but not in the workplace where critical decisions need to be made.

name: Anthony

phone

message: Hi Hack team,

I am sorry I missed your return call, but here is my ideas/experiences with synthetic drugs.

I turned to synthetic drugs 10 years ago as I couldnt handle alchohol. I couldnt stop at one drink & would black out & get into trouble(fights & anti social behavior). On LSD, speed & extasy I would keep it togeather & generally had my wits about me.

There was a huge difference between the two scenes behavior wise. When going to raves,concerts & festivals where synthetics are mainly used, there were very few fights. You compare this to your average pub, from my time in pubs I have seen more fights in one night than 4 years of being around the dance scene.

I believe drug dogs at clubs are not the answer. In doing this they are targeting the consumer of which at a guess there'd be hundreds of thousands, rather than targeting dealers/ producers & importers.

Pill testing is one thing that should be used religiously. Using extasy in the late 1990's was like a lucky dip. We all had no idea of what they contained & this was the main reason for people having bad experiences. Thanks for your time. Cheers

Steve

The largest proportion of speed sold in this country is sold to interstate truck drivers - on average spending \$300 to \$600 dollars per week. This has come about within the last 10 years or so. This effect is due to the government changing policy on prescription drugs such as diuretics. These drugs when used since time as a stimulate to stay awake. As a result of prohibition on diuretics it has created million empires out of bikie gangs

For drivers to purchase drugs now days, to keep them awake (it s not seen as a party drug in this industry) they now come into contact with anti social elements that they would never have been introduced to if the laws had not been changed.

As far as managing their drug use and their emotional state, caused by long term drug use, most of them obviously have this under control otherwise it would be the top story for most media outlets.

So the long term use for most normal people is controllable. It is not the education message that drugs are bad but it s the fact that millions of dollars a week are going into the black market and never seen again instead of into the households of Australia.

Prior to diuretics being off the market, speed use in the transport industry was a fringe element, mainly used by the young people. Now speed is the prominent drug and accepted by most within the industry. The only suggestion I can see is to use an American model as a guide that their family doctor put them on a stimulate programme of which they are constantly monitored and health maintained.

The biggest concern I see is the amount of money that it takes for these people to do their jobs now as compared to 10 years ago. And we don t see too many adverse effects other than financial.

When they changed these laws initially it was fairly short sighted of them not to foresee the emergence of speed as a replacement stimulate for truck drivers. Whether or not it perpetuated the need for law enforcement and legal fraternity to be upgraded and up sized being an added benefit for them, this is a conspiracy theory but the reality is that is exactly what has happened.

So if any changes are made one cannot exist without the other.

As a good comparison, alcohol prohibition in the twenties brought about the mafia and the FBI and prohibition in Australia brought about million dollar bikie gangs and the drug task force.

Kind regards

Craig

name: Joe

message: The senate enquiry needs to understand that pumping more money into direct regulation of supply of these drugs will do the opposite of what it sets out to achieve. This is because if you make a substance illegal and or increase the jail sentence as penalty, then all you do is increase the price of the substance as a result.

If these substances were legalised tomorrow, the price of them would decline rapidly and suppliers would have to search for other viable ways to make money. I am not suggesting this as a solution, however, i am making a relationship between police enforcement and the profits of the suppliers. Suppliers need their product illegal to make big money.

What people need through regulation is an understanding that it is your attitude toward these substances not the drug. I have learnt this through experience in recreational consumption and observation of drug abusers and users. What i am saying is that there should be a war on people's regressive attitudes towards drugs, not a war on drugs.

These substances alone do not cause a problem. What the problem is people's attitudes towards them.

If more people had a positive attitude toward them then the problems associated with them would disappear. It would reduce the demand and irresponsible use of them. Drugs will still be around always and no amount of anything will eliminate the demand for it. The senate needs to understand that these substances are here to stay because as long as there is a demand for something it will be produced. And as long as people feel safe and enjoy consumption that demand will remain.

People want to feel cared for by police, not scared of them because of potentially being busted. This is where the problem of people double dropping arises to avoid sniffer dogs. This kind of thing is potentially life threatening to people.

People need to know what is contained within the substance, the other alternative is to have people consuming that which they are unsure of what is in it. This needs to be open at the police level.

More focus needs to be on influencing peoples attitudes, not focusing on eliminating consumption (particularly through supply) which is an unrealistic fantasy.

name: Nick

message: This is a message to the senate inquiry regarding synthetic drugs.

Rehabilitation is a quick fix to the symptoms of problem, not treatment of the problem. Prevention will never happen because people wanna experiment with life, the boundaries of life and their own understanding of the universe and things around them - heck. Even George Dubya has experimented a little bit. This doesn't mean every one will or has to, it just means that total prevention will never happen. So, what are we left with - a treatment for the problem itself. Now there's a new idea for this country.

The idea: Education of the risks. Give people a clear and concise understanding of exactly what the risk factor for each drug is in an unbiased manner. The only way to maintain a clear risk factor value would be to standardize drugs. The government can make the drugs and sell them at the local bottle or something along those lines. The government gets revenue from making the drugs and puts it in to healthcare and rehab clinics. Each time someone wants to buy these (cheaper than street) drugs

they fill out a form, stating who they are, what they will do with the drugs, where will they use the drugs, how often do they buy drugs. Etcetera.

These forms could go in to some kind of national database of drug users. Monitoring the population of drug users will give the government a clear idea how to educate these people, instead of ranting and raving "drugs r bad... mmmkay?".

That's just my 2c,
Nick.

Legalize drugs?... No Way...

I'm 27 and never touched anything other than alcohol.... People have offered me drugs but I have always said 'NO' Straight out....

I have a 3 year old son.. Legalizing drugs will make them impossible to keep him away from drugs throughout his life. It's going to be a huge task.
I'm a Mobile DJ. When drug users go to 21st for instance they go off around the corner, hide and use their drugs, but if it's legal people won't go and hide, it'll all be out in the open. Other people will see it more openly then consider it "cool" to start-up or inquire...

Here's idea for an education on Drugs. Take on Bali's approach to drugs, that's what i'd like. Show a few drug dealers being beheaded on TV..... No loss. That would be the ultimate way to scare kids.... Don't put them in Jail too expensive. Their habits will continue and be refined in jail anyway.

If they Legalize Drugs I will stop paying Taxes....

Dale

name: Adam

message: Like any drug addiction, amphetamines convinces the user that the drug will constantly give them joy and relief from their lives troubles. Whether it be heroin, amphetamines, alcohol, nicotine or what ever. The choices of people to relive their personal agnsts', by what ever methods they choice, will have different damaging effects. The responsibility of our collective society is to express the relevant effects of the drug on the individual, as well as the rest of society (who is thus effected by drug users and drug distributors.) It is also our responsibility to investigate, understand, and fortify resolution against, the causes/reasons for drug use.

The fact that amphetamines-(ice), in particular, are in the lime-light, is because the drug is very incidious in its betrail of the user and constant profiting of distributors. It is very damaging mentally, socially, morally. It can damage the soul of the soul of the medium-long term user and those close. Greater policing, and stringent controls of the supply, of the fundemental chemical distriubution suppliers that make the composition of these dangerous drugs needs to be addressed.

Rehabilitation of users, whether they be short term or long term, needs greater investment. Possibly the capital needed, could come from the profits made through distrubution, from manufactures of socially dangerous drugs.

The conundrum is, that the user is no more aware of the inheirant dangers of the drugs that they use, than they are of what is coming tomorrow. So the perpetuation of use has taken hold. The manufacture/distribution controls are to the only possibilty to cutting the consistant damage that drug use has.

Unless we adhere to greater control measures of the distribution/manufacture of these damaging, dangerous drugs that we all face in ever day society now, we will not be able to stop the horrible backlash that will result.

name:

message: I'm a 22 year old male from Sydney. I smoked my first cone when I was 13, had my first pill when I was 16 and speed, cocaine, ketamine and ghb have followed from then. I am not a regular user, I have never had an addiction. I am the typical recreational user. I initially take drugs because I am curious, if I have a good experience and they are easy to get and not too expensive I continue to take them to have fun. Predominately I take drugs to have fun. I rarely get depressed, I m quite an outgoing person although a good night on a particular substance can help.

I would call myself a productive member of society. I ve worked since I was 15, finished high school and completed a Bachelor of Policing and was looking to join the NSW Police. As part of my degree I had to choose a Police station and go there for 6 weeks to learn the job. I chose Kings Cross. It wasn t an eye opener, I d spent lots of big nights in Kings Cross but the one thing I had never done is go there sober and I also had the opportunity the accompany the Police sniffer dogs. This practice is getting the wrong people, I watched the Police arrest and charge many people for possession of very small amounts of illegal drugs. I could have easily been one of these people on any other night. The damage done to these users by having a mark on their criminal record far outweighs the damage by taking a pill. My friends and I rarely taking pills, speed and coke when we go out. Ghb is the better alternative because there is a smaller chance of getting busted and yields similar effects. We are much more likely to get a hotel room and send a night doing pills, or do them at home.

Government policy needs to focus on harm minimisation, education and on supply. Apprehending the end-user with sniffer dogs or random searches does nothing to help the drug situation. Pill testing is a great idea; drug testing generally is a good idea. Speed can be contaminated with all kinds of crap.

Education should be more realistic. The ads on television are bullshit. I ve been to lots of raves and never seen anything like what happens on these educational ads. People who use the drugs, who ve battled addiction should be consulted when developing education programs.

My final point is that the suppliers should be targeted. It is ludicrous that end-users are pursued by the Police. During my stint at Kings Cross I have a very interesting conversation with a Senior Sergeant who had been at the Cross for nearly 20 years. He explained the ins and outs of drug trafficking around Kings Cross and Darlinghurst. The major players should be targeted, the ones making millions of dollars out of organised crime. These pricks should be targeted because they are making a mockery of our society and our legal system.

I don t blame the Government or the Police for the situation. It s just that misinformed people are making the decisions. They generally have good intentions but, unfortunately, going about it the wrong way.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to say some of this.

name: Alison

message: Hi,

I am writing to contribute my thoughts and feelings on the issue of recreational drugs that was discussed on Hack on the 5th of May. I didn't get down the correct email address but would hope that this submission was passed on to the Senate inquiry.

I felt that many of the callers perspectives that were voiced on Hack were really once sided, endorsing recreational drugs. Personally, I have a really negative experiences with recreational drugs. I am a 20 year university student, and really don't feel that policies such as harm minimisation is the way to go.

>From my own personal experiences I have been hospitalised from taking ecstasy and speed.

On new years day 2006 after a night of partying on recreational drugs I hospitalised myself as I was very concerned about the effects these party drugs had on me, and were continuing to have hours after I had taken them. According to close friends apparently my behaviour during the night prior was neurotic and quite simply frightening. The next day I was experiencing severely rapid heart palpitations and felt overwhelmingly paranoid.

All my drug experiences I had had before this event had been fun, although I felt that the come down off these drugs were intense, as I often felt strong emotional feelings of depression.

After this frightening experience with recreational drugs I have decided to not participate in taking party drugs ever again. Slowly, I have witness my group of close friends taking these drugs more and more, and have also witnessed my flatmates painful comedowns on a Sunday arvo, that even extend well into the week. I have felt that I am slowly loosing a lot of friends as they continue to take these drugs I m being left out of the social circle.

I really don't want to se recreational drugs to become even more of a social norm than it already is. I truly do believe that they are dangerous, even if the pills have been tested and deemed O.K

I do agree with a lot of the callers that most drug takers will grow out of this phase, but in the mean time the effects are overwhelming and in now way can be likened to alcohol.

Please pass on this letter to the Senate inquiry.

Thanks heaps.

name: B

message: re: synthetic drugs

after leaving school i took pills, speed and meth increasingly often for 3 years. never would i have considered myself to have been an addict. looking back however i realise i was indeed heading down that path. if i hadnt been able to substitute synthetics with natural herbs - particularly in conjunction with the illegal herb ephedra, my story would be very different.

if the current mental health problem is anything to go by government policy needs to focus on harm minimisation and rehabilitation. further exploration into beneficial herbs such as ephedra and lobelia, i feel if decriminalised would provide a less destructive option than synthetics for those simply wanting to feel good.

name: T

message: Hi there,

I'd like to contribute to the senate inquiry mentioned on Hack tonight.

I'm a 38yo IT business owner and employer who has been using recreational drugs like Acid, Ecstasy, Coke and Speed occasionally for about 20 years. I am in good company among my circle of friends, amongst them white and blue collar workers and responsible and outstanding members of the community. We enjoy occasional drug use. We have not had bad experiences. Ever. We are in NO danger of becoming addicts, no more danger than we would be of becoming alcoholic or smokers. The government needs to know that prohibition will not stop us using drugs as we wish. As well as going out and partying, which we do less now in favour of partying at our homes, it's a great experience to share E's or some coke with my partner at home, and the government has NO right to determine what I can and can't do in my own home. The greatest help to the community would be for the government to recognise that drugs are here and will always be here, they need to grow up and quit the scary television ads th!

at border on childish. The govt needs to help the people with addiction issues (be it drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or anything that is consumed by anyone above a level of moderation) and leave those who do not alone. They need to make progress towards making the drugs cleaner, with pill testing and eventually regulated supply. The other benefit of the govt changing it's position on drugs is that it's likely my house won't keep getting broken into by junkies.

Thanks

name: Heath

message: Regarding the Drug equiry goin on around the country.
I tried ICE once a few years ago. I didnt have a bad experience, though the experience I had was nothing special either.

More education is needed with all drugs. Though escpecialy with ICE, Speed and Cocain.
I know and work with a few people who are regular users of the above drugs and others, and these fellas are loosing there minds.

More education of both the good and bad about all drugs, stiffening laws will only cause tention which will cause violence. More detox facilities instead of sending people to jail. A lot of people who end up in the drug addicted life style are good people who just need a helping hand, not a drug conviction.

Hi. I think the major point regarding synth drugs that should be made aware to younger people is that of mental health as a result of taking them.

People come in all shapes and sizes, there physical make up is wide and varied. This also goes for their personalities. Although a number of people may be able to take synth drugs recreationally for a period of time with no side effects mentally, a number of people may not. Depression as a factor should definatly be made aware to the public, but unfortunately to younger people who have had no contact with the illness it is hard to take seriously, no matter how you portray it in a commercial. Anxiety is of the same ilk. A good way in my view to portray the effects to some, is to show what actually happens to the chemicals in your brain while you take ecstasy, and show that you are meddling with natural chemicals, and can bring them out of balance, giving the taker a changed personality. The good time on ecstasy sure does not outway the burden of an unseen illness as a result. I cannot comment on other drugs as I have not had contact with them.

The comment made by a caller regarding the "image of certain classes" affecting their decision on what drugs to take, is utter crap. I was privatly educated, in a highclass school, and at least 2 of my former friends, one who was extremely intelligent, are basically drug-fucked. The addictive personalities of these people made them lose sight of how their drug taking was effecting there family, and social lives. They ended up taking whatever get them pumping, and all that became important was getting charged the next night. Next it was getting charged during the day, and so on.....

Cheers.

name: Emma

message: Hi Steve,

I was listening to your story on the senate inquiry into illicit substances. I was quite interested in this topic as I just did a report for uni arguing for decriminalisation of illicit drugs. And I am also a recreational user of drugs who is concerned that some serious no no's are going into my drug of choice. I choose to take drugs as I enjoy the high, rarely have a come down, and its cheaper than drinking and seems to have less side effects. I agree with the people that rang that education is very important as long as it is 'true' information. And pill testing would make the arena a lot safer. Harsher penalties won't stop drug taking just change the environment its occurring in and as you said with the people on the train, only make the situation much more deadly. Its a hard one though, cause drugs are dangerous and you really don't know what your taking unless your making it. So something needs to be done to make it safer. I look forward to hearing this topic play out, as!

it seems drugs are here to stay. Have a nice weekend.

name: gabrielle

message: For the senate enquiry.

I am a rare recreational user of synthetic drugs and I think pill testing is a great idea. I want to know that what I am taking is not horse tranquiliser. I am wondering if the government has ever thought that decriminalising synthetic drugs could be the way to go? If these kinds of drugs become decriminalised or even legalised the government could make it a safer recreation and perhaps even benefit from it money-wise. If legal government endorsed drugs became available through prescription the government could regulate how much any one person can get from a pharmacy at one time and also the quality of the drug. I know a lot of people I know would feel a lot safer taking their recreational drugs if they knew that they were government controlled, pharmaceutical grade drugs. I mean, we are going to take them anyway but we want to do it in the safest way possible.

The government could then also tax the drugs they are controlling and everyone benefits.

Everyone is happy.

I know this is probably seeming a bit extreme but I really do believe that bolstering law enforcement against recreational drug takers is not working and won't make things any better in the future. The government really needs to take another tack on this whole issue.

I truly believe that people would be able to take drugs more responsibly if they had the opportunity.

Thanks for your time.

Regards,

G.

name: John

message: re: Synthetic drug chat

I am a 43yo professional guy who has been using synthetic drugs since I was 14. I finished university, travelled the world, have been extremely happy in my relationship for the 13 years & I currently run a successful consulting business in Sydney. I use Ecstasy, G & Ketamine usually two or three times a month. I do enjoy a 'night out' and I prefer recreational drugs over alcohol.

I support the government's initiative - education, testing, OPENMINDEDNESS is very important.

I don't plan to 'grow out of' my recreational drug use. Sniffer dogs & the raids cost taxpayers much more than the 'problem' they are supposedly trying to solve. This is such a great state & country, it is such a shame when we fail so miserably on this issue. Let's get it right!

name: Dave

message: *Regarding synthetic drug use enquiry *

I'm 21, and have been using amphetamines, mainly speed, for a few years. One thing which would be great to draw attention too is the parallels to drug education with sex education. We know that educating young people about safe/safer sex has not caused this massive increase in sexual activity, but it has had the effect of lowering the rates of STI's and other issues in the educated groups. Surely people have the need to be educated on the use of synthetic drugs, not only on the effects/ side effects but on the actual taking of them. Countless people double dip, or take excessive amounts purely because they havnt been educated on how to do things properly. I mean how many first time ecxtasy users would take more than 1 pill at a time because they cant feel an effect and be later mashed up that evening purely because they havnt been told that theres a time for these things to kick in? Another interesting point is the legalisation of lower grade amphetamines like BZP in New Zeal!

and. These party pills are available in most outlets, have a controlled synthesis dictated by the countries equivalent of the TGA. It is interesting to see that in the north island, there is a tighter control on these pills and there is actually a far less rate of people being hospitalised as a direct action of these drugs than in the south island, where the control is not as tight. I think it wise that for every enquiry into illicit drugs, a big part of the enquirey should be looking at "Okay if illicit drugs are causing this effect on society, what kind of effect is alcohol having?" The hypocracy on our governments policies on this is obvious to most people and this means that for myself we dont really take the government seriously or listen to what they say about effects of illicit drugs when we can quite plainly see the huge damage that alcohol has on our society.. i mean how many people at raves end up in fights? How many pingers make complete fools of themselves, end!

anger other people, and especially can have negative effects on memebes of the opposite sex??

Hope this hasnt been too long winded!!

name: Corinne

message: Totally related to your second last caller re "white collar users who enjoy pills and coke for a few years". A few of us go off the rails (more with speed and ice) but generally this group take recreational drugs and dont understand/know the consequences. When I told my Mum I took ecstasy (just in case anything ever went wrong and she got a late night call) she said - 'It is like going to a Dr who can give you a prescription to make you feel better but they tell you they dont know what it will do to you in 5, 10 or 50 years time - would you take it??'

Recreational users of ecstasy and coke just dont understand what the consequences may be - so to that extent we all like to believe that maybe there are none? I know I suffered from anxiety and a bit of depression from pills - even months after - but it goes away and then you crave that release again that the drugs provide. I do fear what my friends and I will be like in our old age due to the delayed effects - we all dread to think (so we don't)!

Education re the negative effects, the dodgy ingredients, the seedy very unglamorous underworld that goes along with it and more graphic ad campaigns are needed.

Thanks for a great show Hack!!

name: Lisa

message: I am 25 and took my first pill a year ago. It was nothing like I imagined. It was amazing! I felt free, I felt confident, it broke all communication barriers with my friends and it allowed me to have deep and meaningful conversations and feel absolute compassion for complete strangers. I didn't die, I didn't freak out, and none of my friends did either. Now I like to pop one or 3 whenever I go out (it takes more than one to work now) . I can't see any reason to stop and tougher laws would only make me eat them all before I go out.

name: Brock

message: Steve and senate enquiry. Hi, i have not had much access to pills. When i was younger i was interested in trying these, but was not cool enough. I'm in western sydney. People need good social skills and to be popular to get their hands on these and other drugs when they are of school age. When i got older i did try some of this stuff. I disagree with others who believe that education should convince people the drugs are not risky though. Because between the time that i wanted to try drugs (but could not access them) and the occasion on which i finally did try some drugs as an older youth (post year 12), there was a period there where i did receive some youth centre education at school at about year 11 that convinced me LSD was a safe drug. I had by year 10 decided not to take drugs but this information changed my mind.

So access is not so easy as some of the highly sociable and outgoing natured callers would have you believe. Shy people just don't phone up the radio.

That is the problem with many forums where youth opinions are sought. Shy youths do not vocalise their point of view. So do not get heard. Also those who are teased do not want to speak for fear of persecution.

Thanks

name: Dan

message: I'm a high school teacher... had 2 years off to party on e, coke, speed etc. I'm back teaching and thought it was interesting that they want people educated about it. If the government went that way - i'd love a job like that!!
I taught a drug education program before i left teaching, and then i taught one just recently to year 10 students. I believe that the education i was able to give to them was so much more worthwhile with experience behind me. At no stage though, would it have been appropriate for me to state that i had once been involved in harder drugs. I may lose my job, and i know that the community that surrounds me would not agree with my past. What do you do really. I don't regret my past whatsoever, it just isn't the place for people to know. Understand? Dan

name: Anon

message: About synthetic drugs: I would go so far as to say that the government is directly responsible for the death of young people because of its "zero tolerance" approach to drugs. The reality is many healthy, intelligent, well adjusted young people use recreational drugs because they are FUN. Why is it that when people take illicit drugs it's automatically assumed they have a "problem" or are maladjusted, whereas it's perfectly acceptable to have a drink with friends, just because it's fun? If they legalised drugs they could do away with the nasty side-effects of the drugs themselves, AND the nasty side-effects of the drug industries - violent organised crime, money laundering and police corruption. The law as it stands is simply gets young people off side and is arbitrary because only the unlucky few get "caught", plus because the government doesn't regulate the industry people's lives are put at risk for some conservative "moral crusade". Hopefully the sooner we get the next generation into office the sooner we can correct this ridiculous legal anomaly.

name: Amy

message: I know it's highly unlikely, but say Pills were made legal. It would become a lot easier to regulate not only what is put in to them, possibly making them safer. You could also regulate who it is sold to. alcohol & cigarettes are nice taxable drugs but they kill a lot more people than pills.

name: Jess

message: I'd like to comment on the synthetics drug talk. I noticed that no one mentioned possible causes of why people would need to take drugs habitually. I feel there is a need of high school education, not only on drug effects (good an bad) but the psychological reasons on why people might want to escape reality for a bit. I've always thought there is a great lack of psychology taught in high school on possible personal causes of peoples sadness and how a lot can be avoided with some simple education.

thanks

jess

name: Renae

message: As far as education on synthetic drugs, it is more likely for users of amphetamines to suffer psychosis, until they have eventually given it up.

As an amphetamines user I have suffered from severe psychosis and I think this is the primary problem with drugs. The likelihood of being on a stretcher or in an intensive care ward is minimal compared to the mental health problems of synthetic drugs.

It should be part of drugs education that Ecstasy produces large amounts of serotonin and depletes that supply, thereby causing depression. It's important to note that medical problems are far less likely than mental health problems, which are a given.

name: Nina

message: I'm listening to your Hack program today (talking to drug-users), Steve and i realised that with the mammoth amount of drug education i've been given at school, we have never once been told how to help peers who are in trouble. Barely so with alcohol and never with illicit drugs.

I think that would be a very good next step in drug education, that would be very practical and definitely save lives. How many teens have any clue what to do if their friend(s) overdose or have a very bad reaction? Lots would be terrified to call an ambulance because they think they'll get into trouble. Pretty much, honest and helpful education. No more fear-campaigns, because it actually encourages teenagers to resent and ignore the information.

Nina.

name: Brett

message: More counselling if caught, not convictions. Have used for so long, now it is recreational, once every 2 months with speed and pills, at gigs, but never got into meth or ice, and never injected. So for me, minor use hasn't lead to an addiction, but i try to be smart about it. I am now 28, and started experimenting at 16

name: Tammy

message: Tougher laws are not the answer, as if people want it, they will always find it. Addiction to pills, synthetic drugs and or alcohol is all the same. It all stems from the same genetic or environmental factors affecting the person. The best ways to combat these problems is better more realistic and factual education and more specialised rehabilitation and counseling facilities nationwide to prevent or help current consumers.

name: Brett

message: Hey Steve,
Ian McDonald sounds ok, at least reasonable about the topic. I am a recreational user of ecstasy and speed, cocaine now days, at festivals and gigs, like maybe only a couple times a year. I have used these and more for over 10 years. Tougher laws will not deter me and many other people. Just through my own personal use, i have worked out what my body can handle, and what i don't like. Acid and mushrooms are off the list for me now, as i really know what it means to be mind altering. More information is a good idea for users, as i try to read about what doctors and professionals in the field say. Its different for young people with not any experience in the field, so thats a tough. Il take them for a nice feeling, and great experience, which i can do as well without the drugs as well, but i enjoy the feeling. Moderation is the key Steve, knowing about yourself, but thats only learnt by experience. As is planning your come down, sleep it off, and i haven't had a bad experience in over 5 years.

name: clara

message: in reference to the tv ads about pills etc. I saw them and as a former pill user I didn't find them effective and agreed with the caller who said she saw them as unrealistic scare tactics. However, my younger brother who hasn't been involved in the 'party' scene told me that they really did deter him from ever trying a pill. So as a preventative measure I think they are helpful.
Cheers

name: Kate

message: I take recreational drugs, I do this because I enjoy it. I also believe that these drugs in moderation is a lot healthier than drinking alcohol. Alcohol is a drug just like pot, pills and speed and in my opinion alcohol is worse. Alcohol makes you lose control, and changes your morals and standards.

I find that pills or speed give you more control.

If the police crack down on drugs further then the dealers will just try to find something else to make their money on.... something that may be extremely dangerous to take.

If these drugs remain illegal then alcohol should become illegal too. Otherwise decriminalise it and educate.

name: Scott

message: Drug Enquiry.

As already said,

education is the key, currently we have a zero tolerance on drugs which is backed up by scare campaigns that we see on the TV and read in the papers. Each year before certain big events, such as schoolies, authorities regularly trot out the usual stories about bad pills doing the rounds. It's so predictable now that most take no notice as they know its false. When there is a bad batch out there people will simply ignore the warnings that are issued.

I use with a group of people who are all in Professional occupations, we are all aware of every drug we have even taken, we understand how it affects us and we understand the potential dangers and addictions. To this point none of us have suffered any bad experiences and none of us have had to fight an addiction. All the knowledge we have has been self sourced from web sites such as www.erowid.org and www.pillreports.com.