

Measuring ice use in the population is difficult and many people report higher rates in their communities than are reflected in general population surveys. The data we include here come from a number of sources, including population surveys, the National Wastewater Monitoring Program, hospital and other treatment centre data. What is clear from these data is that the impact of ice on many communities around Australia is significant.

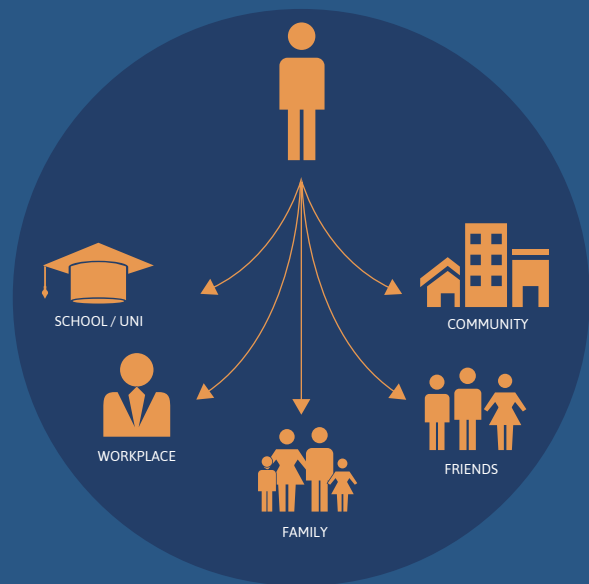
## HOW MANY PEOPLE USE ICE?

The 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that 6.3% or 1.3 million Australians over the age of 14 had ever used methamphetamine (including ice, speed or base) and 1.4% reported recent use (in the past 12 months). Among recent methamphetamine users, over half (57%) reported using ice (crystal methamphetamine), compared to 20% mainly using powder (speed).

Data from the Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS, 2018) indicates that one third of their national sample (910 injecting drug users) reported **methamphetamine**, including ice, as their drug of choice. This report also found an increase in the sample's recent use of ice from 68% in 2017 to 75% in 2018.



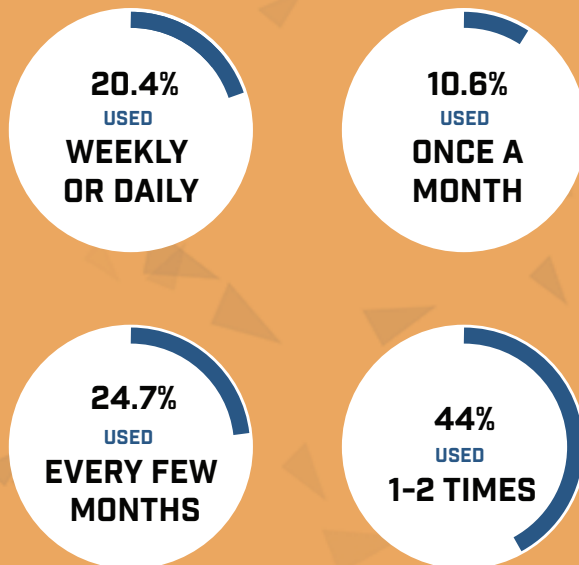
**1 IN 70 PEOPLE HAVE USED  
METHAMPHETAMINE IN THE  
PAST YEAR**



**...BUT THE IMPACT CAN BE MUCH GREATER**

## HOW OFTEN DO PEOPLE USE METHAMPHETAMINES, INCLUDING ICE?

Of those who had used methamphetamines (including ice) in the past 12 months:



## ICE USE IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Data from a number of sources indicate rates of **methamphetamine** use are higher among rural and remote areas of Australia compared to regional areas and major cities. For example, the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found rates of methamphetamine use were 2.5 as high among people living in remote or very remote areas compared to rates among those living in major cities or regional areas. Young people aged 18-24 years old living in rural areas were also more likely to report recent ice use than their city or regional counterparts. This is also supported by recent data from the 2018 report of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program which found that average consumption of **methamphetamine** in regional areas exceeded consumption in capital cities.

## IS ICE USE INCREASING IN AUSTRALIA?

It is difficult to determine whether methamphetamine use (including ice use) in Australia has increased. Data from the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey suggest that overall rates of **methamphetamine** (including ice) use in the general population have remained stable or declined over the past 5 years. However, data from this survey and from hospital records, indicate that rates of regular and dependent methamphetamine use have increased over that time. Additionally, the number of regular users who report using crystal methamphetamine (ice) as their main form of methamphetamine has increased from 22 to 57% between 2010 and 2016, while reports of speed use have decreased (from 50 to 20%). The number of individuals reporting smoking as the main route of **administration** has also increased (from 19 to 42%). Data from the Illicit Drug Reporting System IDRS, (2018) suggests similar trends are emerging among injecting drug users. Reports show a rise in recent use (last 6 months) of crystal methamphetamine among injecting drug users from 2010 (39%) to 2018 (75%), and a decline in recent use of speed (41% in 2010, 20% in 2018).

Taken together these data suggest that, among methamphetamine users, ice is becoming a more popular form of the drug.

FROM 2010 TO 2016 AMONG REGULAR METHAMPHETAMINE USERS, THERE HAS BEEN:



Data from the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program indicates that crystal methamphetamine is the highest consumed illicit drug in Australia, in both capital cities and regional sites. However, this program did not test for cannabis use. It should also be noted the estimated drug usage from this program was highly variable depending on the different sites tested. Alcohol and tobacco were consistently the highest consumed drugs across Australia.

## ARE HARMS FROM ICE USE INCREASING IN AUSTRALIA?

When looking at population data it is difficult to separate harms specifically related to ice use from harms related to other forms of methamphetamine use. However, data from a number of sources indicate harms related to ice use have increased. These include an increase in methamphetamine-related helpline calls, drug and alcohol treatment episodes and hospital admissions for methamphetamine abuse, **dependence**, **psychosis**, and other mental health problems, as well as methamphetamine-related deaths. Increases in harms most likely reflect increases in regular and **dependent** use, as well as shifts from using less potent (e.g. speed) to more potent (e.g. crystal) forms of methamphetamine.

## HOW DOES ICE USE COMPARE TO OTHER DRUG USE IN AUSTRALIA?

As shown in the image below, methamphetamine is not the most commonly used drug in Australia. This diagram shows the proportion of Australians in 2016 who had used the following substances in the past 12 months:

