ECSTASY

Prevalence

General population

- Use of ecstasy in the general population has declined for the first time since 1995. The decline from 3.5% in 2007 to 3% in 2010 was statistically significant, and was driven by a significant decline in use among males over 14 (from 4.4% in 2007 to 3.6% in 2010), and young Australians aged 14 to 19 (particularly among females where use declined from 6% in 2007 to 2.5% in 2010).

- The decline in recent ecstasy use in Australia mirrors a downward trend in ecstasy markets recorded internationally around 2010.

- In 2010 the majority of Australians who used ecstasy reported using once every few months or less.

Sentinel Groups

- Among injecting drug users, prevalence of 6 month ecstasy use declined significantly from 29% in 2002 to 9% in 2013.

- Among regular ecstasy users there has been a significant decline in proportions reporting weekly ecstasy use between 2003 and 2013.

Treatment seeking

- There has been a decline in outpatient treatment episodes for problems associated with ecstasy use from a peak of 1,397 in 2008/09 to 550 in 2011/12.

Deaths

- Ecstasy-related deaths in Australia are low in comparison to methamphetamine and heroin-related deaths. During the period 2000 to 2005, 82 deaths that were ecstasy related were identified. Ecstasy was considered a direct antecedent or cause in 67 of these deaths, with only 19 considered to be due to ecstasy toxicity alone.

Law enforcement

- The number ecstasy seizures detected at the Australian border increased markedly from 110 in 2010/11 to 964 in 2011/12, while total weight of all seizures was only 12 kg.

Market indicators

- The price of ecstasy tablets has declined over time (to $25 in 2013), while reports of ecstasy being of 'medium' purity have increased. Availability of ecstasy has also increased over the past few years, with higher proportions reporting it as 'very easy' to obtain in 2012 (40% compared to 24% in 2010).

- The ecstasy market in Australia appears to be stabilising after a downward trend in 2010.