2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

First results

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2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

First results

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Foreword

This report presents the summary results from the 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. The main survey report, with more detailed analysis—subtitled *Detailed findings*—will be published later in 2008.

The AIHW undertook the survey at the request of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The survey was approved by the AIHW Health Ethics Committee and conducted under AIHW legislation, providing a very high level of protection to the personal information collected in the survey.

The release of *First results* represents a timely and substantial contribution to research and debate on the drug-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of Australians.

I am pleased that the AIHW has been able to undertake this important survey on a topic of high policy concern to all levels of government and the community.

I would like to pay particular tribute to David Batts for his role in managing the survey and authoring the report, to co-authors Shubhada Shukla, Amber Summerill and Mark Cooper-Stanbury, and the Department's officers who worked closely with the AIHW team throughout the survey.

Behind the results produced here is the time and care taken by almost 25,000 Australians who have filled in a fairly long survey of a highly personal nature. This individual effort demonstrates the high level of community concern about licit and illicit drug use in Australia.

Penny Allbon
Director
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

April 2008

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The 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey was a complex project which required the time and input of many individuals and organisations. The assistance of the following is particularly appreciated.

The survey Technical Advisory Group (refer to Appendix 1) was the group responsible for providing technical support for the duration of the survey.

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Abbreviations, symbols and definitions

Abbreviations

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CATI	Computer-assisted telephone interview
CURF	Confidentialised unit record file
MCDS	Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy
NCADA	National Campaign Against Drug Abuse
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NDS	National Drug Strategy
NDSHS	National Drug Strategy Household Survey
SE	Standard error
RSE	Relative standard error

Symbols

–	Nil, or rounded to zero
..	not applicable
#	2007 result significantly different from 2004 result (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$)
n.a.	not available

Definitions

'Illicit drugs' means illegal drugs (such as marijuana/cannabis), prescription or over-the-counter pharmaceuticals (such as analgesics/pain-killers or tranquillisers/sleeping pills) used for illicit purposes, and other substances used inappropriately (such as naturally occurring hallucinogens and inhalants).

'Recent use' is equivalent to 'use in the previous 12 months' and the terms are used interchangeably. Both terms refer to the 12 months preceding the survey.

Further definitions are provided in Chapter 6.

Summary

The 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

The 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey was conducted between July and November 2007. This was the ninth survey in a series which commenced in 1985, and was the fourth to be managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Almost 25,000 Australians aged 12 years or older participated in the survey, in which they were asked about their knowledge of and attitudes towards drugs, their drug consumption histories, and related behaviours. Most of the analyses in this report are based on the population aged 14 years or older, as this allows consistent comparison with earlier survey results.

Tobacco

Nearly half (44.6%) of Australians aged 14 years or older had smoked 100 or more cigarettes or the equivalent amount of tobacco at some time in their lives, but less than one in five (19.4%) had smoked in the last 12 months. The proportion of the population aged 14 years or older who smoked daily declined by nearly one percentage point between 2004 and 2007, from 17.4% to 16.6%. However, the average age at which smokers took up tobacco remained stable at a little less than 16 years.

Tobacco was thought to be associated with a drug 'problem' by 2.6% of Australians aged 14 years or older and 14.3% approved the regular use of tobacco by adults; a further 22.5% neither approved or disapproved. Tobacco was the second most accessible drug: one in every two Australians aged 14 years or older (49.2%) was offered or had the opportunity to use tobacco in the last 12 months.

Daily smokers were more likely than other recent smokers or non-smokers to report high or very high levels of psychological distress.

Alcohol

Nine out of every ten Australians aged 14 years or older (89.9%) had tried alcohol at some time in their lives and 82.9% had consumed alcohol in the 12 months preceding the 2007 survey.

The proportion of the population drinking daily fell significantly (from 8.9% to 8.1%) between 2004 and 2007 whereas the average age at which people had their first full serve of alcohol (17 years of age) remained stable. The proportion of teenagers drinking at least weekly was around 22%.

One in eight people (12.1%) admitted to driving a motor vehicle and one in 17 (5.7%) admitted to verbally abusing someone while under the influence of alcohol. One-quarter (25.4%) of Australians aged 14 years or older had been verbally abused and 4.5% had been physically abused by someone under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol was thought to be associated with a drug 'problem' by one in ten Australians (10.5%) aged 14 years or older, whereas 45.2% approved (and a further 33.8% did not oppose) the regular use of alcohol by adults. Alcohol was the most accessible drug: nine in ten Australians aged 14 years or older (89.3%) were offered or had the opportunity to use alcohol in the last 12 months.

High-risk and risky drinkers were more likely than low-risk drinkers or abstainers to experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.

Illicit drugs

Almost two in every five Australians (38.1%), aged 14 years or older, had used an illicit drug at some time in their lives and more than one in seven (13.4%) had used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months.

The most commonly-reported illicit drug used in the previous 12 months was marijuana/cannabis (9.1% of people aged 14 years or older), followed by ecstasy (3.5%), pain killers/analgesics used for non-medical purposes (2.5%) and meth/amphetamine (which includes 'ice') (2.3%).

Between 2004 and 2007, there was a significant fall in the proportion of the population aged 14 years or older who had used an illicit drug in the past 12 months, from 15.3% to 13.4%. Recent marijuana/cannabis use, in particular, had dropped significantly between 2004 and 2007, from 11.3% to 9.1%. Recent use also declined for meth/amphetamine but increased for cocaine.

The average age at which new users first tried illicit drugs remained close to 19 years of age. The most accessible illicit drugs were marijuana/cannabis and painkillers/analgesics—17.1% and 15.4% of the population respectively were offered or had the opportunity to use these drugs for non-medical purposes, in the previous 12 months.

Driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of illicit drugs was reported by 2.9% of Australians aged 14 years or older. One in nine persons (11.0%) was verbally abused and one in 50 (2.0%) was physically abused by someone affected by illicit drugs.

Not quite nine in every ten Australians aged 14 years or older (85.2%) primarily associated an illicit drug with a drug 'problem', which was largely unchanged between 2004 and 2007. By contrast, the proportion of those who associated meth/amphetamine with a problem trebled between 2004 and 2007 from 5.5% to 16.4%. Together, the perception of marijuana/cannabis and heroin as 'problem' drugs declined by a similar amount. The proportion of Australians approving the regular use of illicit drugs was generally low. However, more than 1 in 5 either approved or 'neither approved nor disapproved' (6.6% and 16.6% respectively) the regular use of marijuana/cannabis by adults. Similar proportions approved (10.4%) or 'neither approved nor disapproved' (13.3%) the illicit use of pain-killers/analgesics.

Of Australians aged 18 years or older , more than one in five persons (20.2%) who used an illicit drug in the previous month reported high or very high levels of psychological distress; more than twice the proportion (8.7%) of those who had not used an illicit drug in the same period.

1 Introduction

The National Drug Strategy

The National Drug Strategy (NDS) 2004–2009, formerly the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NCADA), provides a framework for a coordinated, integrated approach to drug issues in the Australian community. The mission of the NDS is to improve health, social and economic outcomes by preventing the uptake of harmful drug use and reducing the harmful effects of licit and illicit drugs in Australian society.

The National Drug Strategy is the responsibility of the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (MCDS). The MCDS is a national ministerial-level forum responsible for developing policies and programs to reduce the harm caused by drugs to individuals, families and communities in Australia. The MCDS is the peak policy and decision making body on licit and illicit drugs in Australia. It brings together state, territory and Australian government ministers responsible for health and law enforcement, and the Australian Government minister responsible for education. The MCDS is responsible for ensuring that Australia has a nationally coordinated and integrated approach to reducing the substantial harm associated with drug use.

Drug-related costs

Tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use contributes to significant illness and disease, injury, workplace concerns, violence, crime, and breakdowns in families and relationships in Australia (MCDS 2004). Collins and Lapsley (2008) estimated that the economic costs associated with licit and illicit drug use in 2004–5 amounted to $56.1 billion, of which tobacco accounted for 56%, alcohol 27%, and illicit drugs 15%.

About the 2007 survey

The National Drug Strategy Household Surveys are the leading surveys of licit and illicit drug use in Australia. The 2007 survey was the ninth conducted under the auspices of the NDS. Previous surveys were conducted in 1985, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004. The data collected from these surveys have contributed to the development of policies for Australia's response to drug-related issues.

The 2007 survey was built on the design of the 2004 survey. More than 23,000 people aged 12 years or older provided information on their drug use patterns, attitudes and behaviours. The sample was based on households, therefore homeless and institutionalised persons were not included in the survey (consistent with the approach in previous years).

The methodology of the 2007 survey differed only slightly from that of previous surveys—a discussion of the main differences is presented in Chapter 6.

The 2007 survey used the drop and collect method and the computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) method to collect information from household respondents.

The CATI mode of data collection was retained from 2001 and 2004. Not all questions were asked of all respondents—some were asked only of respondents aged 14 years or older; some questions (a different group) were asked only of CATI respondents.

While the 2007 sample included about 6,000 fewer respondents than the 2004 sample, these two and the 2001 sample were about 2.5 times larger than the 1998 sample and more than six times larger than the 1995 and 1993 samples (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: National Drug Strategy Household Survey sample sizes

Survey year	Respondents
2007	23,356
2004	29,445
2001	26,744
1998	10,030
1995	3,850
1993	3,500

Questions relating to the occurrence and circumstances of injury were added in 2007. Also, the description of meth/amphetamine was refined and buprenorphine was added to the questions on methadone. More radically, a fictitious drug, zanthanols, was included to allow some validation of the survey instrument.

This report applies the *National Health Data Dictionary* (NHDC 2003) definition of tobacco smoking status, notably relating to ex-smokers and never-smokers where a threshold of 100 cigarettes is used. Data are presented for 1998 (revised), 2001, 2004 and 2007; however, the definition is not applicable to earlier survey data.

About this report

The report presents estimates derived from survey responses weighted to the appropriate Australian population grouped by age, sex and geographical location including state or territory. While 12– and 13-year-olds were surveyed, for the first time, in 2004, almost all of this report, with its emphasis on time series, presents results for Australians aged 14 years or older.

Chapters 2 to 5 examine the status of drug use in 2007, patterns of consumption, community support for drug-related policy and drug-related activities. Chapter 6 details the survey methodology, response rates, reliability and definitions. Estimates of sampling errors are presented in Appendix 2 and a copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix 5.

Reliability of results

Prevalence and population estimates are provided for information, regardless of their levels of statistical reliability. Statistical reliability depends on sample size and on the magnitude of the estimate. Some estimates of prevalence, close to 0%, may be statistically unreliable.

Readers are reminded, therefore, that when interpreting results, reference should be made to the table of standard errors and relative standard errors (Appendix 2). Results subject to relative standard errors of between 25% and 50% should be considered with caution and those with relative standard errors greater than 50% should be considered as unreliable for most practical purposes.

For selected tables, statistically significant changes between 2004 and 2007 are indicated (with a '#'). The difference is statistically significant if the z-statistic of the pooled estimate of the two rates being compared is > 1.96 or < –1.96 (a 5% two-tailed test).

The totals of some (rounded) percentages and numbers may not add up to the total provided (or 100%) due to the rounding.

2 Overview—the status of drug use in 2007

The drugs most accepted by, available to and used by Australians aged 14 years or older were the licit drugs: tobacco and alcohol. Overwhelmingly, the use of illicit drugs by adults was not accepted and increased penalties for the sale and supply of these drugs were supported. Most Australians did not want illicit drugs legalised and illicit drugs were more likely than licit drugs to be associated with the concept of a drug 'problem'.

Drugs recently used (in the last 12 months)

Between 1993 and 2007, for Australians aged 14 years or older the proportion that had recently used a drug fell for tobacco and marijuana/cannabis but rose for alcohol and most of the illicit drugs.

Table 2.1: Summary of recent[a] drug use: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, Australia, 1993 to 2007

Drug/behaviour	1993	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
			(per cent)			
Tobacco	29.1	27.2	24.9	23.2	20.7	19.4 #
Alcohol	77.9	78.3	80.7	82.4	83.6	82.9
Illicits						
Marijuana/cannabis	12.7	13.1	17.9	12.9	11.3	9.1 #
Pain-killers/analgesics[b]	1.7	3.5	5.2	3.1	3.1	2.5 #
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills[b]	0.9	0.6	3.0	1.1	1.0	1.4 #
Steroids[b]	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	—	—
Barbiturates[b]	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1
Inhalants	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4
Heroin	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.2
Methadone[c] or Buprenorphine[e]	n.a.	n.a.	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other opiates/opioids[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.3	0.2	0.2
Meth/amphetamine (speed)[b]	2.0	2.1	3.7	3.4	3.2	2.3 #
Cocaine	0.5	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.0	1.6 #
Hallucinogens	1.3	1.8	3.0	1.1	0.7	0.6
Ecstasy[d]	1.2	0.9	2.4	2.9	3.4	3.5
Ketamine	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.3	0.2
GHB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.1	0.1
Injected drugs	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.5
Any illicit	*14.0*	*17.0*	*22.0*	*16.9*	*15.3*	*13.4 #*
None of the above	21.0	17.8	14.2	14.7	13.7	14.1

(a) Used in the last 12 months. For tobacco and alcohol, 'recent use' means daily, weekly and less-than-weekly smokers and drinkers respectively.

(b) For non-medical purposes.

(c) Non-maintenance.

(d) This category included substances known as 'Designer drugs' before 2004.

(e) This category did not include buprenorphine before 2007.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- Between 1993 (29.1%) and 2007 (19.4%) there was a steady decline in the proportion of persons who had recently smoked tobacco.
- The proportion of the population recently using alcohol increased over the 11 years from 1993 to 2004, from 77.9% to 83.6% but declined slightly in 2007 to 82.9%.
- Recent use of marijuana/cannabis has declined since 1998, with the proportion of recent users in 2007 (9.1%) dropping to the lowest proportion seen since 1993.

Drugs ever used

In 2007, alcohol and tobacco were the drugs most commonly ever used by the Australian community (Table 2.2). With the exception of marijuana/cannabis, the proportion of the population who had used illicit drugs at some time in their life was relatively low.

Table 2.2: Summary of drugs ever used/tried: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, Australia, 1993 to 2007

	Ever tried[a]			Ever used[b]			
Drug/behaviour	**1993**	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**	
				(per cent)			
Tobacco	50.9	47.4	50.8	49.4	47.1	44.6	#
Alcohol	88.0	87.8	89.6	90.4	90.7	89.9	#
Illicits							
Marijuana/cannabis	34.7	31.1	39.1	33.1	33.6	33.5	
Pain-killers/analgesics[c]	n.a.	12.3	11.5	6.0	5.5	4.4	#
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills[c]	n.a.	3.2	6.2	3.2	2.8	3.3	#
Steroids[c]	0.3	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	
Barbiturates[c]	1.4	1.2	1.6	0.9	1.1	0.9	
Inhalants	3.7	2.4	3.9	2.6	2.5	3.1	#
Heroin	1.7	1.4	2.2	1.6	1.4	1.6	
Methadone[d] or Buprenorphine[f]	n.a.	n.a.	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	
Other opiates/opioids[c]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.2	1.4	0.9	#
Meth/amphetamine (speed)[c]	5.4	5.7	8.8	8.9	9.1	6.3	#
Cocaine	2.5	3.4	4.3	4.4	4.7	5.9	#
Hallucinogens	7.3	7.0	9.9	7.6	7.5	6.7	#
Ecstasy[e]	3.1	2.4	4.8	6.1	7.5	8.9	#
Ketamine	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.0	1.1	
GHB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.5	0.5	
Injected drugs	1.9	1.3	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	
Any illicit	*38.9*	*39.3*	*46.0*	*37.7*	*38.1*	*38.1*	
None of the above	8.0	8.1	6.7	7.5	7.9	8.2	

(a) Tried at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used at least once in lifetime.

(c) For non-medical purposes.

(d) Non-maintenance.

(e) This category included substances known as 'Designer drugs' before 2004.

(f) This category did not include buprenorphine before 2007.

Notes

1. For tobacco, 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2007 figures represent proportions, of the population, that have smoked more than 100 cigarettes in their lifetime.
2. For alcohol, figures represent proportions of the population who have consumed a full serve of alcohol.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- In 2007, 44.6% Australians aged 14 years or older had smoked at least 100 cigarettes or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their lifetime, declining from the proportion in 2004 (47.1%).
- In 2007, nine out of every ten (89.9%) people had consumed a full serve of alcohol in their lifetime.
- Marijuana/cannabis had been used at least once by one-third of Australians aged 14 years or older in 2007 (33.5%).
- Over one-third of the population of Australians aged 14 years or older had ever used any illicit drug (38.1%) in 2007.

Age of initiation—ever used

The mean ages at which Australians first used most licit and illicit drugs have changed very little between 1995 and 2007 (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Mean age of initiation[a] of lifetime drug use, Australia, 1995 to 2007

Drug/behaviour	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
			(years)		
Tobacco	15.6	15.7	15.5	15.9	15.8
Alcohol	17.3	17.1	17.1	17.2	17.0
Illicits					
Marijuana/cannabis	19.1	18.7	18.5	18.7	18.8
Pain-killers/analgesics[b]	19.0	19.7	18.9	23.4	20.9
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills[b]	23.8	23.4	22.8	25.2	25.7
Steroids[b]	18.7	21.6	22.5	25.2	23.9
Barbiturates[b]	18.2	19.7	18.7	19.6	19.6
Inhalants	16.1	17.5	17.6	18.6	19.3
Heroin	20.6	21.5	20.7	21.2	21.9
Methadone[c] or Buprenorphine[e]	n.a.	21.6	21.8	24.8	23.3
Meth/amphetamine[b]	20.2	19.9	20.4	20.8	20.9
Cocaine	21.1	22.3	22.6	23.5	23.1
Hallucinogens	19.1	18.8	19.1	19.5	19.6
Ecstasy[d]	22.7	22.7	21.9	22.8	22.6
Ketamine	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	23.7	24.0
GHB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	23.7	24.6
Injected drugs	n.a.	20.7	20.2	21.7	21.3
Any illicit	*18.9*	*18.8*	*18.6*	*19.4*	*19.1*

(a) Age first tried/used drug.

(b) For non-medical purposes.

(c) Non-maintenance.

(d) This category included substances known as 'Designer drugs' before 2004.

(e) This category did not include buprenorphine before 2007.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- For tobacco and alcohol, the mean ages of initiation remained relatively stable between 1995 and 2007 at around 16 years of age for tobacco and 17 years of age for alcohol.
- The mean age of initiation for first use of all illicit substances surveyed either remained stable or changed slightly between 2004 and 2007.

Availability of drugs

Survey respondents were asked whether they had been offered or had the opportunity to use selected drugs in the preceding 12 months (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Offered or had the opportunity to use selected drugs: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Drug	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Tobacco	58.0	53.7	47.6	44.7	52.8	49.2
Alcohol	92.9	91.5	87.7	87.0	90.3	89.3
Illicits						
Marijuana/cannabis	24.4	20.4	16.8	13.9	20.6	17.1
Pain-killers/analgesics[(a)]	40.9	15.5	41.6	15.3	41.3	15.4
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills[(a)]	6.9	6.2	6.7	5.8	6.8	6.0
Steroids[(a)]	1.1	1.8	0.5	0.9	0.8	1.3
Barbiturates[(a)]	1.0	1.3	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.1
Inhalants	4.0	4.1	2.0	2.3	3.0	3.2
Heroin	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9
Meth/amphetamine[(a)]	8.3	6.1	5.4	3.7	6.8	4.9
Cocaine	3.6	4.7	2.6	3.1	3.1	3.9
Naturally occurring hallucinogens	2.6	2.1	1.5	1.5	2.1	1.8
LSD/synthetic hallucinogens	2.9	2.0	1.6	1.3	2.2	1.7
Ecstasy[(b)]	9.7	9.6	6.0	6.6	7.8	8.1
Ketamine	1.9	1.2	1.3	0.8	1.6	1.0
GHB	1.5	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.2	0.8
Kava	2.5	2.3	1.6	1.3	2.0	1.8

(a) For non-medical purposes.

(b) This category included substances known as 'Designer drugs' before 2004.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- One in two Australians (49.2%) aged 14 years or older had been offered or had tobacco available for use, whereas nine in ten (89.3%) had been offered or had alcohol available for use.
- Between 2004 and 2007, the availability of licit drugs declined; more so for tobacco (from 52.8% to 49.2%) than for alcohol (from 90.3% to 89.3%).
- Approximately one-sixth (17.1%) of the population were offered or had the opportunity to use marijuana/cannabis. The proportion with access to marijuana/cannabis was lower than in 2004 (20.6%).
- The availability of pain-killers/analgesics (both prescription and over-the-counter) for non-medical purposes decreased substantially from 41.3% in 2004 to 15.4% in 2007. The availability of all other illicit drugs surveyed remained stable or changed little for this period.

Drugs thought to be associated with a drug 'problem'

Respondents were asked to name the drug they thought of when people talked about a drug 'problem'. In 2007, heroin, marijuana/cannabis and meth/amphetamine were the drugs most commonly associated with a drug problem (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Drug first nominated[(a)] when asked about a 'drug problem': proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Drug first nominated	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Tobacco	4.1	3.3	2.5	2.0	3.3	2.6
Alcohol	10.2	10.8	9.8	10.2	10.0	10.5
Marijuana/cannabis	29.3	25.8	29.1	24.6	29.2	25.2
Pain-killers/analgesics[(b)]	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills[(b)]	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.3
Steroids[(b)]	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Barbiturates[(b)]	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2
Inhalants	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3
Heroin	39.7	29.7	39.1	30.9	39.4	30.3
Meth/amphetamine[(b)]	5.2	16.0	5.8	16.8	5.5	16.4
Cocaine	6.3	7.2	7.2	7.1	6.7	7.1
Naturally occurring hallucinogens	—	—	0.1	—	0.1	—
LSD/synthetic hallucinogens	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4
Ecstasy[(c)]	2.2	3.7	2.9	4.7	2.6	4.2
GHB	—	0.1	—	0.1	—	0.1
Ketamine	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kava	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tea/coffee/caffeine	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Drugs other than listed	—	0.2	0.1	0.2	—	0.2
None/can't think of any	0.5	1.0	0.7	1.2	0.6	1.1
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

(a) Respondents were allowed to nominate up to two drugs and 'problems', but only the first mentioned drug is shown here.

(b) For non-medical purposes.

(c) This category included substances known as 'Designer drugs' before 2004.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Of the drugs 'first thought of' as associated with a drug 'problem':

- The proportion of persons nominating heroin decreased from 39.4% in 2004 to 30.3% in 2007.
- Marijuana/cannabis was nominated by 25.2% of respondents in 2007; a decrease over the proportion in 2004 (29.2%).
- The proportion of persons nominating meth/amphetamine increased markedly from 5.5% in 2004 to 16.4% in 2007.

Acceptability of drug use

Respondents were asked if they personally approved or disapproved of the regular use by adults of various drugs. In 2007, answers to this question were categorised as 'strongly approve', 'approve', 'neither approve nor disapprove', 'disapprove', 'strongly disapprove', or 'don't know enough to say'. In earlier surveys, the categories were limited to 'approve' and 'disapprove'. The 2007 results are for those respondents who said they 'strongly approve' or 'approve' the use of drugs by adults (shown together as 'approve') and for those who neither approved nor disapproved. Despite the difficulty of comparison, the 2004 results for persons who said they 'approve' are shown.

In 2007, 45.2% of Australians aged 14 years or older 'strongly approved' or 'approved' the use of alcohol by adults (Table 2.6). The corresponding figure for tobacco was 14.3%. For illicit drugs, less than 5% of Australians in 2007 thought that regular use by adults was acceptable, with the exceptions of pain-killers (6.6%) and marijuana (10.4%).

Table 2.6: Approval of regular drug use by adults: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	2004	2007					
	Persons	Males		Females		Persons	
Drug	Approve	Approve	Neither[(a)]	Approve	Neither[(a)]	Approve	Neither[(a)]
				(per cent)			
Tobacco	39.3	15.8	23.2	12.9	21.9	14.3	22.5
Alcohol	77.0	51.7	32.0	38.9	35.5	45.2	33.8
Marijuana/cannabis	23.2	8.7	18.8	4.6	15.1	6.6	16.9
Pain-killers/analgesics[(b)]	8.0	11.5	14.9	9.4	11.8	10.4	13.3
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills[(b)]	5.0	4.8	14.7	3.4	11.2	4.1	12.9
Steroids[(b)]	2.2	2.3	8.7	0.9	5.4	1.6	7.0
Barbiturates[(b)]	1.2	1.3	7.3	0.8	4.5	1.0	5.9
Inhalants	0.8	1.0	2.2	0.7	1.7	0.8	2.0
Heroin	0.9	1.3	2.6	0.7	1.8	1.0	2.2
Methadone[(c)] or Buprenorphine[(e)]	1.1	1.1	4.2	1.0	3.0	1.0	3.6
Meth/amphetamine(b)	3.1	1.5	3.2	0.9	2.1	1.2	2.7
Cocaine/crack	2.0	1.8	3.7	1.0	2.3	1.4	3.0
Hallucinogens	2.7	2.1	6.3	1.2	3.5	1.7	4.9
Ecstasy[(d)]	4.2	2.5	5.6	1.5	3.5	2.0	4.6
GHB	0.9	0.8	3.6	0.7	2.0	0.7	2.8
Ketamine	1.0	1.1	4.4	0.8	2.5	1.0	3.4

(a) Neither approve nor disapprove.

(b) For non-medical purposes.

(c) Non-maintenance.

(d) This category included substances known as 'Designer drugs' before 2004.

(e) This category did not include buprenorphine before 2007.

Notes

1 The 2004 and 2007 results shown in the table are not comparable. See text for explanation.

2 Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- For all drugs, in 2007, approval of their regular use by adults was greater among males than females.

Support for the legalisation of illicit drugs

Support for the legalisation of illicit drugs declined slightly between 2004 and 2007 (Table 2.7). A question about support for the legalisation of ecstasy was included for the first time in the 2007 questionnaire.

Table 2.7: Support[(a)] for the personal use of selected drugs being made legal: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Drug	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Marijuana/cannabis	29.6	23.8	24.4	18.5	27.0	21.2
Heroin	5.5	5.8	4.4	4.6	5.0	5.2
Meth/amphetamine	5.5	5.4	3.9	3.9	4.7	4.6
Cocaine	5.4	6.3	3.9	4.5	4.7	5.4
Ecstasy	n.a.	7.1	n.a.	4.8	n.a.	6.0

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on those respondents who were informed enough to indicate their level of support).

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- Support for the legalisation of personal use of marijuana/cannabis fell between 2004 and 2007, from 27.0% to 21.2%. Males were more likely than females to support legalisation (in 2007, 23.8% versus 18.5%).
- Support for the legalisation of heroin and cocaine increased between 2004 and 2007. Males were more likely to support legalisation than females.
- A question about legalisation of ecstasy was included for the first time in the 2007 survey, with only 6.0% of Australians supporting this proposal.

Support for increased penalties for the sale or supply of illicit drugs

Respondents were asked to consider to what extent they would support or oppose increased penalties for the sale or supply of a selected group of illicit drugs. A question about support for increased penalties for ecstasy was included for the first time in the 2007 questionnaire.

In 2007, large majorities supported an increase in penalties (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: Support[(a)] for increased penalties for the sale or supply of selected illicit drugs: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Drug	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004	2007
			(per cent)			
Marijuana/cannabis	54.2	59.6	62.0	66.4	58.2	63.0
Heroin	85.0	84.3	87.1	85.1	86.0	84.7
Meth/amphetamine	82.0	84.2	85.3	85.2	83.7	84.7
Cocaine	83.0	82.4	86.1	84.2	84.6	83.3
Ecstasy	n.a.	80.5	n.a.	83.6	n.a.	82.1

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on those respondents who were informed enough to indicate their level of support).

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- In 2007, there were higher levels of support for increased penalties for the sale or supply of illicit drugs, compared with 2004.
- As in 2004, in 2007 females were more likely than their male counterparts to support increased penalties for sale or supply of drugs. For example in 2007, 66.4% of females supported increased penalties for the sale or supply of marijuana/cannabis compared with 59.6% of males.
- A question on penalties for sale or supply of ecstasy was introduced for the first time in 2007. This proposition was supported by 82.1% of Australians.

Nominal distribution of a drugs budget

Respondents were asked how they would distribute $100 on education, law enforcement and treatment, for each of a selected list of drugs. In 2007 the question addressed alcohol, tobacco and all illicit drugs, while in 2004 the question addressed alcohol, tobacco and three separate illicit drugs (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9: Preferred distribution of a hypothetical $100 for reducing the use of selected drugs, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Alcohol		Tobacco		Marijuana/ cannabis	Meth/am- phetamine	Heroin/ cocaine	Illicit drug use
Reduction measure	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004	2004	2004	2007
					($)			
Education	40.80	39.80	45.60	43.70	41.70	34.10	31.40	34.00
Treatment	30.50	30.70	30.40	30.90	26.70	24.50	24.70	25.70
Law enforcement	28.70	29.40	24.00	25.40	31.50	41.40	43.90	40.30

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- In 2007, the amounts nominated to be spent on education for tobacco ($43.70) and alcohol ($39.80) exceeded the amounts nominated for treatment and for law enforcement.
- For illicit drugs, law enforcement ($40.30) attracted the largest component of the $100 budget.

3 Consumption patterns

In this chapter, for tobacco, alcohol and selected illicit drugs and behaviours, prevalences in 2007 are presented and compared with earlier results. Statistically significant differences between 2004 and 2007 are highlighted. In some cases further analysis is provided.

Note that, for some drugs discussed below, caution should be used when interpreting the results as they are based on respondents' identification of the substance used and not on empirical testing.

Tobacco

Between 1991 and 2007, daily tobacco smoking rates declined by more than 30% to the lowest levels seen over the 16-year period (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Tobacco smoking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, Australia, 1991 to 2007

Smoking status	1991	1993	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
				(per cent)			
Daily	24.3	25.0	23.8	21.8	19.5	17.4	16.6
Weekly	2.8	2.3	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.3 #
Less than weekly	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.3	2.0	1.6	1.5
Ex-smokers[(a)]	21.4	21.7	20.2	25.9	26.2	26.4	25.1 #
Never smoked[(b)]	49.0	49.1	52.6	49.2	50.6	52.9	55.4 #

(a) Smoked at least 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life, and no longer smoke.

(b) Never smoked 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- In 2007, less than one in six (16.6%) of the population aged 14 years or older reported smoking daily, declining from 17.4% in 2004. The proportion of the population smoking weekly also declined over the 3-year period, from 1.6% in 2004 to 1.3% in 2007.
- More than half (55.4%) of Australians aged 14 years or older had never smoked, which statistic has increased since 1991.

Tobacco use by sex

Although the proportion of Australians aged 14 years or older that smoked daily fell between 2004 and 2007, for both males and females the significant improvement was in the increase between 2004 and 2007 in the proportion that had never smoked, which rose to 50.9% for males and to 59.8% for females (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Tobacco smoking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Smoking status	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Daily	18.6	18.0	16.3	15.2	17.4	16.6
Weekly	2.0	1.4 #	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.3 #
Less than weekly	1.9	1.7	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.5
Ex-smokers[(a)]	29.2	27.9	23.6	22.4	26.4	25.1 #
Never smoked[(b)]	48.2	50.9 #	57.5	59.8 #	52.9	55.4 #

(a) Smoked at least 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life, and no longer smoke.

(b) Never smoked 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- The proportion of males who smoked daily, weekly or less than weekly declined between 2004 and 2007—significantly from 2.0% to 1.4% for weekly smoking.
- As for 2004, in 2007 females were less likely than males to have smoked, at any frequency.

Tobacco use by age

In 2007, age-specific smoking prevalence peaked for daily, weekly and less-than-weekly smokers in the 20–29 years age group (Table 3.3). Nevertheless, this age group also had one of the highest proportions that had never smoked (60.5%), second only to 14–19-year-olds (87.9%).

Table 3.3: Tobacco smoking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Age group						
Smoking status	**14–19**	**20–29**	**30–39**	**40–49**	**50–59**	**60+**	**14+**
				(per cent)			
				Males			
Daily	6.0	23.7	22.7	21.8	20.1	10.8	18.0
Weekly	1.0	2.5	1.9	1.4	1.2	0.6	1.4
Less than weekly	1.6	3.1	2.5	2.0	0.5	0.5	1.7
Ex-smokers[(a)]	1.7	12.0	23.0	29.7	38.3	48.3	27.9
Never smoked[(b)]	89.7	58.6	49.9	45.0	40.0	39.8	50.9
				Females			
Daily	8.7	19.0	18.9	20.6	15.0	8.8	15.2
Weekly	1.7	2.4	1.8	0.9	0.6	0.4	1.2
Less than weekly	0.7	2.7	1.9	1.5	0.5	0.3	1.3
Ex-smokers[(a)]	2.9	13.5	25.2	27.8	27.4	27.4	22.4
Never smoked[(b)]	86.0	62.3	52.1	49.2	56.6	63.1	59.8
				Persons			
Daily	7.3	21.4	20.8	21.2	17.5	9.7	16.6
Weekly	1.3	2.4	1.8	1.2	0.9	0.5	1.3
Less than weekly	1.2	2.9	2.2	1.8	0.5	0.4	1.5
Ex-smokers[(a)]	2.3	12.8	24.1	28.8	32.8	37.2	25.1
Never smoked[(b)]	87.9	60.5	51.0	47.1	48.3	52.2	55.4

(a) Smoked at least 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life, and no longer smoke.

(b) Never smoked 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- Less than one in ten teenagers (14–19-year-olds) smoked tobacco in 2007, with 7.3% smoking daily. A further 1.3% smoked weekly and 1.2% smoked less than weekly.
- Female teenagers (8.7%) were more likely than male teenagers (6.0%) to be daily smokers. For all other ages, males had higher smoking rates than females.
- By a slender margin, smoking rates were highest amongst 20–29-year-olds: 21.4% smoked daily, 2.4% smoked weekly and 2.9% smoked less than weekly.

Tobacco use of younger people

Estimates of tobacco use by younger people (such as 12–19-year-olds) should be interpreted with caution due to the low smoking prevalence and smaller sample sizes of this population group. Nevertheless comparisons such as 'younger females (89.1%) were less likely than younger males (92.1%) to have never smoked (at least 100 cigarettes)' remain valid (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Tobacco smoking status: proportion of 12–19-year-olds and all ages, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Age group				
Smoking status	**12–15**	**16–17**	**18–19**	***12–19***	**12+**
			(per cent)		
			Males		
Daily	1.5	4.1	11.6	*4.7*	17.5
Weekly	—	0.5	2.4	*0.7*	1.4
Less than weekly	0.3	1.4	2.8	*1.2*	1.6
Ex-smokers[(a)]	—	0.9	4.3	*1.3*	27.0
Never smoked[(b)]	98.2	93.2	78.9	*92.1*	52.5
			Females		
Daily	2.5	7.4	13.7	*6.6*	14.8
Weekly	—	1.4	3.6	*1.3*	1.2
Less than weekly	0.2	1.1	0.8	*0.6*	1.2
Ex-smokers[(a)]	1.5	1.7	5.3	*2.5*	21.8
Never smoked[(b)]	95.9	88.5	76.6	*89.1*	61.0
			Persons		
Daily	2.0	5.7	12.6	*5.6*	16.1
Weekly	—	0.9	3.0	*1.0*	1.3
Less than weekly	0.2	1.2	1.8	*0.9*	1.4
Ex-smokers[(a)]	0.7	1.3	4.8	*1.9*	24.4
Never smoked[(b)]	97.1	90.9	77.8	*90.7*	56.8

(a) Smoked at least 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life, and no longer smoke.

(b) Never smoked 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- About one in twenty (5.6%) 12–19-year-olds reported smoking daily in 2007.
- In 2007, 2.0% of 12–15-year-olds, 5.7% of 16–17-year-olds, and 12.6% of 18–19-year-olds smoked daily.
- In 2007, 16–17-year-old females were nearly twice as likely as their male counterparts to smoke daily (7.4% versus 4.1%) or to have stopped smoking (1.7% versus 0.9%).

Population estimates of the number of smokers

It is estimated that in 2007 approximately 2.9 million Australians aged 14 years or older were daily smokers (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Tobacco smoking status: number of smokers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Age group						
Smoking status	**14–19**	**20–29**	**30–39**	**40–49**	**50–59**	**60+**	**14+**
				(number)			
				Males			
Daily	52,800	350,700	339,300	328,900	265,600	196,400	1,533,900
Weekly	8,500	36,300	27,800	21,700	15,400	11,600	121,300
Less than weekly	13,900	46,400	37,700	30,900	6,400	9,200	144,400
Ex-smokers[(a)]	15,300	177,300	343,200	448,500	506,400	880,800	2,371,000
Never smoked[(b)]	786,700	866,100	745,000	677,800	529,000	725,400	4,330,200
				Females			
Daily	72,800	272,100	285,300	313,900	201,000	182,800	1,328,400
Weekly	14,100	34,600	27,700	13,700	7,600	8,800	106,500
Less than weekly	6,300	38,300	29,300	23,600	6,800	5,900	110,300
Ex-smokers[(a)]	24,200	193,400	380,400	423,400	366,900	570,600	1,958,800
Never smoked[(b)]	723,100	891,400	786,000	750,100	758,500	1,312,600	5,221,300
				Persons			
Daily	125,500	622,700	624,600	642,800	466,600	379,200	2,862,400
Weekly	22,500	70,900	55,500	35,400	23,000	20,400	227,800
Less than weekly	20,100	84,700	67,000	54,500	13,200	15,100	254,800
Ex-smokers[(a)]	39,500	370,800	723,600	871,900	873,400	1,451,700	4,329,900
Never smoked[(b)]	1,509,800	1,757,500	1,531,000	1,427,900	1,287,500	2,037,700	9,551,300

(a) Smoked at least 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life, and no longer smoke.

(b) Never smoked 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent amount of tobacco in their life.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- There were more male than female daily smokers in all tabulated age groups with the exception of 14–19-year-olds.
- The number of ex-smokers (4.3 million) and persons who had never smoked (9.6 million) far exceeded the number of smokers (3.3 million) in 2007.

Number of cigarettes smoked

The mean number of cigarettes smoked per week was highest in the 50–59 years age group (124.9 cigarettes), and lowest among teenagers (59.8 cigarettes) (Table 3.6). The number of cigarettes smoked among recent tobacco smokers includes both manufactured and 'roll-your-own' cigarettes.

Table 3.6: Recent[(a)] tobacco smokers: mean number of cigarettes smoked per week, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

Age group	Males	Females	Persons
		(number)	
14–19	53.3	65.0	59.8
20–29	84.0	72.2	78.8
30–39	100.0	86.6	93.8
40–49	106.8	104.7	105.8
50–59	135.9	110.2	124.9
60+	106.0	101.6	103.9
Aged 14+	**102.1**	**91.4**	**97.2**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- The mean number of cigarettes smoked per week increased with age until the 50–59 years age group (125 cigarettes). This trend applied to males and females.
- Only teenage female smokers smoked on average more cigarettes per week than their male counterparts (65.0 versus 53.3 cigarettes).

Alcohol

Between 1991 and 2007, for Australians aged 14 years or older, alcohol consumption patterns remained largely unchanged (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Alcohol drinking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, Australia, 1991 to 2007

Drinking status	1991	1993	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
			(per cent)				
Daily	10.2	8.5	8.8	8.5	8.3	8.9	8.1 #
Weekly	41.0	39.9	35.2	40.1	39.5	41.2	41.3
Less than weekly	30.4	29.5	34.3	31.9	34.6	33.5	33.5
Ex-drinker[(a)]	12.0	9.0	9.5	10.0	8.0	7.1	7.0
Never a full serve of alcohol	6.5	13.0	12.2	9.4	9.6	9.3	10.1 #

(a) Has consumed at least a full serve of alcohol, but not in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- The proportion of Australians aged 14 years or older that has never had a full serve of alcohol has generally increased since 1998 with a significant increase between 2004 and 2007, from 9.3% to 10.1%.
- The proportion of the population drinking daily has remained between 8 and 9 per cent since 1993, declining significantly between 2004 and 2007, from 8.9% to 8.1% of Australians aged 14 years or older.

Alcohol use by sex

The alcohol drinking status of Australians aged 14 years or older varied considerably between males and females (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Alcohol drinking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Drinking status	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Daily	12.0	10.8 #	5.8	5.5	8.9	8.1 #
Weekly	47.6	46.8	35.0	35.9	41.2	41.3
Less than weekly	27.5	28.3	39.4	38.5	33.5	33.5
Ex-drinker[(a)]	6.0	5.8	8.2	8.1	7.1	7.0
Never a full glass of alcohol	6.9	8.2 #	11.6	12.1	9.3	10.1 #

(a) Has consumed at least a full serve of alcohol, but not in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- In 2007, males (10.8%) were almost twice as likely as females (5.5%) to drink daily.
- The proportion of the population who consumed alcohol daily declined significantly between 2004 (8.9%) and 2007 (8.1%).
- Between 2004 and 2007, weekly drinking increased marginally (from 41.2% to 41.3%) driven by an increase in weekly drinking by females (from 35.0% to 35.9%) contrary to a decline for males (from 47.6% to 46.8%).
- The proportions of Australians aged 14 years or older abstaining from alcohol (never had a full serve of alcohol) increased significantly between 2004 (9.3%) and 2007 (10.1%), with a greater change seen among males than females, proportionately and absolutely.

Alcohol use by age

The proportion of daily drinkers increased with age; the peak for daily drinkers was for those aged 60 years or older, and the peak for less-than-weekly drinkers was among teenagers (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Alcohol drinking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Age group						
Drinking status	**14–19**	**20–29**	**30–39**	**40–49**	**50–59**	**60+**	**14+**
				(per cent)			
				Males			
Daily	1.4	2.8	6.1	11.4	15.9	21.4	10.8
Weekly	23.0	55.7	54.8	51.0	49.6	39.2	46.8
Less than weekly	46.4	30.3	28.2	26.7	24.5	22.1	28.3
Recent drinker [(a)]	*70.8*	*88.9*	*89.1*	*89.2*	*90.1*	*82.7*	*86.0*
Ex-drinker[(b)]	3.3	2.8	5.2	5.7	5.7	10.3	5.8
Never a full serve of alcohol	25.9	8.3	5.7	5.1	4.2	7.0	8.2
				Females			
Daily	0.5	1.7	3.0	5.6	7.8	10.5	5.5
Weekly	18.8	39.6	40.4	42.7	38.0	30.6	35.9
Less than weekly	52.0	44.0	43.1	37.7	36.2	27.8	38.5
Recent drinker [(a)]	*71.3*	*85.2*	*86.5*	*86.1*	*81.9*	*68.9*	*79.9*
Ex-drinker[(b)]	2.6	5.8	6.4	6.2	8.4	14.2	8.1
Never a full serve of alcohol	26.1	8.9	7.0	7.8	9.7	16.9	12.1
				Persons			
Daily	1.0	2.3	4.6	8.5	11.8	15.6	8.1
Weekly	20.9	47.8	47.5	46.8	43.8	34.6	41.3
Less than weekly	49.1	37.0	35.7	32.3	30.4	25.1	33.5
Recent drinker [(a)]	*71.0*	*87.1*	*87.8*	*87.6*	*86.0*	*75.3*	*82.9*
Ex-drinker[(b)]	3.0	4.3	5.8	5.9	7.1	12.4	7.0
Never a full serve of alcohol	26.0	8.6	6.3	6.5	7.0	12.3	10.1

(a) Has consumed at least a full serve of alcohol in the previous 12 months.

(b) Has consumed at least a full serve of alcohol, but not in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- In 2007, a greater proportion of males than of females (aged 14 years or older) drank daily, for all age groups tabulated. The proportion of males was twice or more than that for females for all age groups tabulated except 20–29-year-olds.
- In 2007, for all age groups, drinking alcohol (daily, weekly or less than weekly) was more prevalent than not drinking alcohol. Only for teenagers (71.0%) and those aged 60 years or older (75.3%) was the prevalence of drinking alcohol less than the population average of 82.9%
- For all age groups a greater proportion of females than of males consumed alcohol less than weekly. The difference was least for teenagers and those aged 60 years or older.

Use of alcohol by younger people

Estimates of alcohol use by younger people should be interpreted with caution due to the low prevalence and smaller sample sizes for these age groups. Nevertheless, in 2007, over two in three 12–15-year-olds (67.5%) had never consumed a full serve of alcohol (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: Alcohol drinking status: proportion of the population aged 12 years or older, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Age group				
Drinking status	**12–15**	**16–17**	**18–19**	***12–19***	**12+**
			(per cent)		
			Males		
Daily	—	1.7	2.6	*1.1*	10.5
Weekly	1.0	20.0	46.7	*17.3*	45.3
Less than weekly	28.8	50.9	40.9	*37.4*	27.7
Ex-drinker[(a)]	2.7	5.2	1.5	*3.1*	5.7
Never a full serve of alcohol	67.5	22.1	8.3	*41.2*	10.8
			Females		
Daily	0.5	—	0.7	*0.4*	5.4
Weekly	3.2	15.4	35.3	*14.4*	34.8
Less than weekly	26.8	63.2	51.9	*42.3*	37.7
Ex-drinker[(a)]	2.1	3.0	1.9	*2.3*	7.9
Never a full serve of alcohol	67.4	18.4	10.2	*40.6*	14.3
			Persons		
Daily	0.2	0.8	1.6	*0.7*	7.9
Weekly	2.1	17.8	41.1	*15.9*	40.0
Less than weekly	27.8	57.0	46.3	*39.8*	32.8
Ex-drinker[(a)]	2.4	4.2	1.7	*2.7*	6.8
Never a full serve of alcohol	67.5	20.3	9.2	*40.9*	12.5

(a) Has consumed at least a full serve of alcohol, but not in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- Rates of abstinence from drinking alcohol (never had a full serve of alcohol) fell sharply from two thirds (67.5%) for 12–15-year-olds to a rate for 18–19-year-olds (9.2%) closer to the rate of abstinence for all Australians aged 12 years or older (12.5%).
- By contrast, rates of daily alcohol consumption increased with age (to 1.6% for 18–19-year-olds) but did not reach the 'population' rate (7.9% for Australians aged 12 years or older).
- In the age group 12–15 years, higher proportions of females than males consumed alcohol daily and weekly. In the age groups 16–17 and 18–19 years, higher proportions of females than males consumed alcohol less than weekly. For all other combinations of age group and rate of alcohol consumption, the proportion of males was higher than that for females.

Population estimates of the number of alcohol drinkers

In 2007 over 14.2 million Australians aged 14 years or older consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Alcohol drinking status: number of recent[a] and non- drinkers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Age group						
Drinking status	**14–19**	**20–29**	**30–39**	**40–49**	**50–59**	**60+**	**14+**
				(number)			
				Males			
Daily	12,300	42,000	91,200	172,500	210,700	390,200	919,100
Weekly	201,500	823,200	817,900	768,900	656,100	714,200	3,982,400
Less than weekly	407,000	447,600	421,500	403,100	324,700	403,500	2,407,100
Ex-drinker[b]	29,100	40,700	77,800	85,700	75,800	187,600	496,700
Never a full glass of alcohol	227,300	123,200	84,500	77,600	55,400	127,800	695,500
				Females			
Daily	4,500	24,500	45,600	85,200	104,200	218,700	482,200
Weekly	157,800	565,800	609,100	651,600	509,700	636,100	3,130,500
Less than weekly	436,900	628,400	651,000	575,500	484,900	578,200	3,355,700
Ex-drinker[b]	21,900	83,400	97,300	94,300	112,400	295,700	704,600
Never a full glass of alcohol	219,300	127,700	105,900	118,200	129,800	351,900	1,052,400
				Persons			
Daily	16,900	66,500	136,800	257,700	314,900	609,200	1,401,400
Weekly	359,300	1,388,900	1,427,100	1,420,400	1,165,800	1,350,700	7,113,200
Less than weekly	843,900	1,076,200	1,072,400	978,500	809,500	981,600	5,762,500
Ex-drinker[b]	51,000	124,100	175,100	180,000	188,200	483,300	1,201,200
Never a full glass of alcohol	446,600	251,000	190,400	195,800	185,200	479,400	1,747,800

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

(b) Has consumed at least a full serve of alcohol, but not in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- In 2007, about 1.4 million Australians consumed alcohol daily, 7.1 million weekly and a further 5.8 million less than weekly.
- Of 14–19-year-old Australians, 220,000 females and 230,000 males had not consumed a full serve of alcohol.

Risk of alcohol-related harm in the long term

In the 12 months prior to (responding to) the survey, 72.6% of Australians aged 14 years or older consumed alcohol in quantities that were considered a low risk to health in the long term by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC 2001) (Table 3.12). A further 17.1% did not consume alcohol in the previous 12 months. The remaining 10.3% consumed alcohol in a way considered risky or a high risk to their health, in the long term.

Table 3.12: Alcohol consumption, risk of harm in the long term: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

Age group	Abstainers[a]	Level of risk[b]		
		Low risk	Risky	High risk
		(per cent)		
		Males		
14–19	29.2	63.7	4.4	2.6
20–29	11.1	73.4	9.3	6.2
30–39	10.9	79.2	6.2	3.7
40–49	10.8	79.6	6.0	3.5
50–59	9.9	78.9	6.1	5.1
60+	17.3	75.3	4.9	2.5
14+	**14.0**	**75.8**	**6.2**	**3.9**
		Females		
14–19	28.7	60.7	6.7	3.9
20–29	14.8	68.8	11.0	5.4
30–39	13.5	75.8	7.7	3.0
40–49	13.9	74.1	9.3	2.6
50–59	18.1	72.3	6.9	2.7
60+	31.1	63.4	4.7	0.8
14+	**20.1**	**69.4**	**7.6**	**2.8**
		Persons		
14–19	29.0	62.2	5.6	3.2
20–29	12.9	71.1	10.2	5.8
30–39	12.2	77.5	7.0	3.3
40–49	12.4	76.8	7.7	3.1
50–59	14.0	75.6	6.5	3.9
60+	24.7	68.9	4.8	1.6
14+	**17.1**	**72.6**	**6.9**	**3.4**

(a) Not consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months.

(b) For males, the consumption of up to 28 standard drinks per week is considered 'Low risk', 29 to 42 per week 'Risky', and 43 or more per week 'High risk'. For females, the consumption of up to 14 standard drinks per week is considered 'Low risk', 15 to 28 per week 'Risky', and 29 or more per week 'High risk'.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- Persons in the 20–29 years age group were most likely to consume alcohol in a way that put them at risk of alcohol-related harm in the long term.
- Females in the age groups 14–19 to 40–49 years were more likely than their male counterparts to consume alcohol at risky or high-risk levels for long-term harm. The gap between males and females was widest for teenagers.

Risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term

There are also risks to health in the short term from alcohol consumption. In 2007, 48.3% of Australians aged 14 years or older drank in a pattern that is considered low risk for alcohol-related harm in the short term (Table 3.13). Similarly, 7.8% drank at risky or high-risk levels for harm in the short term at least once a week. A further 12.6% drank at risky or high-risk levels for harm in the short term at least once a month (but not as often as once a week) and a final 14.2% did so once or more a year, but not monthly.

Table 3.13: Alcohol consumption, risk of harm in the short term: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

Age group	Abstainers[a]	Low risk	Risky and high risk[b]		
			At least yearly	At least monthly	At least weekly
			(per cent)		
			Males		
14–19	29.2	33.4	12.9	15.7	8.8
20–29	11.1	26.1	19.0	26.6	17.2
30–39	10.9	40.6	21.1	17.5	10.0
40–49	10.8	47.0	18.9	14.5	8.7
50–59	9.9	59.4	12.9	9.5	8.2
60+	17.3	67.8	6.4	4.5	4.0
14+	**14.0**	**47.2**	**15.1**	**14.3**	**9.3**
			Females		
14–19	28.7	30.1	12.9	18.8	9.5
20–29	14.8	29.2	20.7	23.1	12.2
30–39	13.5	46.9	19.5	13.3	6.8
40–49	13.9	53.4	16.2	10.2	6.3
50–59	18.1	62.5	10.2	4.8	4.4
60+	31.1	61.3	3.9	2.1	1.5
14+	**20.1**	**49.3**	**13.4**	**10.9**	**6.2**
			Persons		
14–19	29.0	31.8	12.9	17.2	9.1
20–29	12.9	27.6	19.8	24.9	14.7
30–39	12.2	43.8	20.3	15.3	8.4
40–49	12.4	50.2	17.6	12.3	7.5
50–59	14.0	61.0	11.6	7.1	6.3
60+	24.7	64.3	5.1	3.2	2.7
14+	**17.1**	**48.3**	**14.2**	**12.6**	**7.8**

(a) Not consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months.

(b) For males, the consumption of 7 or more standard drinks on any one day. For females, the consumption of 5 or more standard drinks on any one day.

Notes

1. Respondents that have been coded 'Can't say/No answer' to all relevant alcohol questions are assumed to be low-risk drinkers for this alcohol risk analysis.
2. Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- At all ages, greater proportions of the population drank at risky or high-risk levels for short-term harm compared with risk for long-term harm.
- Overall, about one third (34.6% = 14.2% + 12.6% + 7.8%) of persons aged 14 years or older put themselves at risk or high risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term on at least one drinking occasion during the previous 12 months.
- Males aged 20–29 years (17.2%) were the most likely group to consume alcohol at risky or high-risk levels for short-term harm at least weekly.
- More than a quarter (26.3% = 17.2% + 9.1%) of 14–19-year-olds put themselves at risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term at least once a month during the previous 12 months; higher among females of this age (28.3%) than males (24.5%).

Illicit drugs

In 2007, over one-third (38.1%) of the population aged 14 years or older had ever used an illicit drug (Table 3.14).

As defined elsewhere in this report, illicit drugs include illegal drugs (such as marijuana/cannabis), prescription or over-the-counter pharmaceuticals (such as tranquillisers/sleeping pills) used for illicit purposes, and other substances used inappropriately (such as naturally occurring hallucinogens and inhalants).

Any illicit drug

Table 3.14: Use of any illicit drug: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older and numbers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Ever used[(a)]			Recent use[(b)]		
Age group	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**
			(per cent)			
14–19	21.1	26.5	23.8	15.6	17.7	16.6
20–29	55.8	52.1	54.0	32.4	22.9	27.7
30–39	60.2	55.5	57.9	20.3	13.0	16.7
40–49	53.0	42.3	47.6	14.9	8.5	11.6
50–59	39.3	25.7	32.5	8.7	5.4	7.0
60+	14.8	10.7	12.6	4.6	4.0	4.3
14+	**41.4**	**34.8**	**38.1**	**15.8**	**11.0**	**13.4**
			(number)			
14–19	185,400	222,900	408,300	137,000	148,500	285,400
20–29	824,600	744,800	1,569,100	479,100	328,000	806,400
30–39	899,500	837,900	1,737,400	303,200	196,900	499,800
40–49	799,300	645,100	1,443,300	224,600	129,200	352,900
50–59	520,000	344,200	864,800	114,900	72,100	187,000
60+	270,200	222,700	492,600	83,100	84,200	167,200
14+	**3,519,100**	**3,037,000**	**6,554,900**	**1,346,400**	**961,200**	**2,306,200**

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used illicit drugs

- Three in five (60.2%) of male 30–39-year-olds had used an illicit drug in their lifetime—this age group had the greatest proportion of persons who had ever used an illicit drug.
- Less than one quarter (23.8%) of teenagers had ever used an illicit drug.
- Female teenagers were more likely than male teenagers to have ever used an illicit drug (26.5% versus 21.1%). However, for all other age groups, males were more likely than females to have ever used an illicit drug.

Recent use of illicit drugs

- In 2007, there were 2.3 million people aged 14 years or older who had recently used an illicit drug. Of these 1.3 million were male, and 1.0 million were female.

- For all age groups, males were more likely than females to have recently used an illicit drug, with the exception of 14–19-year-olds (females 17.7% versus male 15.6%).
- There were approximately 200,000 fewer recent illicit drug users in 2007 than 2004.
- The group with the highest proportion of recent illicit drug users was 20–29-year-old males (32.4%, 479,100 users).
- One in six (16.6%, 285,400) teenagers had used illicit drugs in the past 12 months.

Of Australians aged 14 years or older who had ever used illicit drugs, 65% had not used illicit drugs in the last 12 months—males: 62%, females: 68%.

Recent use of any illicit drug 1995 to 2007

For both males and females, the proportion of the population who had used any illicit drug in the previous 12 months generally fell over the period 1995 to 2007 (Table 3.15). For males the fall from 18.2% in 2004 to 15.8% in 2007 was significant, as was the fall for females from 12.5% to 11.0%.

Table 3.15: Recent[(a)] use of any illicit drug: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**
					(per cent)					
14–19	37.9	38.3	28.8	20.9	15.6 #	25.0	37.1	26.6	21.8	17.7
20–29	46.1	47.1	40.4	37.5	32.4	27.4	33.5	30.5	25.6	22.9
30–39	24.7	27.5	25.2	25.5	20.3 #	13.6	20.4	15.6	15.1	13.0
40–49	12.0	22.1	14.4	15.0	14.9	7.9	10.1	9.5	9.5	8.5
50–59	3.5	7.2	8.2	7.6	8.7	3.9	13.4	5.2	4.8	5.4
60+	1.8	5.2	4.0	4.1	4.6	3.7	6.3	3.8	4.0	4.0
14+	**21.1**	**25.0**	**19.8**	**18.2**	**15.8 #**	**12.9**	**19.1**	**14.2**	**12.5**	**11.0 #**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- The general decreases, between 2004 and 2007, in the proportions of males and females who had used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months was even more marked for 14–30-year-olds. For example, the decreases for teenagers were from 20.9% to 15.6% for males and from 21.8% to 17.7% for females.
- Contrary to the decline noted above, recent use by 50–59-year-old males and females, rose between 2004 and 2007 (7.6% to 8.7% for males, 4.8% to 5.4% for females).

Recent illicit drug use of younger people

Estimates of illicit drug use by younger people should be interpreted with caution due to the low prevalence and smaller sample sizes for these age groups—notwithstanding this, recent use amongst teenagers, increased with age (Table 3.16). For any illicit drug, recent use rose from 4.9% of 12–14 –year-olds to 23.4% of 18–19-year-olds.

Table 3.16: Recent use of illicit drugs: proportion of the population aged 12 years or older, by selected age, Australia, 2007

	Age group				
Drug type	**12–15**	**16–17**	**18–19**	***12–19***	**12+**
			(per cent)		
Marijuana/cannabis	2.7	15.0	19.0	*9.9*	8.8
Pain-killers/analgesics[(a)]	1.1	2.5	2.4	*1.8*	2.5
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills[(a)]	—	1.1	2.2	*0.8*	1.3
Steroids[(a)]	—	—	0.4	*0.2*	0.1
Barbiturates[(a)]	—	0.2	0.9	*0.3*	0.1
Inhalants	0.6	1.2	1.0	*0.8*	0.4
Heroin	—	0.2	0.7	*0.2*	0.2
Methadone[(b)]	—	—	—	—	0.1
Other opiates/opioids[(b)]	—	—	0.6	*0.2*	0.2
Meth/amphetamine[(a)]	0.4	1.0	2.9	*1.2*	2.2
Cocaine	0.2	1.0	2.0	*0.8*	1.6
Hallucinogens	0.1	0.7	2.8	*0.9*	0.6
Ecstasy	0.5	4.9	9.1	*3.8*	3.4
Ketamine	—	—	0.7	*0.3*	0.2
GHB	—	—	0.3	*0.1*	0.1
Injected drugs	—	0.2	0.8	*0.4*	0.5
Any illicit	*4.6*	*18.9*	*23.4*	*13.0*	*13.0*
None of the above	95.4	81.1	76.6	*87.0*	87.0

(a) For non-medical purposes.

(b) Non-maintenance.

Notes

1. 'Any illicit' does not include 'other opiates', ketamine, GHB or injecting drug use for 12–13-year-olds. Statistics reported for these substances are based on those people aged 14 years or older only.
2. Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- In 2007, approximately one in forty (2.7%) of 12–15-year-olds used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months compared with six in forty (15.0%) of 16–17-year-olds and one in five (19.0%) of 18–19-year-olds.
- For 12–19-year-olds, the frequency of recent use of painkillers/analgesics for non-medical purposes (1.8%), meth/amphetamine for non-medical purposes (1.2%) and ecstasy (3.8%) were the only frequencies greater than 1%.
- The prevalence among 18–19-year-olds of recent ecstasy use (9.1%) is the highest prevalence for any age group and illicit drug, with the exception of marijuana/cannabis.

Marijuana/cannabis use

In 2007, one in three (33.5%, about 5.8 million) of Australians aged 14 years or older had used marijuana/cannabis at some time in their lives (Table 3.17). Of the same Australians, almost one in ten (9.1%, 1.6 million) had used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months.

Table 3.17: Use of marijuana/cannabis: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older and numbers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Ever used[(a)]			Recent use[(b)]		
Age group	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**
			(per cent)			
14–19	18.0	22.1	20.0	13.1	12.7	12.9
20–29	52.2	46.8	49.5	25.7	15.9	20.8
30–39	57.1	52.1	54.6	15.9	8.4	12.1
40–49	49.6	38.8	44.1	11.6	5.1	8.3
50–59	35.2	20.9	28.0	5.4	2.2	3.8
60+	8.8	5.0	6.8	0.6	0.4	0.5
14+	**37.1**	**30.0**	**33.5**	**11.6**	**6.6**	**9.1**
			(number)			
14–19	157,500	185,600	343,000	114,900	106,800	221,700
20–29	771,300	669,400	1,440,200	380,000	226,700	605,700
30–39	852,400	786,100	1,638,600	237,500	126,600	364,200
40–49	747,900	591,300	1,338,300	174,900	77,500	251,800
50–59	465,000	280,200	745,200	71,500	29,300	100,800
60+	160,800	103,600	264,300	11,500	8,200	19,600
14+	**3,154,800**	**2,616,100**	**5,769,600**	**990,200**	**575,000**	**1,563,700**

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used marijuana/cannabis

- Males aged 14 years or older were more likely than their female counterparts to have ever used marijuana/cannabis (37.1%, 3.2 million versus 30.0%, 2.6 million).
- One in five (20.0%, 0.3 million) teenagers (14–19-year-olds) had ever used marijuana/cannabis.
- Australians aged 30–39 years were more likely (54.6%, 1.6 million) than those in the other age groups to have used marijuana/cannabis at some time in their lives.

Recent use of marijuana/cannabis

- Males aged 14 years or older were more likely than the corresponding females to have used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months (11.6%, 1.0 million versus 6.6%, 0.6 million).
- Almost one in eight (12.9%, 0.2 million) teenagers had used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months.
- Australians aged 20–29 years were most likely to have used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months—one in five (20.8%, 0.6 million) had done so. One quarter (25.7%, 0.4 million) of males in this group had used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months.

Of Australians aged 14 years or older who had ever used marijuana/cannabis, 68.7% of males and 78.0% of females had not used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months.

Recent use of marijuana/cannabis 1995 to 2007

After peaking in 1998, the proportion of both males and females aged 14 years or older that had used marijuana/cannabis in the previous 12 months declined steadily (Table 3.18). Between 2004 and 2007, the decline was significant.

Table 3.18: Recent[(a)] use of marijuana/cannabis: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**
					(per cent)					
14–19	35.9	35.0	26.6	18.4	13.1 #	20.1	34.2	22.6	17.4	12.7 #
20–29	43.7	43.7	35.1	32.4	25.7 #	23.4	29.3	23.2	19.5	15.9 #
30–39	19.0	24.1	20.8	21.4	15.9 #	8.2	16.3	11.7	10.6	8.4 #
40–49	8.0	16.6	10.7	11.9	11.6	2.2	6.3	6.6	5.7	5.1
50–59	1.9	5.6	4.5	4.3	5.4	1.2	7.6	2.0	2.1	2.2
60+	—	1.1	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.5	1.2	0.3	0.2	0.4
14+	**18.0**	**21.3**	**15.8**	**14.4**	**11.6 #**	**8.6**	**14.7**	**10.0**	**8.3**	**6.6 #**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

Heroin

In 2007, of Australians aged 14 years or older, 1.6% (0.3 million) had used heroin in their lifetime (Table 3.19). Less than 1.0% of the same Australians had used heroin in the previous 12 months.

Table 3.19: Use of heroin: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older and numbers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Ever used[(a)]			Recent use[(b)]		
Age group	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**
			(per cent)			
14–19	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.3
20–29	2.5	1.4	2.0	0.7	0.2	0.5
30–39	3.2	2.1	2.7	0.4	0.3	0.4
40+	1.9	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.0	0.1
14+	**2.1**	**1.0**	**1.6**	**0.3**	**0.1**	**0.2**
			(number)			
14–19	5,100	900	5,900	4,400	900	5,300
20–29	37,600	20,100	57,600	10,700	2,700	13,400
30–39	47,300	32,300	79,600	6,200	5,000	11,200
40+	88,900	36,200	125,000	4,600	1,700	6,400
14+	**178,800**	**89,500**	**268,100**	**25,900**	**10,300**	**36,200**

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used heroin

- Males aged 14 years or older were more likely than their female counterparts to have ever used heroin (2.1%, 0.2 million versus 1.0%, 0.1 million). This was the case for all other age groups as well.
- Less than 1.0% of teenagers had ever used heroin.
- In, 2007, Australians aged 30–39 years were more likely than those in the other age groups to have ever used heroin—2.7% of this age group (0.1 million) had ever used heroin.

Recent use of heroin

- Australian males aged 14 years or older were more likely than their female counterparts to have used heroin in the previous 12 months (0.3%, 25,900 versus 0.1%, 10,300).
- Australian males aged 20–29 years had the highest proportion and number of all age groups of recent heroin users (0.7%, 10,700).
- There were more than twice as many male as female recent heroin users—25,900 versus 10,300.

Of Australians aged 14 years or older who had ever used heroin, about 90% had not used heroin in the last 12 months.

Recent use of heroin 1995 to 2007

The proportion of both males and females who had used heroin in the previous 12 months has fluctuated over the period 1995 to 2007, but was generally lower in 2007 (Table 3.20).

Table 3.20: Recent[(a)] use of heroin: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**
					(per cent)					
14–19	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.9	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.1
20–29	2.2	2.9	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.2	0.2
30–39	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3
40+	—	0.4	0.2	—	0.1	—	0.1	0.1	—	—
14+	**0.5**	**1.0**	**0.3**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0.2**	**0.5**	**0.2**	**0.1**	**0.1**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- No age-group-specific or population changes in recent heroin use between 2004 and 2007 were statistically significant, including 14–15-year-old males, increasing from 0.1% in 2004 to 0.5% in 2007.

Meth/amphetamine

In 2007, of Australians aged 14 years or older, 6.3% (1.1 million) had ever used meth/amphetamine and 2.3% (0.4 million) had recently used meth/amphetamine (Table 3.21).

Table 3.21: Use of meth/amphetamine: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older and numbers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Ever used[(a)]			Recent use[(b)]		
Age group	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**
			(per cent)			
14–19	1.4	2.9	2.1	1.0	2.2	1.6
20–29	18.2	13.7	16.0	9.8	4.8	7.3
30–39	13.4	9.5	11.4	4.9	2.9	3.9
40+	3.8	1.3	2.5	0.7	0.2	0.4
14+	**7.7**	**4.9**	**6.3**	**3.0**	**1.6**	**2.3**
			(number)			
14–19	12,100	24,700	36,800	8,500	18,300	26,800
20–29	269,400	196,400	465,500	144,300	68,400	212,400
30–39	199,400	142,600	342,100	72,600	44,200	116,900
40+	175,900	63,900	239,400	31,700	8,600	40,200
14+	**655,600**	**426,300**	**1,081,200**	**256,200**	**138,900**	**394,800**

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used meth/amphetamine

- Males aged 14 years or older were more likely than their female counterparts to have ever used meth/amphetamine (7.7%, 0.7 million versus 4.9%, 0.4 million).
- Of teenagers, 2.1% (36,800) had ever used meth/amphetamine.
- The age group most likely to have ever used meth/amphetamine was the 20–29-year-olds (16.0%, 0.5 million).

Recent use of meth/amphetamine

- Males aged 14 years or older were more likely than their female counterparts to have used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months (3.0%, 0.3 million versus 1.6%, 0.1 million).
- Of teenagers (Australians aged 14–19 years old) 1.6% (26,800) were recent users of meth/amphetamine; female teenagers were twice as likely as male teenagers to have used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months—2.2% versus 1.0%.
- The age group most likely to have used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months was the 20–29-year-olds, of whom 7.3% (0.2 million) were recent users.
- Males aged 20–29 years, of whom 9.8% (0.1 million) used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months, were the group most likely to have done so in 2007.

Of Australians aged 14 years or older who had ever used meth/amphetamine, about 60% had not used meth/amphetamine in the last 12 months.

Recent use of meth/amphetamine 1995 to 2007

The proportion of males who had used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months declined between 1998 and 2007, but such a clear trend is not evident for females (Table 3.22).

Table 3.22: Recent[(a)] use of meth/amphetamine: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
					(per cent)					
14–19	2.9	5.5	5.7	4.0	1.0 #	1.9	6.3	6.8	4.9	2.2 #
20–29	10.5	16.4	14.1	12.4	9.8	6.3	7.6	8.2	9.0	4.8 #
30–39	2.1	4.1	4.0	5.7	4.9	0.5	1.2	2.2	2.5	2.9
40+	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
14+	**2.8**	**5.0**	**4.2**	**4.0**	**3.0 #**	**1.5**	**2.5**	**2.7**	**2.5**	**1.6 #**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- For both males and females, there were significant falls between 2004 and 2007 in recent use of meth/amphetamine, for teenagers and overall.

Form of meth/amphetamine used

Australians aged 14 years or older who had used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months were asked to nominate the main form of meth/amphetamine they had used in that time. Powder (51.2%) and 'crystal, ice' (26.7%) were the two most common main forms of meth/amphetamine used in the previous 12 months (Table 3.23).

Table 3.23: Main form of meth/amphetamine used: proportion of recent[(a)] users aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

Form of drug	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Powder	53.6	46.6	51.2
Liquid	1.1	1.7	1.3
Crystal,ice	25.8	28.5	26.7
Base/Paste/Pure	10.8	15.4	12.4
Tablet	6.1	3.3	5.1
Prescription amphetamines	2.6	4.3	3.2
Other	—	0.2	0.1

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- A higher proportion of male, than of female, users of meth/amphetamine (53.6% versus 46.6%) nominated powder as the main form used in the previous 12 months.
- Conversely, a higher proportion of females than of males (28.5% versus 25.8%) nominated the 'crystal, ice' form.

Ecstasy

In 2007, 8.9% (1.5 million) of Australians aged 14 years or older had ever used ecstasy and 3.5% (0.6 million) were recent users (Table 3.24).

Table 3.24: Use of ecstasy by Australians aged 14 years or older: population proportions and numbers, by age and sex, 2007

	Ever used[(a)]			Recent use[(b)]		
Age group	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**
			(per cent)			
14–19	4.8	7.2	6.0	4.0	6.0	5.0
20–29	25.7	22.1	23.9	13.8	8.7	11.2
30–39	19.8	14.2	17.0	6.3	3.2	4.7
40+	3.2	1.5	2.4	0.9	0.2	0.6
14+	**10.2**	**7.6**	**8.9**	**4.4**	**2.7**	**3.5**
			(number)			
14–19	42,100	60,200	102,200	34,900	50,600	85,500
20–29	379,000	315,900	694,500	203,500	123,800	326,800
30–39	295,000	214,500	509,600	94,500	47,700	142,200
40+	151,100	75,200	226,200	43,400	12,000	55,300
14+	**865,400**	**665,700**	**1,530,700**	**374,900**	**233,800**	**608,400**

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used ecstasy

- Males aged 14 years or older were more likely to have ever used ecstasy than their female counterparts (10.2%, 0.9 million versus 7.6%, 0.7 million).
- In 2007, 6.0% of teenagers had ever used ecstasy with females more likely than males to have ever used ecstasy (7.2% versus 4.8%).
- With the exception of 14–19-year-olds, males were more likely than females to have ever used ecstasy.
- The group most likely to have ever used ecstasy was 20–29-year-old males (25.7%, 0.4 million).

Recent use of ecstasy

- Of males aged 14 years or older, 4.4% (0.4 million) had used ecstasy in the previous 12 months, which was a higher prevalence than that for females (2.7%, 0.2 million).
- One in twenty (5.0%, 0.1 million) of teenagers had used ecstasy in the previous 12 months.
- Of 20–29-year-olds, 11.2% (0.3 million) were recent users of ecstasy, which was the highest prevalence for any age group.
- Of 20–29-year-old males, 13.8% (0.2 million) were recent users of ecstasy, which was the highest rate for any group.

Of Australians aged 14 years or older who had ever used ecstasy, about 60% had not used ecstasy in the last 12 months.

Recent use of ecstasy 1995 to 2007

The proportion of the population that had used ecstasy in the previous 12 months increased sharply between 1995 and 1998 but the rate of change slowed between 1998 and 2007.

(Table 3.25). Nevertheless, the increase between 1998 and 2007 is notable: 1.1 percentage points for males and the same for females.

Table 3.25: Recent[(a)] use of ecstasy: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
					(per cent)					
14–19	0.9	3.3	5.7	3.9	4.0	0.1	3.0	4.3	4.7	6.0
20–29	5.1	11.9	12.5	15.1	13.8	2.9	4.9	8.3	8.8	8.7
30–39	0.6	1.9	3.1	5.8	6.3	0.4	0.8	1.7	2.3	3.2
40+	—	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.9	—	1.0	0.2	0.1	0.2
14+	**1.1**	**3.3**	**3.6**	**4.4**	**4.4**	**0.6**	**1.6**	**2.3**	**2.4**	**2.7**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- The proportions of both male and female 20–29-year-olds using ecstasy in each year between 2004 and 2007 exceeded those of any other age group.

Inhalants

In 2007, 3.1% (0.5 million) of Australians aged 14 years or older had ever used inhalants and 0.4% had used inhalants in the previous 12 months (Table 3.26).

Table 3.26: Use of inhalants: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older and numbers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Ever used[(a)]			Recent use[(b)]		
Age group	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
			(per cent)			
14–19	1.6	2.4	2.0	0.9	1.3	1.1
20–29	6.3	4.0	5.2	1.1	0.2	0.7
30–39	7.9	4.3	6.1	0.8	0.1	0.4
40+	2.4	1.2	1.8	0.3	0.0	0.2
14+	**3.9**	**2.3**	**3.1**	**0.6**	**0.2**	**0.4**
			(number)			
14–19	13,800	20,300	34,100	8,100	11,100	19,200
20–29	93,000	57,900	150,600	16,500	3,500	19,900
30–39	117,700	65,500	183,200	11,400	1,400	12,700
40+	110,200	58,500	168,700	16,000	1,800	17,800
14+	**334,700**	**202,200**	**536,700**	**52,000**	**17,600**	**69,600**

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used inhalants

- Males were more likely than females to have ever used inhalants, with the exception of teenagers.

- The 30–39 years age group had the highest proportion and number of persons ever using inhalants (6.1%, 0.2 million) compared with all other age groups.

Recent use of inhalants

- Males were about three times as likely as females to have used inhalants in the preceding 12 months.
- With the exception of teenage females and 20–29-year-old males, fewer than one in a 100 in any age/sex group had used inhalants in the previous 12 months.

Recent use of inhalants 1995 to 2007

The proportion of the population who had used inhalants in the previous 12 months barely changed over the period 1995 to 2007 (Table 3.27).

Table 3.27: Recent[(a)] use of inhalants: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**
					(per cent)					
14–19	0.8	1.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.9	3.0	1.2	1.3	1.3
20–29	2.1	2.4	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.0	1.9	0.5	0.6	0.2
30–39	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.8	—	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
40+	—	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	—	0.1	0.1	—	—
14+	**0.6**	**0.9**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.3**	**0.8**	**0.3**	**0.3**	**0.2**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- Between 2004 and 2007, the proportion of persons using inhalants remained (statistically) unchanged across all age groups.

Cocaine

In 2007, 5.9% (1.0 million) of Australians aged 14 years or older had ever used cocaine and 1.6% had used cocaine in the previous 12 months (Table 3.28).

Table 3.28: Use of cocaine: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older and numbers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Ever used[(a)]			Recent use[(b)]		
Age group	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**
			(per cent)			
14–19	1.4	2.5	2.0	0.8	1.4	1.1
20–29	14.2	9.5	11.9	7.0	3.1	5.1
30–39	13.0	9.8	11.4	3.8	1.9	2.9
40+	4.3	1.9	3.1	0.5	0.1	0.3
14+	**7.3**	**4.6**	**5.9**	**2.2**	**1.0**	**1.6**
			(number)			
14–19	12,600	21,300	33,900	7,300	11,600	18,900
20–29	209,100	136,200	344,800	103,700	44,000	147,300
30–39	194,400	147,400	341,800	56,600	29,100	85,700
40+	202,200	92,200	294,100	23,900	5,900	29,700
14+	**617,300**	**397,500**	**1,014,400**	**190,700**	**90,700**	**281,100**

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used cocaine

- In 2007, males aged 14 years or older were more likely than their female counterparts to have ever used cocaine (7.3%, 0.6 million versus 4.6%, 0.4 million).
- One in 50 (2.0%, 33,900) teenagers had ever used cocaine.
- Australian 20–29-year-old males (14.2%, 0.2 million) were more likely than any other age/sex group to have ever used cocaine.

Recent use of cocaine

- Males were more than twice as likely to have used cocaine in the preceding 12 months than females (2.2%, 0.2 million versus 1.0%, 0.1 million)
- In 2007, 1.1% (18,900) teenagers used cocaine at least once in the previous 12 months.
- Males aged 20–29 years (7.0%, 0.1 million) were more likely to have used cocaine in the previous 12 months than any other age/sex group.

Of Australians aged 14 years or older who had ever used cocaine, about 70% had not used cocaine in the last 12 months.

Recent use of cocaine 1995 to 2007

The proportions of males and females who had used cocaine in the previous 12 months fluctuated over the period 1995 to 2007 but was at a high in 2007 (Table 3.29).

Table 3.29: Recent[a] use of cocaine: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
					(per cent)					
14–19	—	0.6	1.7	0.6	0.8	2.0	1.0	1.3	1.4	1.4
20–29	5.6	5.0	5.2	3.7	7.0 #	2.4	2.9	3.4	2.3	3.1
30–39	0.7	2.7	1.8	2.4	3.8	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.9
40+	—	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5 #	—	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
14+	**1.1**	**1.9**	**1.6**	**1.3**	**2.2 #**	**0.8**	**0.9**	**1.0**	**0.8**	**1.0**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- Between 2004 and 2007, the proportion of both males and females recently using cocaine increased to 2.2% for males and 1.0% for females.
- Throughout the period 1995 to 2007, 20–29-year-old males were the most likely group to have used cocaine in the previous 12 months.
- Significant increases in recent use between 2004 and 2007 were seen for males aged 20–29 years (from 3.7% to 7.0%), 40 years or older (from 0.2 %to 0.5%) and for all males (from 1.3% to 2.2%).

Injecting drug use

In 2007, it is estimated that a low proportion of the population aged 14 years or older had ever (1.9%, 0.3 million) or recently (0.5%, 0.1 million) injected drugs (Table 3.30).

Table 3.30: Use of injecting drugs[a]: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older and numbers, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Ever used[b]			Recent use[c]		
Age group	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
			(per cent)			
14–19	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.4
20–29	3.3	2.0	2.6	1.4	0.6	1.0
30–39	4.9	3.1	4.0	1.3	0.6	1.0
40+	1.8	0.7	1.2	0.3	0.1	0.2
14+	**2.5**	**1.3**	**1.9**	**0.7**	**0.3**	**0.5**
			(number)			
14–19	5,800	6,600	12,400	3,900	2,100	6,000
20–29	48,400	28,100	76,400	21,300	8,500	29,700
30–39	73,200	46,700	119,800	19,000	9,800	28,800
40+	84,200	35,300	119,400	14,600	3,400	18,000
14+	**211,500**	**116,700**	**328,100**	**58,700**	**23,800**	**82,400**

(a) Any illicit drug injected.

(b) Used at least once in lifetime.

(c) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Ever used injecting drugs

- Of Australians aged 14 years or older, more males (2.5%, 0.2 million) than females (1.3%, 0.1 million) had ever injected drugs.
- Of teenagers, 0.7% (12,400) had ever injected drugs.
- Australians aged 30–39 years were the age group most likely to have ever injected drugs.

Recent use of injecting drugs

- Of Australians aged 14 years or older, more males (0.7%, 0.1 million) than females (0.3%, 23,800) had injected drugs in the previous 12 months.
- Of teenagers, 0.4% (6,000) had injected drugs in the previous 12 months.
- Australians aged 40 years or older were the least likely (0.2%, 18,000) age group to have injected drugs in the previous 12 months.

Of Australians aged 14 years or older who had ever injected illicit drugs, about 75% had not injected illicit drugs in the last 12 months.

Recent use of injecting drugs 1995 to 2007

The proportion of the population who had injected drugs in the previous 12 months was low over the period 1995 to 2007 (1.0% or less throughout for males, 0.4% or 0.3% throughout for females) (Table 3.31).

Table 3.31: Recent[(a)] use of injecting drugs[(b)]: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older by age and sex, Australia, 1995 to 2007

	Males					Females				
Age group	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**	**1995**	**1998**	**2001**	**2004**	**2007**
					(per cent)					
14–19	1.1	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.9	1.2	0.6	1.0	0.2
20–29	2.8	3.0	2.8	1.5	1.4	0.7	1.1	1.3	0.6	0.6
30–39	0.6	0.9	0.6	1.1	1.3	—	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.6
40+	—	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	—	0.1	0.1	0.1
14+	**0.7**	**1.0**	**0.8**	**0.6**	**0.7**	**0.4**	**0.4**	**0.4**	**0.3**	**0.3**

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

(b) Any illicit drug injected.

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- In absolute terms, between 1995 and 2007, the changes in the proportion of males or females who had injected drugs in the previous 12 months were small.
- For males, the age groups most likely to have injected drugs in the previous 12 months were 20–29-year-olds (1.4%) and 30–39-year-olds (1.3%). For females, the age groups most likely to have injected drugs in the previous 12 months were the same, 20–29-year-olds and 30–39-year-olds (both 0.6%).

Illicit drugs injected

In 2007, respondents who had ever injected an illicit drug were asked to name the *single* drug they had first injected. Also, respondents who had injected one or more illicit drugs in the previous 12 months (recent injectors) were asked to name those drugs.

Table 3.32: Injecting drug use: first and recent[a] illicit drugs injected, proportion of ever or recent injecting drug users aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2007

	First injected[b]			Recently injected[c]		
Drug	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**
			(per cent)			
Heroin	28.8	32.1	30.0	41.8	34.8	39.7
Methadone	0.3	1.7	0.8	14.2	4.0	11.2
Other opiates	3.3	1.9	2.8	13.0	18.7	14.6
Meth/amphetamine	49.6	51.8	50.4	67.2	68.7	67.7
Cocaine	1.8	3.5	2.4	6.8	1.2	5.2
Hallucinogens	1.7	2.2	1.8	2.6	1.5	2.3
Ecstasy	0.6	1.7	1.0	11.5	3.3	9.1
Benzodiazepines	—	—	—	7.8	8.6	8.0
Steroids	11.1	—	7.2	6.9	0.4	5.0
Other drugs	2.8	5.1	3.6	7.0	12.9	8.7

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

(b) Answered by respondents who have ever injected.

(c) Answered by respondents who have injected in the previous 12 months.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

First drug injected

- Meth/amphetamine was the most common (50.4%) first drug injected by injecting drug users (Table 3.32). Females (51.8%) were more likely than males (49.6%) to have injected meth/amphetamine as their first injected drug.
- Heroin (30.0%) was the next most prevalent first illicit drug injected by injecting drug users. Again, females (32.1%) were more likely than males (28.8%) to have first injected heroin.

Drugs injected recently

- The most common drug among recent injecting drug users was meth/amphetamine (67.7%). Similar proportions of male (67.2%) and female (68.7%) recent injecting drug users injected meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months.
- The second most common drug among injecting drug users was heroin, with 39.7% of recent injecting drug users injecting this drug in the previous 12 months. Males (41.8%) were more likely than females (34.8%) to have injected heroin in the previous 12 months.

Source of supply

In 2007, illicit drugs were most likely sourced from friends or acquaintances, with the exceptions of heroin, which was mostly sourced from dealers, and analgesics and inhalants, which were mostly bought at shops (Table 3.33).

Table 3.33: Source of supply of illicit drugs, by type of drug, Australia, 2007

Drug	Friend or acquaintance	Relative	Dealer	Doctor shopping/ forged script	Buy at shop	Other[c]
			(per cent)			
Marijuana/cannabis	68.5	4.8	19.5	..	..	7.2
Analgesics[a]	15.4	14.7	3.0	3.3	53.3	10.3
Tranquillisers[a]	39.8	16.4	1.8	15.1	..	26.9
Steroids[a]	28.9	11.7	10.6	—	..	48.8
Inhalants	34.0	3.1	0.8	10.8	41.0	10.4
Heroin	29.1	2.7	63.6	—	..	4.6
Methadone[b]	38.3	—	37.5	—	..	24.2
Meth/amphetamine[a]	65.9	4.8	27.0	—	..	2.3
Cocaine	74.4	2.1	20.1	—	..	3.4
Hallucinogens	56.3	4.5	10.4	—	..	28.9
Ecstasy	72.2	3.2	21.6	—	..	2.7

(a) Non-medical use.

(b) Non-maintenance.

(c) Includes theft, 'at the gymnasium' and 'grew/made/picked it myself'.

Notes

1. Base for each substance equals respondents using in the previous 12 months.
2. Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- The majority of marijuana/cannabis users (68.5%) obtained this drug from friends and acquaintances. The proportion was similar for meth/amphetamine (65.9%), cocaine (74.5%), and ecstasy users (72.2%).
- However, a majority of heroin users (63.6%) obtained heroin from dealers.
- Purchasing at shops was the most common source of supply for users of analgesics for non-medical purposes (53.3%) and inhalant users (41.0%).
- Users of steroids were most likely (48.8%) to obtain this drug by 'other' methods—see note (c) to Table 3.33 above.

4 Community support for drug-related policy

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they would support or oppose specific policies, using a 5-point scale (strongly support, support, neither support nor oppose, oppose, and strongly oppose). Respondents also had the option of indicating that they did not know enough about the policy to give or withhold support. For the purposes of this chapter, responses of 'support' or 'strongly support' are taken as support for specific policies, and 'Don't know enough to say' are excluded from the analyses. The survey questions were expressed in terms of reducing problems associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana/cannabis and heroin.

Tobacco

Between 2004 and 2007, public support increased for the majority of measures to reduce the problems associated with tobacco (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Support[(a)] for tobacco measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Measure	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Banning smoking in the workplace	79.6	79.6	85.0	84.3	82.3	82.0
Banning smoking in pubs/clubs	65.6	74.9 #	70.4	79.0 #	68.1	77.0 #
Increasing tax on tobacco products to pay for health education	61.8	65.1 #	67.0	69.1 #	64.5	67.1 #
Increasing tax on tobacco products to contribute to treatment costs	64.9	66.9 #	69.2	70.2	67.1	68.6 #
Increasing tax on tobacco products to discourage smoking	60.3	63.7 #	66.1	67.6	63.3	65.7 #
Making it harder to buy tobacco in shops	60.9	64.4 #	66.2	68.4 #	63.6	66.4 #
Stricter enforcement of law against supplying to minors	87.9	88.5	91.1	91.5	89.6	90.1
Stricter penalties for sale or supply of tobacco products to minors	85.4	85.7	88.9	89.3	87.2	87.5
Bans on point of sale advertising and display of tobacco products	66.8	71.4 #	73.0	75.8 #	70.0	73.6 #
Implementing a licensing scheme for tobacco retailers	68.5	69.4	72.0	73.7 #	70.3	71.6 #

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- As was the case in 2004, the greatest level of support for tobacco interventions in 2007 was for 'Stricter enforcement of laws against supplying tobacco products to minors'. Of Australians aged 14 years or older nine in ten (90.1%) supported this measure.

- Again, as was the case in 2004, the lowest level of support was for 'Increasing tax on tobacco products to discourage smoking' (65.7% in 2007).

Alcohol

Support for possible measures to reduce the problems associated with alcohol increased between 2004 and 2007 for all but a few of the surveyed measures (Table 4.2). Where support fell the fall was not significant.

Table 4.2: Support[(a)] for alcohol measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Measure	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Increasing the price of alcohol	16.1	20.5 #	25.5	27.7 #	20.9	24.1 #
Reducing the number of outlets that sell alcohol	22.7	27.9 #	34.2	36.3 #	28.5	32.2 #
Reducing trading hours for pubs and clubs	27.3	35.4 #	36.6	42.4 #	32.0	38.9 #
Raising the legal drinking age	35.4	42.5 #	45.9	50.0 #	40.7	46.3 #
Increasing the number of alcohol-free public events	56.9	56.4	69.5	68.3	63.3	62.5
Increasing the number of alcohol-free dry zones	59.1	58.9	67.4	67.0	63.3	62.5
Serving only low-alcohol beverages at sporting events	53.8	54.5	67.2	65.5 #	60.6	60.1
Limiting TV advertising until after 9.30 p.m.	66.3	67.2	76.3	77.0	71.4	72.2
Banning alcohol sponsorship of sporting events	37.8	41.7 #	54.1	55.2	46.1	48.5 #
More severe penalties for drink driving	80.4	81.5	91.1	91.0	85.9	86.3
Stricter laws against serving drunk customers	79.9	79.9	87.7	86.8	83.8	83.3
Restricting late night trading of alcohol	45.5	54.0 #	58.1	61.9 #	51.9	58.0 #
Strict monitoring of late night licensed premises	68.4	72.4 #	75.7	77.9 #	72.1	75.2 #
Increasing the size of standard drink labels on alcohol containers	60.3	60.7	72.4	70.7 #	66.4	65.8
Adding national drinking guidelines to alcohol containers	63.9	66.1 #	75.7	75.7	69.9	70.9
Increasing tax on alcohol to pay for health, education and treatment of alcohol-related problems	31.5	35.5 #	45.5	47.0	38.6	41.3 #

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- As seen for tobacco, in general there was greater support for enforcement measures than for bans and taxation increases.
- There was an increase in 'Restricting late night trading of alcohol' from 51.9% in 2004 to 58.0% in 2007.
- Without exception, females were more likely to support these measures than were males.

Marijuana/cannabis

Support for two measures relating to marijuana use in medical settings remained relatively unchanged between 2004 and 2007 (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Support[(a)] for marijuana/cannabis measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Measure	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
A change in legislation permitting the use of marijuana for medical purposes	66.6	68.0	68.5	69.2	67.5	68.6
A clinical trial for people to use marijuana to treat medical conditions	72.6	72.6	74.5	74.6	73.5	73.6

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- Two-thirds (68.6%) of respondents supported 'A change in legislation permitting the use of marijuana for medical purposes' and almost three-quarters (73.6%) supported 'A clinical trial for people to use marijuana to treat medical conditions'.
- Females were slightly more likely than males to support either of these measures.

Heroin

Support for measures relating to the use of heroin increased between 2004 and 2007, for every measure surveyed (Table 4.4). By contrast support had fallen for every one of these measures between 2001 and 2004.

Table 4.4: Support[(a)] for heroin measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Measure	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Needle and syringe programs	52.9	63.7 #	56.2	70.2 #	54.6	67.0 #
Methadone maintenance programs	55.9	64.9 #	60.1	70.5 #	58.0	67.7 #
Treatment with drugs other than methadone	58.4	66.2 #	59.9	70.9 #	59.1	68.5 #
Regulated injecting rooms	39.4	47.7 #	40.3	52.1 #	39.8	49.9 #
Trial of prescribed heroin	27.6	32.2 #	24.0	33.6 #	25.8	32.9 #
Rapid detoxification therapy	72.7	76.8 #	74.1	80.9 #	73.4	78.8 #
Use of Naltrexone	69.2	73.5 #	66.8	76.0 #	68.0	74.7 #

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed α = 0.05).

- In both 2004 and 2007, support was strongest for measures relating to detoxification (73.4% and 78.8% respectively) and use of Naltrexone (68.0% and 74.7%).
- In 2007, support was higher among females than males for every measure surveyed.

5 Harm and psychological distress associated with drug use

This chapter presents analysis of alcohol- and illicit drug-related harm along with an examination of Kesslller-10 status and selected drug-consumption patterns.

Perpetrators of drug-related harm

Survey participants were asked how many times in the past 12 months they undertook specific potentially harmful activities while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Activities undertaken while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs in the past 12 months: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Influence and activity	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
Alcohol			(per cent)			
Drove a motor vehicle	18.6	16.2	8.3	8.0	13.4	12.1
Operated a boat	2.1	1.7	0.2	0.2	1.1	0.9
Operated hazardous machinery	1.3	1.4	—	0.1	0.7	0.8
Verbally abused someone	7.8	7.4	4.3	4.1	6.0	5.7
Physically abused someone	1.5	1.7	0.6	0.5	1.1	1.1
Caused damage to property	2.5	2.7	0.7	0.7	1.6	1.7
Stole money, goods or property	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4
Created a public disturbance or nuisance	4.0	4.2	1.7	1.6	2.8	2.9
Went swimming	7.3	7.1	3.2	3.3	5.2	5.2
Went to work	6.7	6.0	2.1	2.1	4.4	4.0
Other drugs						
Drove a motor vehicle	4.8	4.2	2.0	1.7	3.3	2.9
Operated a boat	0.7	0.4	—	—	0.3	0.2
Operated hazardous machinery	0.8	0.7	0.1	—	0.4	0.4
Verbally abused someone	1.1	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.9
Physically abused someone	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Caused damage to property	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4
Stole money, goods or property	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Created a public disturbance or nuisance	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.6
Went swimming	2.8	2.2	0.8	0.8	1.8	1.5
Went to work	2.8	2.5	1.0	0.8	1.9	1.6

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Perpetrators of drug-related harm—alcohol

Overall, the proportion of respondents who reported that they were likely to undertake a potentially harmful activity while under the influence of alcohol remained relatively stable between 2004 and 2007.

- Males were more likely than females to undertake potentially harmful activities while under the influence of alcohol.

- Between 2004 and 2007, the proportion of the population aged 14 years or older who drove a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol decreased from 13.4% to 12.1%.
- Males (16.2%) were more than twice as likely as females (8.0%) to drive while under the influence of alcohol.
- The proportion of persons who verbally abused someone while under the influence of alcohol also declined slightly between 2004 (6.0%) and 2007 (5.7%). Males (7.4%) were almost twice as likely as females (4.1%) to verbally abuse someone while under the influence of alcohol.

Perpetrators of drug-related harm—drugs other than alcohol

The prevalence of activities undertaken while under the influence of drugs other than alcohol was much lower than for alcohol.

- As seen above for alcohol-related harm, males were more likely than females to undertake the specified activities while under the influence of other drugs.
- The activity most likely to be undertaken while under the influence of other drugs in 2007 was driving a motor vehicle, which decreased from 3.3% in 2004 to 2.9% in 2007.
- Males (4.2%) were more than twice as likely as females (1.7%) to drive while under the influence of drugs other than alcohol.
- Approximately 1.5% of persons reported swimming or going to work while under the influence of other drugs in 2007. These findings also represent declines when compared with proportions in 2004 at 1.8% and 1.9% respectively.
- Less than 1% of persons undertook any of the remaining activities while under the influence of other drugs.

Victims of drug-related harm

Australians aged 14 years or older were more than twice as likely to be victims of alcohol-related incidents as victims of incidents related to other drugs (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Proportion of the population aged 14 years or older who have been victims of alcohol or other drug-related incidents, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Influence and activity	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
Alcohol			**(per cent)**			
Verbal abuse	27.5	29.3	22.5	21.5	24.9	25.4
Physical abuse	5.4	5.9	3.5	3.1	4.4	4.5
Put in fear	10.6	12.0	15.3	14.1	13.0	13.1
Other drugs						
Verbal abuse	10.8	13.0	8.8	9.1	9.8	11.0
Physical abuse	1.8	2.6	1.4	1.4	1.6	2.0
Put in fear	6.0	7.9	8.5	9.0	7.3	8.4

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

Victims of drug-related harm—alcohol

- The proportion of victims of alcohol-related incidents increased between 2004 and 2007 for males but decreased for females.
- Males (29.3%) were more likely than females (21.5%) to be victims of alcohol-related verbal abuse in 2007.
- The proportion of persons subjected to alcohol-related physical abuse remained relatively stable between 2004 and 2007 at approximately 4.5%. Males (5.9%) were more likely than females (3.1%) to be victims of alcohol-related physical abuse.
- The likelihood of being 'put in fear' by a person under the influence of alcohol also remained stable between 2004 and 2007, around 13.0%. Females (14.1%) were more likely than males (12.0%) to be 'put in fear' by a person under the influence of alcohol.

Victims of drug-related harm—drugs other than alcohol

- In 2007, 11.0% of Australians aged 14 years or over were victims of verbal abuse from a person under the influence of other drugs. This was an increase from the proportion verbally abused in 2004 (9.8%).
- The proportion 'put in fear' by a person under the influence of other drugs in 2007 (8.4%) increased compared with the proportion in 2004 (7.3%).
- The proportion physically abused by a person under the influence of other drugs also increased between 2004 (1.6%) and 2007 (2.0%).

Estimates of the number of victims of alcohol-related incidents

There were an estimated 4.4 million victims of alcohol-related verbal abuse and a further 2.3 million Australians aged 14 years or older who were 'put in fear' by persons under the influence of alcohol in the 12 months preceding the 2007 survey (Table 5.3). More than three-quarters of a million Australians were physically abused by persons under the influence of alcohol.

Table 5.3: Number of victims of alcohol-related incidents: population aged 14 years or older, by age and sex, Australia, 2007

	Age group						
Incident	**14–19**	**20–29**	**30–39**	**40–49**	**50–59**	**60+**	**14+**
				(number)			
				Males			
Verbal abuse	257,600	702,000	519,200	455,900	334,700	227,600	2,491,400
Physical abuse	81,600	203,500	82,100	65,300	49,200	14,800	503,500
Put in fear	121,500	263,300	214,900	199,500	148,100	72,700	1,024,900
				Females			
Verbal abuse	223,200	471,000	357,200	347,600	288,400	186,800	1,878,000
Physical abuse	38,200	101,700	40,700	42,600	27,600	18,300	272,200
Put in fear	176,900	323,300	228,900	245,600	151,900	99,300	1,233,500
				Persons			
Verbal abuse	480,700	1,171,400	875,400	803,300	623,100	414,900	4,368,700
Physical abuse	119,600	305,300	122,400	107,700	76,800	33,100	775,000
Put in fear	298,800	586,900	443,800	445,600	300,100	172,100	2,259,400

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- With the exception of those aged 60 years or older, there were more male than female victims of alcohol-related verbal or physical abuse.
- Conversely, for all ages, more females were 'put in fear' by persons under the influence of alcohol than males.

Injuries resulting from drug-related physical abuse

Approximately 5% of all Australians aged 14 years or older suffered an injury (non-self-inflicted) as a result of an alcohol or other drug-related incident in the 12 months preceding the survey (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Most serious injury sustained as a result of alcohol or other drug-related incidents: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Injury	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**	**2004**	**2007**
			(per cent)			
Total physically abused	6.0	6.6	4.0	3.5	5.0	5.0
Most serious injury						
Bruising, abrasions	35.1	39.1	47.2	39.1	40.0	39.1
Burns, not involving hospital admission	0.5	0.6	0.2	1.4	0.4	0.8
Minor lacerations	12.7	9.5	12.0	11.8	12.4	10.3
Lacerations requiring suturing, but not hospital admission	4.3	4.4	2.1	2.1	3.4	3.6
Fractures not requiring hospital admission	4.9	4.2	5.7	3.8	5.2	4.0
Sufficiently serious to require hospital admission	3.1	4.8	1.9	3.7	2.6	4.4
No physical injury sustained	39.3	37.4	31.0	38.1	35.9	37.7

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- The most frequent serious injury sustained as a result of alcohol or other drug-related physical abuse was bruising or minor abrasions (39.1%). Males and females were equally likely to sustain bruising or abrasions.
- Approximately two in five (37.7%) of those physically abused in the past 12 months sustained no physical injury.
- In 2007, minor lacerations accounted for 10.3% of injuries among victims of physical abuse as a result of alcohol or other drug-related incidents, a decrease from 12.4% in 2004.

Risk of serious injury

In 2007, risk of serious injury varied by age group and type of injury (Table 5.5). Victims of physical abuse aged 60 years or older were most likely to report no physical injury sustained.

Table 5.5: Most serious injury sustained as a result of alcohol or other drug-related physical abuse, by age, Australia, 2007

	Age group						
Injury	**14–19**	**20–29**	**30–39**	**40–49**	**50–59**	**60+**	**14+**
				(per cent)			
Bruising, abrasions	39.5	46.9	34.0	29.8	34.2	29.3	39.1
Burns, not involving hospital admission	1.6	0.5	—	2.7	—	—	0.8
Minor lacerations	10.6	10.8	10.9	8.9	10.0	9.2	10.3
Lacerations requiring suturing, but not hospital admission	0.7	5.9	4.2	3.0	0.9	1.3	3.6
Fractures not requiring hospital admission	4.4	4.1	5.2	5.9	0.6	—	4.0
Sufficiently serious to require hospital admission	3.6	4.0	3.9	6.4	6.3	2.2	4.4
No physical injury sustained	39.6	27.9	41.8	43.3	48.1	58.1	37.7
All	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes

1. Denominator in each age group is the number physically abused.
2. Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- 'Bruising or abrasions' was most frequently mentioned as the most serious type of injury resulting from alcohol or other drug-related incidents for all age groups.
- For the older age groups, 'no physical injury sustained' as a result of these incidents was the most common outcome of physical abuse.
- Approximately one in ten victims of alcohol or other drug-related physical abuse received minor lacerations. This finding was broadly consistent across all age groups.

Psychological distress and patterns of drug use

The Kessler 10 scale of psychological distress (K10) was developed for screening populations on psychological distress. The scale consists of ten questions on non-specific psychological distress and relates to the level of anxiety and depressive symptoms a person may have experienced in the preceding 4-week period.

Table 5.6: Psychological distress[a] by selected drug-use: proportion of persons aged 18 years or older, Australia, 2007

	Level of psychological distress[b]			
Drug/use	**Low**	**Moderate**	**High**	**Very high**
		(per cent)		
All persons (aged 18+)	69.0	21.1	7.7	2.2
Tobacco smoking status				
Daily	59.4	24.0	11.6	5.1
Other recent smokers[c]	58.4	31.5	8.1	2.1
Non-smokers[d]	71.5	20.1	6.8	1.5
Risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term				
High risk	56.3	28.5	12.2	3.1
Risky	65.4	23.6	8.3	2.7
Low risk	71.8	19.7	6.7	1.8
Abstainer	68.6	20.5	8.1	2.9
Any illicit[e]				
Used in the last month	51.2	28.6	14.6	5.6
Not used in the last month	70.8	20.5	6.9	1.8
Marijuana/cannabis				
Used in the last month[f]	51.2	27.2	15.7	5.8
Not used in the last month	70.1	20.8	7.2	1.9
Inhalants				
Used in the last month[f]	44.3	32.5	17.5	5.7
Not used in the last month	69.2	21.1	7.6	2.1
Heroin				
Used in the last month[f]	20.9	14.2	53.7	11.1
Not used in the last month	69.2	21.1	7.5	2.1
Meth-amphetamine				
Used in the last month[f]	43.5	35.3	15.8	5.4
Not used in the last month	69.6	21.0	7.4	2.1
Cocaine				
Used in the last month[f]	47.1	30.9	15.3	6.7
Not used in the last month	69.3	21.1	7.5	2.1
Ecstasy				
Used in the last month[f]	45.4	34.4	16.3	3.9
Not used in the last month	69.5	20.9	7.5	2.1

(a) Using the Kessler 10 scale of psychological distress.

(b) Low: K10 score 10–15; Moderate: 16–21; High: 22–29; Very high: 30–50.

(c) 'Other recent smokers' are persons who smoke 'Weekly' or 'Less than weekly'.

(d) 'Non-smokers' are 'Ex-smokers' or persons who have 'Never smoked'.

(e) 'Any illicit' includes pain-killers, tranquillisers, steroids, barbiturates, meth/amphetamine, marijuana/cannabis, heroin, methadone or buprenorphine, cocaine, hallucinogens, ecstasy, ketamine, GHB and inhalants.

(f) 'Use in the last month' refers to use of the substance at least once in the previous month.

Note: Statistical significance testing was not undertaken for this table.

- In 2007, approximately seven in ten people aged 18 years or older reported low levels of psychological distress (69.0%). Almost one in ten (9.9%) reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.
- Daily smokers (16.7%) were more likely than other recent smokers (10.1%) or non-smokers (8.3%) to report high or very high levels of psychological distress.

- High-risk drinkers (15.3%) were twice as likely as low-risk drinkers (8.5%) to experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.
- Risky drinkers and abstainers were equally likely (and more likely than low-risk drinkers) to experience high or very high levels of psychological distress.
- One in five persons who used an illicit drug in the past month reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.
- Approximately two-thirds of people (64.9%) who used heroin in the past month reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.

6 Explanatory notes

The 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey is the ninth in a series which commenced in 1985. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to manage the 2007 survey. The AIHW was supported in this task by a Technical Advisory Group.

As in 2004, two survey modes (Drop and Collect, CATI) were used. In 2007 however, two companies were selected by competitive tender to do the field work. Roy Morgan Research was selected to administer the Drop and Collect component and The Social Research Centre was selected to administer the CATI component. Roy Morgan Research was also tasked with compilation and weighting of the final dataset.

The CATI component of the survey was conducted between July and November 2007, and the drop and collect component was conducted between July and October 2007.

Scope

The estimates for 2007 contained in this publication are based on information obtained from persons aged 12 years or older or 14 years or older (as specified) from the populations of all states and territories.

Methodology

Households were selected by a multistage, stratified area random sample design. Minimum sample sizes sufficient to return reliable strata estimates were allocated to states and territories, and the remainder distributed in proportion to population size.

Survey design

The survey employed two collection modes: drop and collect and the computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI). The sample was designed so that each method was implemented in separate census collection districts. For the drop and collect sample in country areas, the Statistical Local Area was selected for the first stage, rather than collection districts, as this had considerable efficiency benefits. Census collection districts could be selected only for the Drop and Collect survey component, outlined below.

Drop and collect

Data were collected from a national random selection of households, using self-completion booklets. Two attempts were made by the interviewer to personally collect the completed questionnaire; if collection was not possible at this time, a reply-paid pre-addressed envelope was provided. A reminder telephone call was made if necessary. The respondent was the household member aged 12 years or older whose birthday was next. The number of respondents who completed the survey from this sample was 19,818.

CATI

Data from computer-assisted telephone interviews were collected from a national random selection of households.

As in the drop and collect sample, the respondent was the household member aged 12 years or older whose birthday was next. The number of respondents who completed the survey from this sample was 3,538. Due to the practical limitations of the CATI method, some questions were omitted in this mode.

Not all respondents were asked all questions; the questionnaire at Appendix 5 provides a full description. Persons aged 12–15 years of age completed the survey with the consent of the adult responsible for the adolescent at the time of consent. A separate, shorter questionnaire was administered to 12–13-year-olds in order to minimise respondent burden.

Sample distribution

The over sampling of lesser populated states and territories, in order to return reliable estimates along with reasonable sampling variations, produced a sample which was not proportional to the state/territory distribution of the Australian population aged 12 years or older (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Comparison of sample and state/territory population distributions, by sex, 2007

	State/territory								
Population	**NSW**	**Vic**	**Qld**	**WA**	**SA**	**Tas**	**ACT**	**NT**	**Australia**
					(number)				
Males	2,870	2,072	1,845	1,103	867	506	477	491	**10,231**
Females	3,757	2,770	2,395	1,323	1,115	650	576	539	**13,125**
Persons	**6,627**	**4,842**	**4,240**	**2,426**	**1,982**	**1,156**	**1,053**	**1,030**	**23,356**
Distribution					(per cent)				
% of total sample	28.4	20.7	18.2	10.4	8.5	4.9	4.5	4.4	100.0
% of 2007 population aged 12 years and over	32.8	24.9	19.8	10.0	7.6	2.3	1.6	1.0	100.0

Source: ABS 2007.

Estimation procedures

Multistage editing and weighting procedures were applied to derive the estimates.

Editing

All open-ended questions were coded manually prior to scanning. The only fully open-ended questions related to occupation and industry. The Australian Standard Classification of Occupations and the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification were used for coding. Various scan and logic edits were applied to maximise data quality.

Weighting

The sample was designed to provide a random sample of households within each geographic stratum. Respondents within each stratum were assigned weights to overcome

imbalances arising in the design and execution of the sampling. Estimates in this publication are based on the weighted combined samples.

For questions that were not included in the CATI component, weights based on the drop and collect sample were used to calculate estimates.

Table 6.2: Comparison of the sample and estimated population distributions

	Sample			2007 estimated popultion		
Age group	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Population aged 14+			**(per cent)**			
14–19	3.2	3.6	6.8	5.1	4.9	10.0
20–29	5.2	7.3	12.4	8.6	8.4	17.0
30–39	7.1	10.9	18.0	8.8	8.9	17.6
40–49	7.3	9.2	16.5	8.8	8.9	17.7
50–59	7.6	9.4	17.0	7.7	7.7	15.4
60+	13.3	15.9	29.2	10.3	11.8	22.2
14+	**43.7**	**56.3**	**100.0**	**49.4**	**50.6**	**100.0**
Population aged 12+			**(per cent)**			
12–15	2.0	2.1	4.1	3.3	3.1	6.4
16–17	1.1	1.3	2.4	1.7	1.6	3.2
18–19	1.0	1.1	2.1	1.7	1.6	3.2
12–19	*5.2*	*5.0*	*5.2*	6.6	6.3	12.9
20+	39.5	51.5	91.0	42.8	44.3	87.1
12+	**43.5**	**56.5**	**100.0**	**49.4**	**50.6**	**100.0**

Source: ABS 2007.

Response rates

When compared with 2004, the 2007 survey achieved a slightly higher but comparable response rate (49.3%).

Table 6.3: Sample disposition and participation rates, by sample, 2007

Disposition	Drop & collect	CATI	Total
		(number)	
Original sample	55,515	28,163	83,678
Less out-of-scope households			
Not connected	n.a.	9,801	9,801
Not residential	1,041	2,390	3,431
Fax/modem	n.a.	1,863	1,863
Failed quota	n.a.	—	—
Other ineligible	88	71	159
Total	*1,129*	*14,125*	*15,254*
Eligible sample	54,386	14,038	68,424
Less those not contact after 3/6 attempts[(a)]	15,971	5,032	21,003
Eligible sample contacted	*38,415*	*9,006*	47,421
Less eligible respondents contacted but not available			
Refusals	8,635	4,316	12,951
Foreign	733	64	797
Incapacitated	280	482	762
Terminated	n.a.	72	72
Respondent unavailable	n.a.	534	534
Other non-response	1,974	—	1,974
Questionnaire not returned/unusable	6,975	—	6,975
Total	*18,597*	*5,468*	*24,065*
Completed	19,818	3,538	23,356
		(per cent)	
Participation rate	**51.6**	**39.3**	**49.3**

(a) Three attempts at drop and collect and six attempts at CATI.

Several strategies were used to minimise cases of non-contact and non-response by the originally selected respondent, including those below:

- fieldworkers conducted call backs at different times on different days
- strict protocols were applied to ensure that selected dwellings were fully attempted
- respondents were given a letter of introduction and support from the Director of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- calling cards were left where appropriate
- two '1800' numbers were set up to answer queries, one to AIHW for questions about the confidentiality of the survey, and one to Roy Morgan Research for operational queries.

Reliability of estimates

Sampling error

As the estimates are based on a sample, they are subject to sampling variability (that is, the extent to which the sample-derived results vary from the results that would have been derived had a census/complete survey been undertaken). Estimates in this publication are considered reliable if the relative standard error (the ratio of the sampling error to the derived results or estimate) is less than 25%. Estimates between 25% and 50% should be interpreted with caution. Estimates with relative standard errors over 50% should be considered unreliable for most practical purposes. A table of standard errors and relative standard errors can be found in Appendix 2.

Non-sampling error

In addition to sampling errors, the estimates are subject to non-sampling errors. These can arise from errors in transcription of responses, errors in reporting of responses (for example, failure of respondents' memories), and the unwillingness of respondents to reveal their 'true' responses.

Counter balancing

The order in which multiple possible answers are presented can sometimes affect the likelihood of responses (the earlier a possible response in a list, the higher the likelihood that it will be selected). To overcome this tendency, possible responses were rotated within questions. There were three rotations for the drop and collect component; the CATI questionnaire was comprehensively auto-rotated during execution. Thus, there were more than four different questionnaires with identical sequencing of questions, but different orders of possible responses within. The copy in Appendix 5 is a rotation 1 version of the drop and collect questionnaire. The symbols in the questionnaire, the telephone and a group of three (young) people, indicate those questions asked via CATI and/or of 12–13-year-olds respectively.

Limitations of the data

Excluded from sampling were non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, boarding houses, etc.) and institutional settings (hospitals, nursing homes, other clinical settings such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres, prisons, military establishments and university halls of residence). Homeless persons were also excluded as well as the territories of Jervis Bay, Christmas Island and Cocos Island.

Illicit drug users, by definition, have committed illegal acts. They are, in part, marginalised and difficult to reach. Accordingly, estimates of illicit drug use and related behaviours are likely to be underestimates of actual practice.

Definitions

Definitions used in previous NDSHS surveys were retained for 2007. However, since the 1998 survey the descriptions of 'non-medical' and 'illicit' have been improved.

Recent smoker

A recent smoker was a person who had smoked 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent tobacco, and had not since permanently ceased smoking.

Ex-smoker

An ex-smoker was a person who had smoked at least 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent tobacco in their life, but reported no longer smoking.

Never smoked

A person who had not smoked 100 cigarettes (manufactured and/or roll-your-own) or the equivalent tobacco in their life, was deemed to have never smoked.

Recent drinker

A recent drinker was a person who consumed a full serve of alcohol in the last 12 months.

Ex-drinker

An ex-drinker was a person who had consumed a full serve of alcohol, but not in the past 12 months.

Never drinker

A never drinker was a person who had never had a full serve of alcohol.

Non-medical drug use

The definition used in the survey questionnaire and for this publication is:

1. either alone or with other drugs in order to induce or enhance a drug experience
2. for performance (e.g. athletic) enhancement
3. for cosmetic (e.g. body shaping) purposes.

This definition has been used since 1998; however, in 1995, 'non-medical use' was not defined in the questionnaire.

Illicit drugs

Illegal drugs, drugs and volatile substances used illicitly or inappropriately, and prescription or over-the-counter pharmaceuticals used for non-medical purposes.

The survey asked questions on the following illicit drugs:

- painkillers/analgesics*
- tranquillisers/sleeping pills*
- steroids*

- barbiturates*
- meth/amphetamine*
- marijuana/cannabis
- heroin
- methadone**
- buprenorphine**
- other opiates*
- cocaine
- LSD/synthetic hallucinogens
- ecstasy
- ketamine
- GHB
- (any) injected*.

* for non-medical purposes

** non-maintenance program

Recent illicit drug use

Use within the previous 12 months.

Ever used illicit drugs

Used at least once during a person's lifetime.

Comparability with previous surveys

The 2007 survey differs from the 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004 surveys in several respects.

Methodology

- For the 1993 and 1995 surveys, a combination of personal interview and self-completion for the more sensitive issues, was collected nationally. Sample 1 of the 1998 survey was also collected nationally via this method. However, the similar component of the 2001 survey was collected only in capital cities. Personal interviews have not been included since 2001.
- The 2001 survey was the first to include a CATI component. The CATI questionnaire was a version of the drop and collect questionnaire, shortened to suit telephone methodology. CATI was conducted nationally, proportional to the population.
- In 2007, the field work was split between two companies, one completing the CATI component and the other completing the Drop and Collect component (as well as dataset preparation).

Sample

- In 1998, sample 2 targeted young people from capital cities in order to obtain more reliable estimates, in particular for illicit drugs. In 2001, the overall sample size was more

than double that of 1998, eliminating the need for a targeted sample. However, as requested and funded by the Western Australian Department of Health, additional respondents aged 14–34 years were selected from metropolitan Perth. In 2004, the 12–17 years age group was boosted via CATI in all jurisdictions; and as requested and funded by the Queensland Health Department, additional respondents aged 12–29 years were selected via the drop and collect method from Queensland. In 2007, no jurisdictions purchased a supplemental sample.

- In 1998, samples 1 and 2 were drawn from the same household, whereas for the 1993, 1995, 2001 and 2004 surveys only one respondent per household was selected.

Questionnaire

- Since 2001, the survey has included an expanded section on tobacco. Type of cigarette smoked was asked—manufactured or 'roll-your-own'. Importantly, there was no upper limit on the reporting of the number of cigarettes smoked. There were also questions on unbranded loose tobacco, otherwise known as 'chop-chop'.
- Since 2004, questions relating to attitudes to tobacco cessation have been included.
- A new section on opiates other than heroin and methadone (e.g. morphine and pethidine) was included in 2001 and retained in 2004 and 2007. Methadone was introduced as a separate category in 1998; thus, data on methadone use are not available for the 1993 and 1995 surveys. Buprenorphine was included with methadone in 2007—'methadone or buprenorphine'.
- Questions relating to heroin overdoses were included only in the 1998 survey.
- The 1995 survey included three questions on personal health, whereas the 1998 survey used the SF-36 instrument to assess personal health. Based on an analysis of the 1998 data, the SF-36 was not included in the 2001 survey. This latter survey included five questions on personal health. A question on self-assessed health was consistent for the three most recent surveys. The 2004 and 2007 surveys have included the Kessler 10 Scale of Psychological Distress and questions about diagnosis and treatment of selected health conditions.
- The 2004 and 2007 surveys included new sections on use of GHB and ketamine; thus, data about these substances are not available for the 1993, 1998 and 2001 surveys.
- In 2004 and 2007, the section on barbiturates was reduced to seven questions and the hallucinogens section was clarified.
- In 2004 and 2007, questions relating to meth/amphetamine use were refined to more accurately reflect substances used in Australia.
- In 2001, new questions related to drugs consumed during pregnancy and breastfeeding in the past 12 months were included. These were refined in 2004 and also included in 2007.
- The alcohol section was restructured and expanded in the 2001 survey. In previous surveys there were gender-specific questions on alcohol consumption. In 2001, however, both genders answered the same questions and gave a detailed report of the previous day's alcohol consumption. Since 2004, respondents were also able to indicate consumption of less than one standard drink or no standard drinks on given days.
- The 2007 questionnaire included a 'fake' drug with a view to validating the survey instrument. Initial analysis suggests that very few (half a dozen) respondents nominated

it as a drug they had used. Among these few respondents, various subsequent responses were made, suggesting that none were sky-larking.

- Since 2001, the survey has included new alcohol consumption questions which enabled estimations of the population at risk of harm in the long and short term using the NHMRC (2001) Australian alcohol guidelines.
- Since 2004, the question relating to quantity and types of alcohol consumed yesterday was expanded to include a wider variety of types and sizes of alcohol containers, and a new question relating to awareness of the Australian alcohol guidelines was introduced.
- Since 1998, the term 'non-medical purposes' has been explained to respondents.
- In 1998, questions on drug use were in grid layout formats; however, in 2001 they were returned to the 1995 and 1993 format of questions (separated into sections for each drug type). In 2001, questions relating to where drugs were first obtained and age last used were omitted and in 2004 and 2007 they were reintroduced for most substances.
- The section relating to alcohol- and drug-related incidents varied in size between surveys. In 2007, more detailed questions on injury were added.
- The 1998 and 1995 surveys included sections on regulations relating to cannabis use. In the 2001 and subsequent surveys, this section was expanded to include heroin, ecstasy and meth/amphetamine; however, the number of questions was reduced.
- In 2004, minor changes were made to some questions in the demographics section of the questionnaire, and these were retained in 2007.
- The mix of open-ended and forced-choice questions varied between surveys.

Fieldwork

- Since 2001, the survey was conducted between June/July and November, compared with between June and September in 1998 and 1995, and between March and April in 1993.
- The 2007 Census was 'in the field' at the same time as the 2007 survey but the extent of any cross-effect is unknown.

This list comprises several of the major changes between versions of the surveys. Please see the relevant questionnaires to determine the full extent of changes made.

Interpretation of results

The exclusion of persons from dwellings and institutional settings described in 'Limitations of the data' above, and the difficulty in reaching marginalised persons, are likely to have affected estimates.

It is known from past studies of alcohol and tobacco consumption that respondents tend to underestimate actual consumption levels. There are no equivalent data on the tendencies for under- or over-reporting of actual illicit drug use. Anecdotal data, however, suggest that younger persons may overestimate actual consumption of these drugs.

Appendix 1: Membership of the Technical Advisory Group

Table A1.1: 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey Technical Reference Group

Member	Organisation
Ms Susan Killion (Chair)	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Mr Mark Cooper-Stanbury	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Ms Karen Price	Department of Health and Ageing
Dr Louisa Degenhardt	University of New South Wales
Dr Toni Makkai	Australian Institute of Criminology
Professor Ian McAllister	Australian National University
Ms Rebecca McKetin	University of New South Wales
Mr Fearnley Szuster	Adelaide University
Ms Jenny Taylor	Department of Health and Ageing
Mr David Batts	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (Secretariat)

Appendix 2: Standard errors

Table A2.1: Approximate standard errors (SE) and relative standard errors (RSE) for indicative population sizes

	Indicative population											
	250,000		500,000		1,500,000		3,000,000		9,000,000		18,000,000	
Prevalence	SE[(a)]	RSE[(b)]	SE	RSE	SE	RSE	SE	RSE	SE	RSE	SE	RSE
						(per cent)						
95	1.57	1.7	1.11	1.2	0.64	0.7	0.45	0.5	0.26	0.3	0.18	0.2
90	2.16	2.4	1.53	1.7	0.88	1.0	0.62	0.7	0.36	0.4	0.25	0.3
80	2.88	3.6	2.04	2.5	1.18	1.5	0.83	1.0	0.48	0.6	0.34	0.4
70	3.30	4.7	2.33	3.3	1.35	1.9	0.95	1.4	0.55	0.8	0.39	0.6
50	3.60	7.2	2.54	5.1	1.47	2.9	1.04	2.1	0.60	1.2	0.42	0.8
30	3.30	11.0	2.33	7.8	1.35	4.5	0.95	3.2	0.55	1.8	0.39	1.3
20	2.88	14.4	2.04	10.2	1.18	5.9	0.83	4.2	0.48	2.4	0.34	1.7
10	2.16	21.6	1.53	15.3	0.88	8.8	0.62	6.2	0.36	3.6	0.25	2.5
5	1.57	31.4	1.11	22.2	0.64	12.8	0.45	9.1	0.26	5.2	0.18	3.7
3	1.23	40.9	0.87	28.9	0.50	16.7	0.35	11.8	0.20	6.8	0.14	4.8
2	1.01	50.4	0.71	35.6	0.41	20.6	0.29	14.5	0.17	8.4	0.12	5.9
1	0.72	71.6	0.51	50.6	0.29	29.2	0.21	20.7	0.12	11.9	0.08	8.4
0.5	0.51	101.5	0.36	71.8	0.21	41.4	0.15	29.3	0.08	16.9	0.06	12.0
0.3	0.39	131.2	0.28	92.8	0.16	53.6	0.11	37.9	0.07	21.9	0.05	15.5
0.2	0.32	160.8	0.23	113.7	0.13	65.6	0.09	46.4	0.05	26.8	0.04	18.9
0.1	0.23	227.5	0.16	160.9	0.09	92.9	0.07	65.7	0.04	37.9	0.03	26.8

(a) Standard error, expressed in same units as prevalence.

(b) Relative standard error.

Note: Light shading indicates caution in using estimates; dark shading indicates unreliable for most practical purposes.

Table A2.2: Thresholds for unreliable prevalence and population estimate, Australia, 2007

	Males		Females		Persons	
Age group	**Prevalence**	**Estimate**	**Prevalence**	**Estimate**	**Prevalence**	**Estimate**
	(per cent)	**(number)**	**(per cent)**	**(number)**	**(per cent)**	**(number)**
			(14 years or older)			
14–19	0.89	7,900	0.79	6,600	0.42	7,200
20–29	0.55	8,200	0.39	5,700	0.23	6,700
30–39	0.40	6,000	0.26	4,000	0.16	4,800
40–49	0.39	5,900	0.31	4,700	0.17	5,200
50–59	0.37	5,000	0.30	4,000	0.17	4,400
60+	0.21	3,800	0.18	3,700	0.10	3,700
Aged 14+	0.07	5,500	0.05	4,400	0.03	4,900
			(12 years or older)			
12–15	1.38	8,000	1.34	7,400	0.68	7,800
16–17	2.47	7,300	2.10	5,900	1.15	6,600
18–19	2.86	8,400	2.44	6,800	1.33	7,700
12–19	0.68	8,100	0.62	6,900	0.33	7,500
20+	0.07	5,400	0.05	4,300	0.03	4,700
Aged 12+	0.06	5,600	0.05	4,500	0.03	5,000

Note: Based on NDSHS respondents (N) and 95% confidence interval (CI)—prevalence plus CI greater than 0.

Appendix 3: Population estimates

Analysis of the 2007 NDSHS is based on the (preliminary) June 2007 estimated resident population of Australia, tabulated by sex and some common age groupings in Table A3.1.

Table A3.1: Population estimates, by age and sex, Australia, 2004

Age group	Males	Females	Persons
		(14 years or older)	
14–19	885,800	838,700	1,724,500
20–29	1,489,100	1,447,900	2,937,000
30–39	1,513,300	1,525,900	3,039,100
40–49	1,511,900	1,533,600	3,045,500
50–59	1,324,400	1,333,400	2,657,800
60+	1,781,500	2,040,700	3,822,100
14+	8,506,000	8,720,100	17,226,200
		(12 years or older)	
12–15	583,600	552,900	1,136,500
16–17	297,000	281,000	578,000
18–19	295,600	280,200	575,800
12–19	*1,176,200*	*1,114,100*	*2,290,300*
20+	7,620,200	7,881,400	15,501,600
12+	8,796,400	8,995,500	17,792,000

Source: AIHW National Population Database.

Appendix 4: Survey-related materials

References

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MCDS (Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy) 2004. The national drug strategy: Australia's integrated framework 2004–09. Canberra.

NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) 2001. Australian alcohol guidelines: health risks and benefits. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

NHDC (National Health Data Committee) 2003. National Health Data Dictionary. Version 12. Cat. no. HWI 43. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Other statistics

In October 2008, the AIHW will release more detailed statistics from the 2007 survey in a publication entitled *2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: Detailed findings*. Special analyses are available on request. Provision of data may be subject to an AIHW Health Ethics Committee application, and charges may apply. For further information contact David Batts on (02) 6289 8515 or by e-mail at David.Batts@AIHW.gov.au.

Access to confidentialised unit record files (CURF)

A public-use CURF will be available for researchers through the Australian Social Science Data Archive at the Australian National University, from mid-2008: <assda@anu.edu.au>

The public-use CURF will have geographic areas aggregated to capital city/rest of state and the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) code reduced to two digits.

Application for research access to the master dataset, which contains all of the data items, may be approved subject to the agreement of the AIHW's Health Ethics Committee. Contact David Batts on (02) 6244 1000; or by e-mail at David.Batts@AIHW.gov.au.

Appendix 5: The questionnaire

There were several questionnaires used to collect data for the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Two samples were selected for the 2007 survey: a drop and collect sample and a CATI sample, each of persons aged 12 years or older.

A separate, shorter, version of the main questionnaire was developed for 12–13-year-olds. The CATI questionnaire also had fewer questions than the drop and collect questionnaire.

However, questions in all three questionnaires were in the same sequence (refer to 'Survey design' in Chapter 6). Questions in common were identically worded for each questionnaire.

In order to obviate the possibility that the order of possible responses within questions might affect the likelihood of selection, response lists were rotated so that blocks of possible answers were presented in equal numbers across all samples. The drop and collect questionnaire had three rotations; the lists for the CATI questionnaire were randomly rotated at appropriate questions.

For the drop and collect component, respondents self-completed the entire questionnaire. An example of the drop and collect, rotation 1, questionnaire follows. At each question, icons indicate those asked of 12–13-year-olds and/or CATI.