

COCAINE

Prevalence

General population

- There was a slight increase in cocaine use among the general population in 2007 (from 1% in 2004 to 1.6% in 2007) and again in 2010 to 2.1%. However cocaine use in the broader population remains relatively low. The rise in 2010 was mainly accounted for by 20 to 29 year olds.
- Frequency of cocaine use in the general population remains sporadic, with the majority of Australians reporting monthly or less frequent use in 2010.

Sentinel groups

- Among IDRS respondents there has been a decline in prevalence of 6 month cocaine use between 2001 and 2008, and prevalence has remained at this lower level between 2009 and 2011. Frequency of cocaine use (weekly or more) has remained relatively stable between 2001 and 2011.
- Conversely, among regular ecstasy users there has been an increase in prevalence of past 6 month cocaine use (from 23% in 2003 to 46% in 2011), however use among this group is relatively infrequent at 2 occasions over the past 6 months in 2011. Frequency of cocaine use has remained stable among this group.

Treatment seeking

- An increase in cocaine-related harms in 2001 (treatment and hospital presentations) mirrored high levels of use among injecting drug users in NSW. These indicators have since declined with hospital and treatment presentations for problems relating to cocaine remaining relatively low.

Law enforcement

- Cocaine seizures declined in number (291) and weight (386kg) in 2009/10, however, there was one particularly large detection of 240kg seized through the cargo stream, coming in from Mexico.
- Cocaine-related arrests increased from 689 in 2007/08 to 848 in 2008/09. Over 50% of these arrests occurred in NSW.

Deaths

- Cocaine-related deaths remain relatively low in Australia. In 2005 there were 10 deaths where cocaine was determined to be the underlying cause and a total of 15 deaths where cocaine was mentioned as either the underlying or contributory cause.

Market indicators

- There has been an increase in the price of a gram of cocaine between 2001 and 2010, while purity is reported as being low to medium.
- There have been increasing proportions of both EDRS and IDRS respondents reporting that cocaine is 'low' in purity between 2008 and 2011.
- Availability of cocaine is reported by EDRS respondents as difficult (44% in 2011), and these proportions have increased since 2008 (from 37%). Just under half (43%) of the IDRS respondents reported cocaine as 'easy' to obtain in 2011 however this proportion has declined from 54% in 2008. Approximately one-quarter (27%) of IDRS respondents reported cocaine as 'difficult' to obtain in 2011, increasing from just 18% in 2008.