

Size Does Matter

Establishing a Drug Court Pilot in Tasmania

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1. the level of demand from offenders with drug problems, who have committed an offence under the influence of drugs or to support a drug habit, and
2. the underdeveloped capacity of the drug and alcohol service sector.

Research Questions

- What is the extent of illicit drug use and drug-related crime in Tasmania?
- Do current treatment and support services have the capacity to integrate and collaborate with a drug court pilot?

National Drug Strategy Household Survey (2004) findings - Tasmania

- 15.4% of the population recorded recent illicit drug use, higher than both NSW and Victoria:
- More than 1 person in 100 used the following illicit drugs recently: marijuana/cannabis (@ 11), pain-killers/analgesics used for non-medical purposes (@ 4), methamphetamine (@ 2), and ecstasy (@ 2);
- Second-highest proportion nationally of persons recently using pain-killers/analgesics for non-medical purposes (3.9%);
- 40.1% were found to be at risk/high-risk of alcohol related harm in the short-term, the second-highest of all States and Territories and 4.7% above the national average; and
- 48.6% of males were found to be at risk/high-risk of alcohol related harm in the short-term, second-highest of all States and Territories and 8.3% above the national average.

Tasmanian Drug Trends 2004 findings

- Cannabis remains the most widely used illicit drug, although its prevalence in recent years has decreased;
- Tasmania is experiencing increased availability of methamphetamine and increased prevalence of use (like other jurisdictions);
- There is a significant market in the illicit use of methadone;
- The widespread injection of benzodiazepines is a stable feature of Tasmania's illicit drug market with use amongst local IDU consumers at a relatively high level in comparison to other Australian jurisdictions; and
- The availability and use of heroin and cocaine in Tasmania continues to be very low.

Table 1. Reported criminal activity among IDU (n =100)

Activity	2000 IDRS %	2001 IDRS %	2002 IDRS %	2003 IDRS %	2004 IDRS %
Crime (% in last month)					
Dealing	49	41	34	32	43
Property crime	18	23	28	22	34
Violent crime	10	4	6	5	5
Fraud	5	4	2	6	7
Any crime	64	56	50	52	63
Arrested last 12 months (%)	43	41	41	46	51
Arrested for property crime	16	13	25	21	29
Arrested for use/possession	9	1	9	2	9
Arrested for violent crime	6	9	14	5	9
Arrested for fraud	2	0	0	3	2
Arrested for dealing/trafficking	1	2	1	0	1

Table 2: Number of arrests (including cautions and diversions) for cannabis, methamphetamine, opioid and cocaine related offences in Tasmania, 1996-2004

Type of offence	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Cannabis	1079	1196	736	799	1050	1540	1830	1638
Methamphetamine	20	15	7	28	70	89	66	39
Opioids	28	16	25	9	9	34	9	10
Cocaine	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0

**Table 3: Drug diversions or cautions issued by
Tasmania Police 2000-2005**

	Jul 2000 – Jun 2001	Jul 2001 – Jun 2002	Jul 2002 – Jun 2003	Jul 2003 – Jun 2004	Jul 2004 – Jun 2005
No. of 1 st Level Diversions (Cannabis Caution)	584	820	919	1158	930
No. of 2 nd Level Diversions (Brief Intervention)	101	128	203	286	296
No. of 3 rd Level Diversions (Treatment)	62	42	97	101	122
Total no. of cautions/ diversions statewide	747	990	1219	1545	1348
Cannabis Cautions as a proportion of all cautions/diversion	78%	83%	75%	75%	69%
Total no. diverted to health intervention statewide	163	170	300	387	418
No. diverted to health interventions that complied with the request	160 (or 98%)	127 (or 75%)	166 (or 55%)	209 (or 54%)	229 (or 55%)

Key findings from the DUCO study

- 39% causally attributed their offence/s to alcohol and/or illegal drugs - 18% to illegal drugs, 9% to alcohol and 12% to both;
- 52% reported addiction to alcohol or illegal drugs during the six months prior to the most recent arrest;
- 62% reported being intoxicated at the time of their most serious offence - 24% on illicit drugs, 21% on alcohol and 17% on both;
- of those who reported drug use, 51% attributed all or most of their offending to illegal drugs and alcohol;
- regular amphetamine users were more likely to be violent offenders; and
- regardless of drug type, *addicted* offenders reported more frequent property crime.

Perilegal resources - the community and health resources and infrastructure around or near the court system that support the operation of the drug court

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