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The impact of alcohol and other drugs on policing

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Fund (NDLERF)



Presentation Outline

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- Policing aims in responding to alcohol and other drug problems.
- Alcohol.
- Trends in illicit drug markets.
 - Synthetic drugs (including pharmaceuticals)
 - The amateurisation of the illicit drug production and distribution
 - More systematic responses to illicit drug markets
- Indigenous Australians.



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Supports the National Drug Strategy by:

- funding research which leads to quality evidence-based practice in drug law enforcement;
 - facilitating experimentation and innovation; and
 - enhancing strategic alliances and linkages between law enforcement personnel, human service providers and research agencies;
-to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of licit and illicit drugs in Australia.



Policing aims

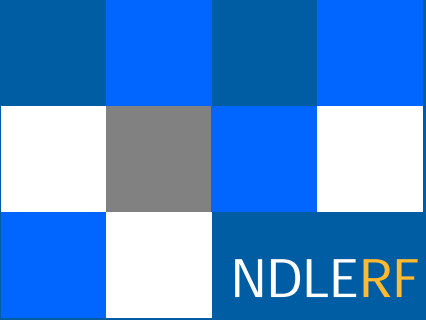
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- Australia's approach to alcohol and other drug problems involves a balanced blend of strategies that reduce: the supply of drugs; the demand for drugs; and the harm from drugs. The law enforcement sector is not just involved in supply reduction, it also has a role in demand and harm reduction.
- Drug law enforcement – it's not just about drugs.

(Nicholas, 2004).

Policing responses and the concept of 'net' alcohol and other drug-related harm (Spooner, 2004)

- Categories of harm
 - Health (physical and psychological) social, economic, safety, public order and crime.
- Recipients of harm
 - Drug users, families, local community and society.
- Sources of Harm
 - Direct (from the use of the drug) and induced (from our efforts to control, regulate or reduce the use of a drug).
- Timeframes for harm
 - Short term and long term.



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ALCOHOL



Alcohol

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- Australia ‘dropped the ball’ 10-15 years ago.
- Massive impact on policing – road trauma, violence, public amenity etc.
- Alcohol-related problems are ‘wicked’ - they span a number of policy arenas, are difficult to resolve, and the responsibility for them stretches across several stakeholders who often have different perspectives on how they should be addressed (Flemming, 2008).
- Policing sits ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ of many alcohol-related problems.



Alcohol – what's changing?

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- Level of alcohol-related harm among young people is increasing especially alcohol-related hospitalisations (Livingston, 2008).
- Hospital separation rates for acute alcohol intoxication among young men increased from 66 to 107 per 100,000 between 1998-99 and 2005-06. For young women, the rate doubled over this time from 46 to 99 separations per 100,000 (ABS, 2008).
- Initiation into alcohol use occurring earlier. (Roche et al. 2008)



Alcohol - what's changing?

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- Cultural shifts in the meaning of alcohol to young people (Roche et al. 2008).
- 'Determined', wilful, vehement, drunkenness.
- Are more young people drinking or are some young people drinking much more?
- Vertical drinking.
- Pre-loading.
- Marketing.

Alcohol



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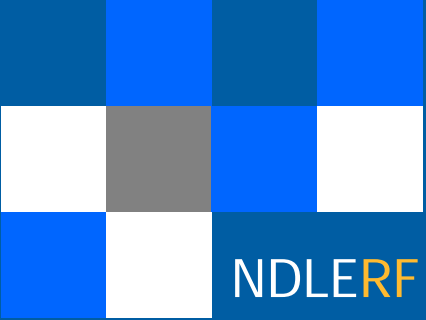
- Currently a historically unique ‘alignment of the planets’ exists to address alcohol-related social harms in Australia.
- But what do we do about it?



Alcohol problems and licensed premises

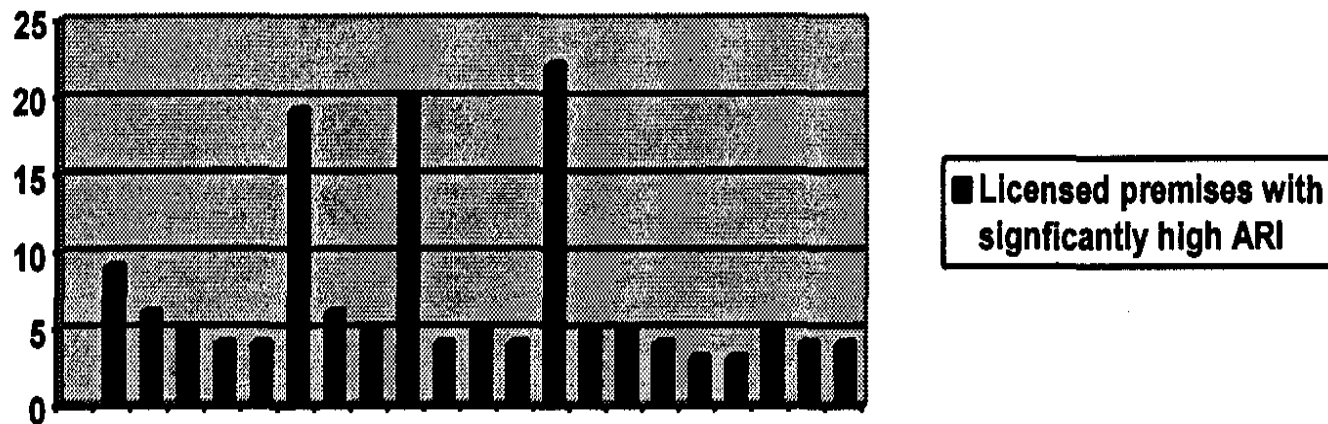
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- A significant proportion of social order problems are associated with licensed premises (LPs).
- 37% of alcohol-related assaults happen in LPs.
(Doherty & Roche, 2003)
- A minority of LPs are associated with large number of problems. Inner Sydney - 12% of LPs accounted for 60% of assaults at LPs;
 - Newcastle - 8% of LPs accounted for 80% of assaults on LPs; and
 - Wollongong 6% of LPs accounted for 67% of assaults on LPs (Briscoe and Donnelly, 2003).



An example of the data maps obtained about alcohol-related incidents on LPs

Licensed Premises with More than 2 ARI



Individual Licensed Premises in Newcastle

Source: Considine et al. (1998)



Number of assaults per licensed premises NSW July 2008 - June 2009

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Mean Fiddler	42
Glasshouse Tavern	36
Penrith Rugby League Club Limited	30
Star City Pty Limited	29
Stonewall Hotel	26
The Valley Brewery	26
Coffs Harbour Hotel	24
The Colombian Hotel	24
Albion Hotel	23
Collingwood Hotel	22
Imperial Hotel	22
Ivy	22

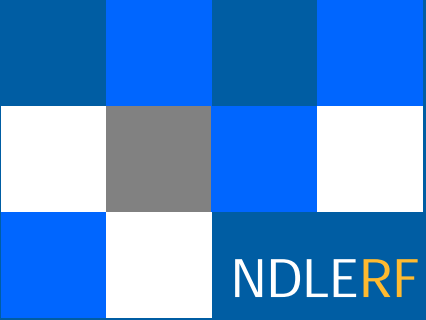
(NSW BOCSAR, 2009)



What do problem LPs often have in common?

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- Extended trading hours;
- Irresponsible alcohol promotions (i.e. cheap or free drinks);
- Overcrowding, low comfort, poor entertainment;
- Aggressive bouncers / security staff;
- Serving alcohol to obviously intoxicated patrons;
- Permissive attitude of LP management towards poor behaviour; and
- High density of LPs (or more accurately extent and profile of alcohol sales [Chikrhtzs et al. 2007])



This is all very well and good, but what can we do about it?

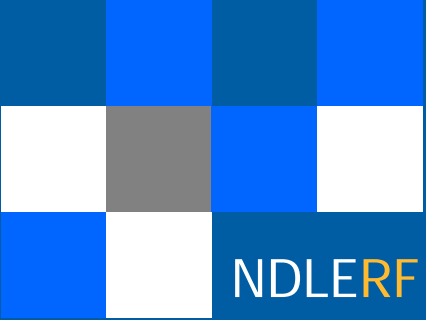
- Better identification and targeting of problem licensed premises.
- But..... in doing this are we defining the problem in overly narrow terms?
- We do have problems with specific premises, but this is a subset of the problem of excessive availability.
- The way we see problems shapes the tools we develop to address them.

Alcohol



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- Focussing on problem premises / precincts risks diverting attention from the broader issues of excessive supply (Chikritzhs, et al. 2007).
- Alcohol supply-side problems – we need a second generation of thinking.
 - Change LE research focus towards better understanding total supply issues (e.g. bottle shops / pre-drinking / advertising etc.).
 - The importance of modelling and the interface between modelling and legislation (Chikritzhs et al. 2007).
 - Better harnessing local government powers.



Illicit drug problems in Australia: Some important trends.



The shift towards synthetic drugs

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Cannabis.

Two aspects.

Synthetically produced illicit drugs

Pharmaceutical drug misuse

The shift towards synthetic drugs

Synthetically produced illicit drugs

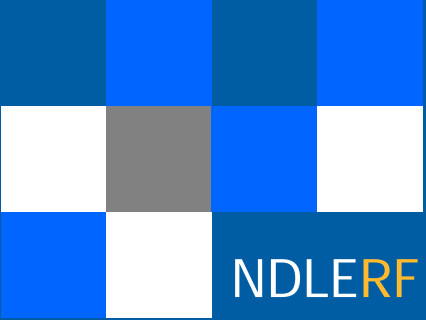
- *“To produce one kilo of cocaine, one has to cultivate nearly one hectare of coca, and use nearly 200 kilograms of inputs which include acids, solvents, bases and salts. To produce one kilogram of synthetic drugs requires only five kilograms of inputs..... The production of synthetic drugs can be completed in a matter of days and is a relatively non-labour intensive procedure compared to cultivating cocaine or heroin. Profitability and mark-ups are huge”*. Cherney, O’Reilly and Grabosky (2005) p. 7 citing Dirección Nacional De Estupefacientes, and Wilkins 2003)



The shift towards synthetic drugs

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- New drugs & old drugs with different precursors & new proto-precursors.
- Implications for precursor control (Cherney et al. 2005).
- Not necessarily psycho-stimulants (UNODC, 2009).



The shift towards synthetic drugs

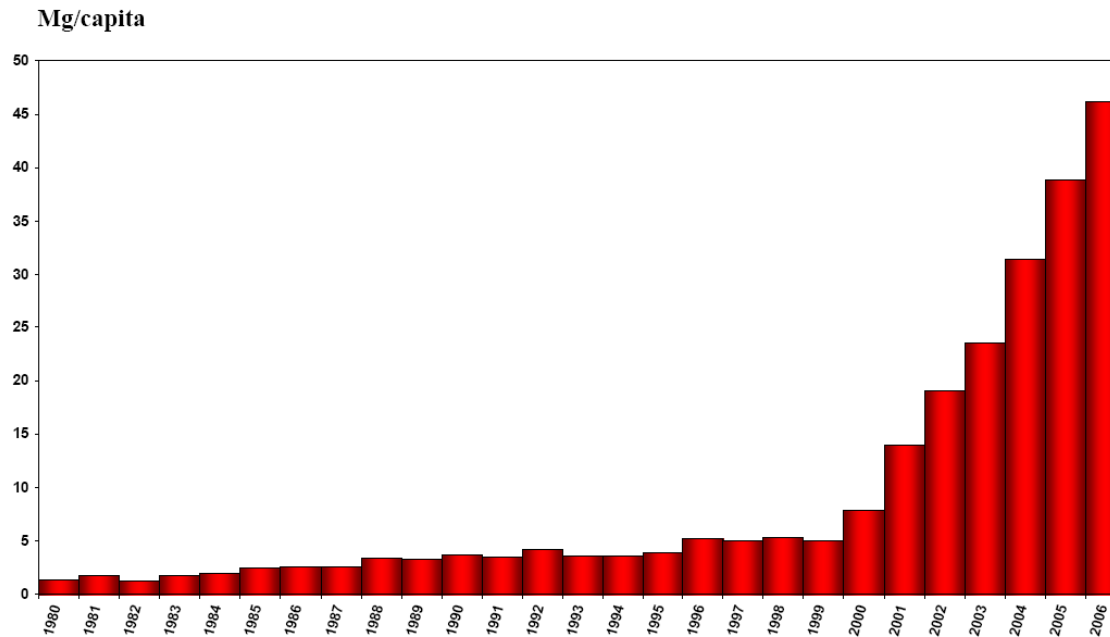
Pharmaceutical drug misuse

- Poorly understood in Australia.
- Part of a global trend in developed countries.
- Trend in developed countries towards pharmaceutically assisted mood control increasingly being seen as a right (Uchtenhagen, 2008).
- Fundamental paradigm shift away from heroin as the illicit opioid of choice?? (Fischer and Rhem, 2007).
- Australia's window of opportunity.

Pharmaceutical misuse

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Mg/capita Consumption of Oxycodone, Australia, 1980-2006

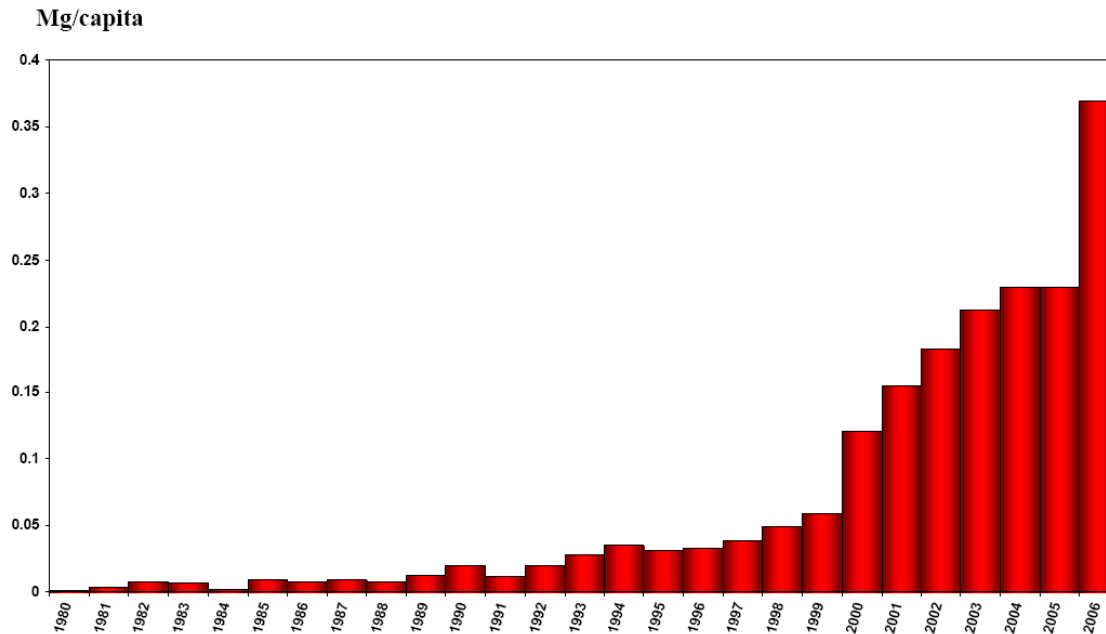


Sources: International Narcotics Control Board; United Nations population data
By: Pain & Policy Studies Group, University of Wisconsin/WHO Collaborating Center, 2008

Pharmaceutical misuse

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Mg/capita Consumption of Fentanyl, Australia, 1980-2006

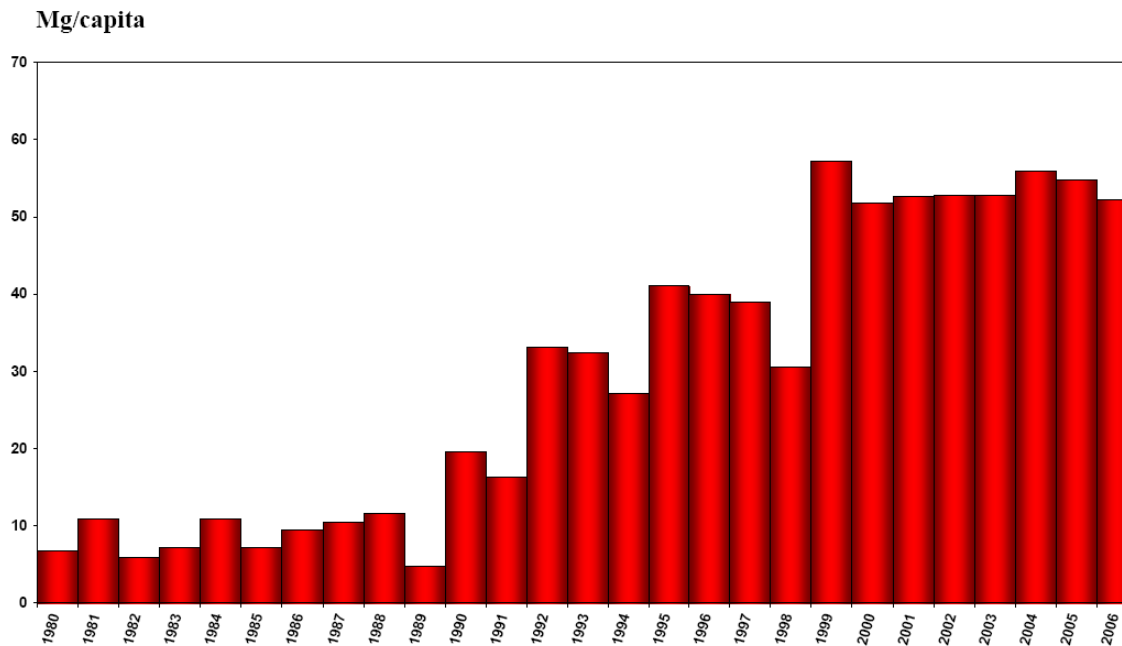


Sources: International Narcotics Control Board; United Nations population data
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Pharmaceutical misuse

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Mg/capita Consumption of Morphine, Australia, 1980-2006

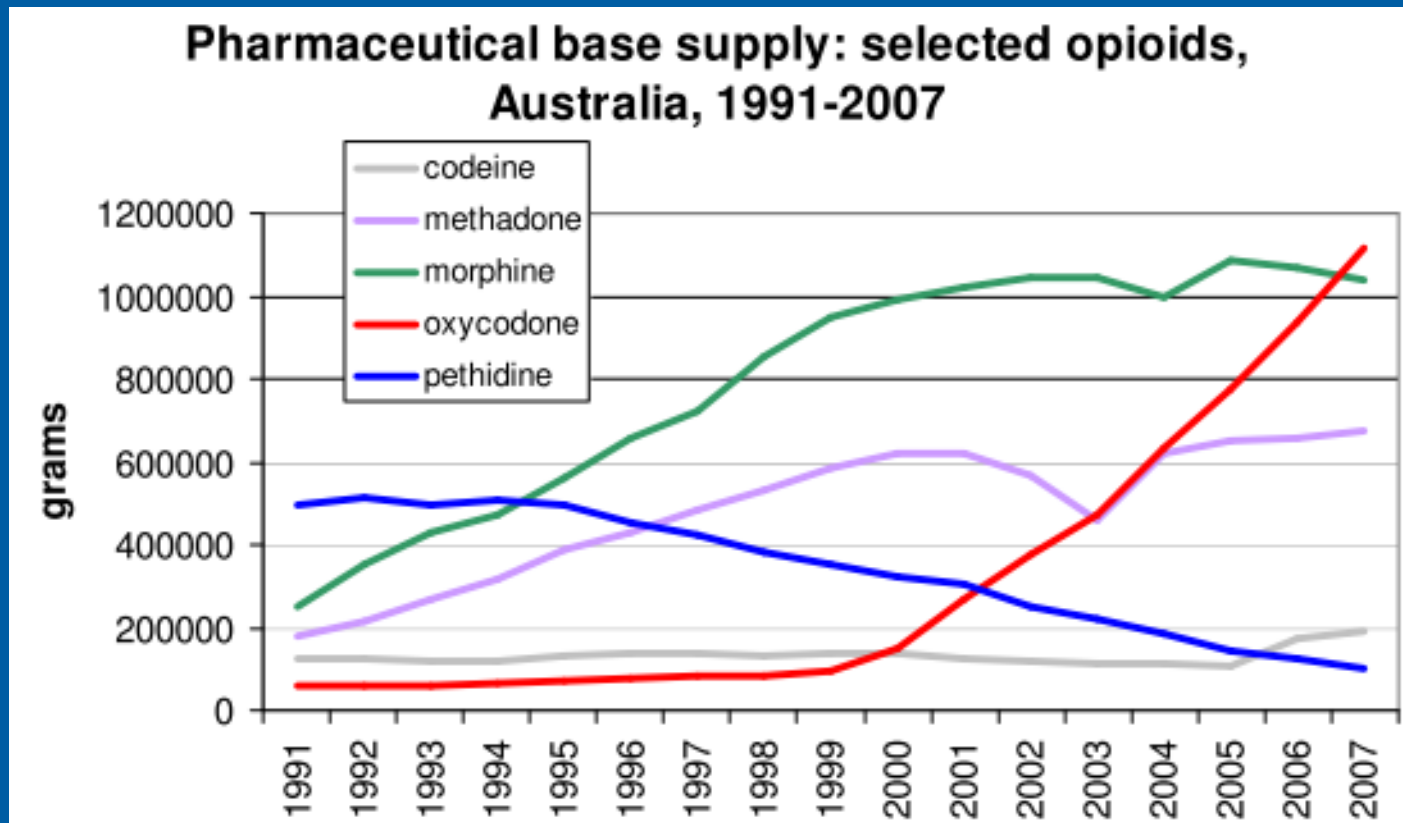


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Pharmaceutical misuse

(Dobbin, 2008)

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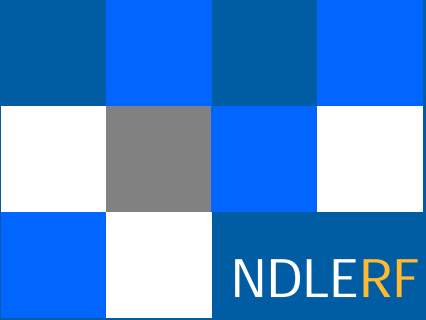




Prescription psycho-stimulants

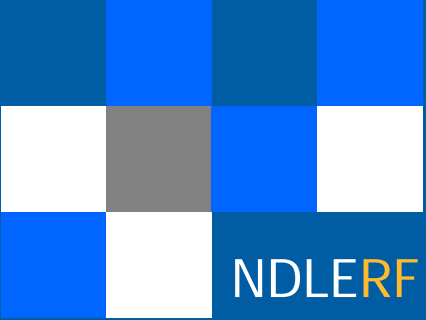
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- Between 1984 and 2000 the rate of consumption of Dexamphetamine (Dexedrine) and methylphenidate (Ritalin) in Australia increased 26% per year with an 8.46 fold increase from 1994-2000.
- WA had twice the annual rate of consumption of these drugs compared with New South Wales which rated second.
- Between 1984 and 2000, consumption of dexamphetamine in Western Australia increased by an average of 43% per year (Berbatis, et al. 2002).



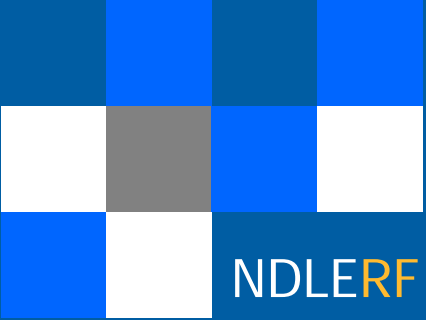
Prescription drug misuse – So what?

- Very sensitive issue.
- We don't know what we don't know.
- How much is legitimate use and what is legitimate use anyway?
- Highly variable infrastructure for tracking prescriptions of S8 drugs.
- The interaction between pharmaceutical drug misuse and illicit drug markets (including markets for the pharmaceuticals themselves).
- Theft / diversion from the supply chain.



Prescription drug misuse – So what?

- The impact of pharmaceutical misuse on crime.
- The impact of pharmaceutical misuse on harm reduction.
- Impact of pharmaceutical misuse on road trauma.
- Emerging sources for illicit pharmaceutical drugs.
- The risks of over-reaction
 - Criminalisation of users & inadequate pain management (Nicholas, 2002)



The amateurisation of illicit drug markets

Two aspects to this:

- Production: Increasing access to recipes and information about precursors on the Internet.
 - Increased risks of adverse outcomes.
- Retailing: Increased not for profit low level drug dealing (except heroin) by people with no criminal background (Nicholas, 2008).
- This has major implications for low-level market disruption.



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Can the law enforcement sector and its partners be more systematic in responding to the peaks and troughs in the use of different illicit drugs?

- We understand the ebb and flow of illicit drug markets much better than in the past and what this means for each responding sector (Caulkins, 2007).

Is the current balance of measures utilised by the law enforcement sector maximising its impact on illicit drug markets?

- Law enforcement impacts on drug markets in two main ways – target hardening (including exploiting the vulnerabilities of criminal organisations) and by enforcing drug laws (Nicholas, 2002).
- Future diminished capacity to control the supply of synthetically produced drugs through 'traditional' means such as interdiction and criminal investigation (Cherney et al. 2005).



Impacting on illicit drug markets

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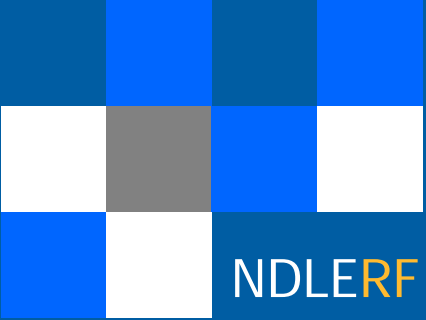
- The importance of coercive / non-coercive partnerships with those who influence the means of production (Cherney et al. 2005).



Indigenous Australians

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- Things are not improving.
- Limitations of supply reduction strategies.
 - Differences in perceptions of approaches
- Limitations of criminal justice approaches.



The end

Many thanks