

# **INJECTING ICE IN THE COUNTRY**

## **Healthier Approaches**

### **CURRENT TRENDS IN ICE USE**

Ice is having a significant impact on individuals and communities in rural and regional areas. Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) workers need to understand the effects of ice and how it impacts people. This will help to support clients to reduce the harms of their ice use.

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## Background

A number of indicators point to the increasing level of injecting among people who use methamphetamine. The use of ice and other illicit stimulants is not limited to Australia. It is a global issue, where illicit amphetamine-type stimulants have become the second-most widely used drug after cannabis.

## The evidence

According to the most recent National Drug Strategy Household Survey in Australia:

- 7% of the population have admitted taking methamphetamine in their lifetime.
- Among those who use illicit stimulants, methamphetamine has become far more heavily used.
- Between 2010 and 2013 the use of ice doubled while the use of powder amphetamines almost halved.

## The context of ice use in regional areas:

- It's relatively easy to access ice in regional communities. People report being able to buy it easily and relatively cheaply.
- The purity is greater than other forms of amphetamines leading to more severe dependence and higher rates of relapse.
- Where previously the majority of NSP clients were opioid injectors, increases in ice use has meant there is a new cohort of people accessing NSPs.

## Summary

There is a changing landscape around drug use in Australia, and more people are injecting ice than ever before. The accessibility and purity of ice is having a significant impact for people who use ice, their families, and the wider community. Given that people who inject drugs are often reluctant to engage with health services, NSP workers are uniquely placed to educate clients about the effects of ice. This will help clients to reduce the harms for themselves and others.

Please consider contacting your local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation for additional services and supports for your Aboriginal clients, or visit [www.vaccho.org.au](http://www.vaccho.org.au).

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