

Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission to Inquiry into crystal methamphetamine (ice)

10 June 2015

- I am 47 years old and live in Melbourne with a 6 year old son.
- I do not take illegal drugs.
- I know people my own age, in my own peer group, who have become addicted to ice and I have seen lives destroyed.

Prohibition of drugs has not only failed, it has caused significant problems for our society.

This submission calls for:

- Ending prohibition of the sale and possession of “safer drugs”
- Retaining prohibition of the sale of ice
- Educating children (and also adults) that even one try of ice can lead to addiction

Defining “safer drugs”

- The disastrous impacts of ice have shown that the previously demonised illegal drugs marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin are very poor life choices. For the most part however they impact the individual and do not necessarily destroy the life of the user and those around the user. This submission refers to marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin as “safer drugs”.

Problem: Prohibition makes “Safer drugs” unsafe.

Solution: Legalise sale of “safer drugs”.

- Marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin are made unsafe when they are made of unknown ingredients (and may not in fact contain the expected drug at all). Users may overdose or have unexpected outcomes when drugs contain additional ingredients, and when users do not know the level of purity of the drug being used. If these drugs were professionally manufactured and standardised then users would be less likely to overdose and would be less likely to be consuming harmful additives. Marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin manufactured by drugs companies such as Bayer would be much more predictable.
- It is also possible that users think they are using “safer drugs” but those drugs might include ice as an ingredient. Thus prohibition is leading people to take ice even though it was not their intention.

Problem: Prohibition has created ice, because “safer drugs” are not available.

Solution: Legalise manufacture and sale of “safer drugs”.

- People want to get high. Recreational drugs are illegal, expensive, hard to get and of unknown quality. Because “safer drugs” are unavailable, people who really want to get high will try whatever is available. Ice is available because it is cheap and easy to make. Make “safer drugs” cheap, available and of high quality made from known ingredients. If people

can get high on safer drugs cheaply and easily then there will be less demand for ice and less reason for people to try ice.

- “Safer drugs” should be sold much as tobacco is, behind the counter, with bans and stiff penalties for advertising or promoting drug use.

Problem: Prohibition leads to small scale crime so users can buy drugs.

Solution: Ensure that legal “safer drugs” are sold at low cost.

- Drug users need money to buy drugs. They get that money by stealing it from people they know, or from the wider community. This forces users to become criminals, consumes police and legal resources and makes victims of family, friends and the community.
- Drug users must commit their time to finding money to buy drugs and cannot commit their time to running effective family life. When they have money it is spent on expensive drugs so they do not have money to run effective personal and family lives, with major family and community impacts.
- If “safer drugs” are made available at very low cost then users are in a better position to expend personal time and effort on personal and family life.

Problem: Prohibition leads to organised crime, which professionalises manufacture of ice.

Solution: Legalise sale of “safer drugs”, thereby starving organised crime of money.

Organised crime sells all of the currently illegal drugs including the “safer drugs”. If organised crime is starved of its income from safer drugs then there will be less organised crime and therefore less capability for organised crime to manufacture ice.

Massive, ongoing community education required with a focus on children.

- Drugs having varying levels of addictiveness.
- As children move through teenage years and become young adults they experiment with drugs at some point. Somehow we need to educate children that even one use of ice can lead to addiction.
- Many adults have an expectation that drugs can be dabbled to a greater or lesser extent largely without significant consequence. My observation is that many (most) adults are not aware that ice is extremely addictive and should not be tried even once.

Finally:

The point of the measures above is to take away reasons for people to try ice. Given safer, clean, cheap alternatives, hopefully this will reduce the prevalence of ice, reduce the number of people who start taking ice, and reduce the impact on the community of ice.

One of my greatest concerns is that my six year old son one day will try ice. I urge the government to do everything it can to educate the community and especially children that you can try many things but you cannot try ice.

<name withheld>

10 Jun 2015