

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates Hearing 25-29 May 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Ice Taskforce

Senator: Senator Nick Xenophon

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Question:

Is what's called the Ice epidemic an epidemic of:

- a. Rising availability of Ice?
- b. Rising use of Ice?
- c. Rising seizures of Ice?
- d. Rising concentration (purity) of Ice – leading to worse outcomes for users and those around them?
- e. All of the above?

Answer:

The National Ice Taskforce ('the Taskforce') consulted with local communities, and heard from experts and individuals who have a particular expertise in relation to drug addiction and support services. Feedback from experts, communities and individuals consistently indicated that the supply, demand and harm associated with the use of ice has increased.

The amount of crystal methamphetamine (crystal meth) imports to Australia seized grew by almost 60 times between 2010 and 2014 (Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, 2015). Since 2009 the number of treatment programmes where the main drug of concern was meth/amphetamine has risen from 10,027 to 28,886 (Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set, 2014).

Further, current data indicates that the prevalence of the use of crystal meth increased between 2007 and 2013. In absolute terms, in 2013 there were around 200,000 Australians who reported crystal meth as the main form of meth/amphetamines they used in the previous 12 months, compared to around 100,000 Australians in 2007 (National Drug Strategy Household Survey).