



AUSTRALIAN  
**CRIMINAL  
INTELLIGENCE  
COMMISSION**

# ILLICIT DRUG DATA REPORT **2017–18**



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# ILLICIT DRUG DATA REPORT

2017–18





# CEO FOREWORD

## MICHAEL PHELAN APM

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission’s annual *Illicit Drug Data Report*, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> edition, continues to provide an authoritative picture of illicit drugs in Australia. It informs policy and operational decisions across government, industry and the not-for-profit sector and focuses efforts to reduce the impact of illicit drugs on our communities.

Serious and organised criminals are at the centre of Australia’s illicit drug market, motivated by greed, power and profit. We know serious and organised crime groups continue to generate significant profits from the sale of illicit substances, with the price paid for illicit drugs in Australia among the highest in the world. The estimated street value of the weight of amphetamines, MDMA, cocaine and heroin seized nationally in 2017–18 is nearly \$5 billion, underlining the size of the black economy that relates to illicit drugs alone. As such, the importation, manufacture, cultivation and distribution of illicit drugs and related precursors in Australia remain a focal point of government, law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Illicit drug use cannot be addressed by law enforcement alone—a multi-faceted approach is needed. This report combines illicit drug data from a variety of sources including law enforcement, forensic services, health and academia, which inform our understanding and assist in focusing our collective efforts to respond to the issue of illicit drugs. The risk and harm posed by illicit drugs to the Australian community is ever-growing, which underscores the need for law enforcement and health agencies to work collaboratively to combat both the supply and demand for illicit drugs in Australia.

In 2017–18, new records were set and include:

- 30.6 tonnes of illicit drugs seized nationally
- 5,096 national cocaine seizures
- 4,325 national cocaine arrests
- 22 clandestine laboratories detected nationally producing GHB/GBL
- 17,383 cannabis detections at the Australian border
- 4,912 kilograms of ATS (excluding MDMA) precursors detected at the Australian border.

These upward trends not only highlight the continued vigilance of law enforcement in reducing the supply of all illicit drugs; they also highlight why illicit drugs continue to be a concern for law enforcement and the wider community, and the ongoing need to reduce demand.

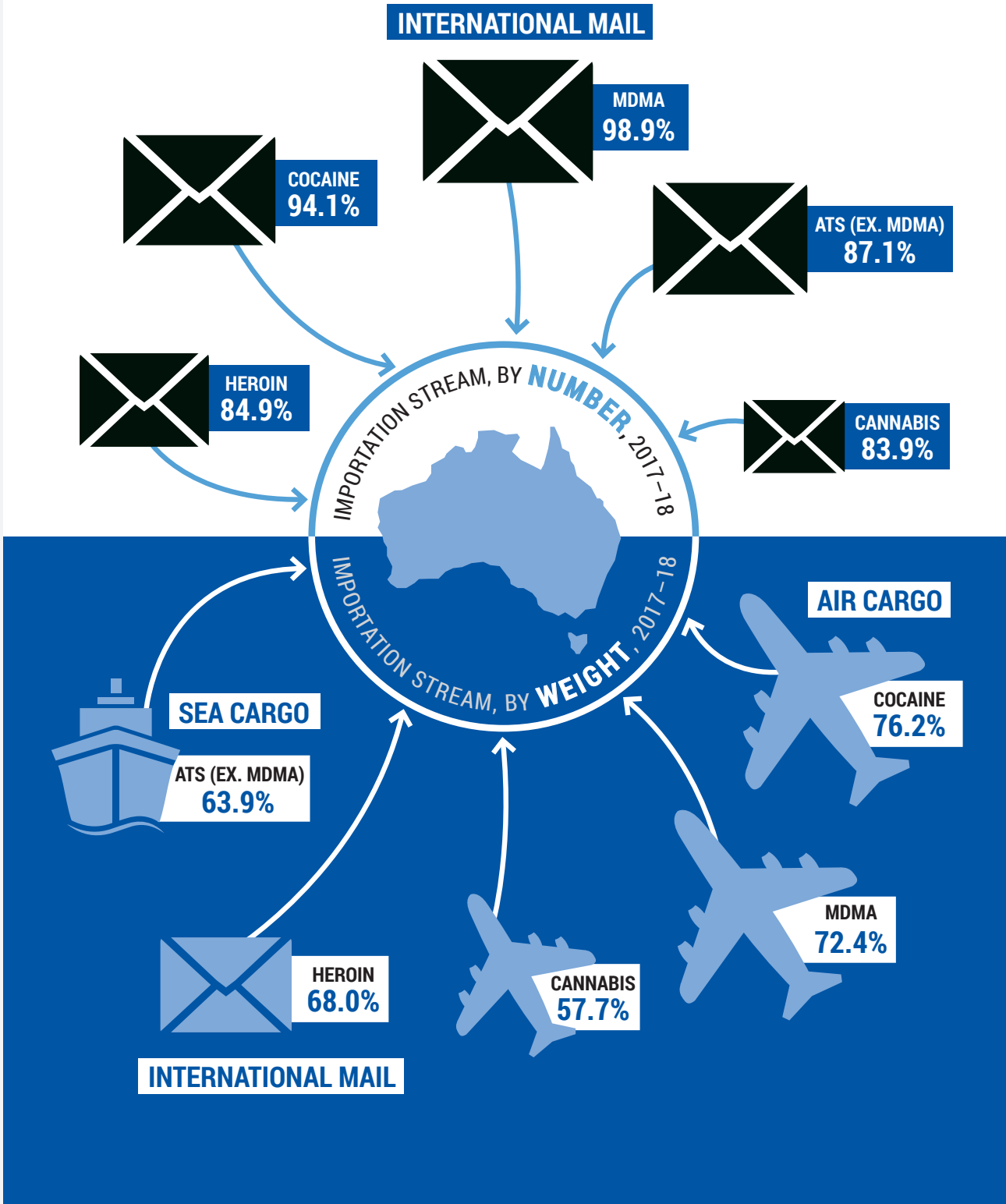


Methylamphetamine is one of the most consumed illicit drugs in Australia, remaining the most consumed illicit drug of those monitored by the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program based on available dose data. It is estimated that 9,847 kilograms of methylamphetamine is consumed annually in Australia, with 5,064 kilograms of amphetamines—the majority of which is methylamphetamine—seized nationally 2017–18. While demand for methylamphetamine remains high, serious and organised criminals will continue to import, manufacture and distribute the drug.

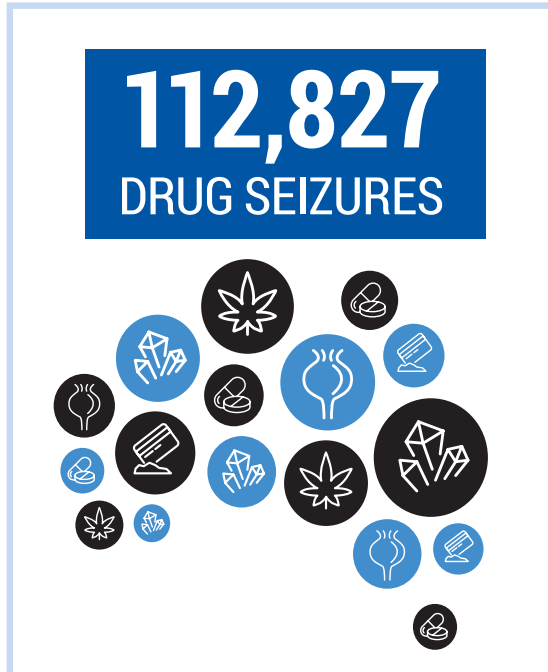
I commend the efforts of all who contributed to this report, from law enforcement, forensic services, academia and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. If not for your vital contributions and continued support, it would not be possible to understand the complex and evolving Australian drug market.


**Michael Phelan APM**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

# IMPORTATION METHODS





## NATIONAL SEIZURES AND ARRESTS




<b>INTRODUCTION</b>  <b>2</b> 	Foreword	2
	Snapshot	4
	Acknowledgements	8
	Introduction	9
	Executive summary	10
	Abbreviations	20

<b>AMPHETAMINE- TYPE STIMULANTS</b>  <b>23</b> 	Key points	23
	Main forms	24
	International trends	24
	Domestic trends	25
	Domestic market indicators	29
	National impact	40
	References	42

<b>CANNABIS</b>  <b>43</b> 	Key points	43
	Main forms	44
	International trends	44
	Domestic trends	45
	Domestic market indicators	46
	National impact	52
	References	53

<b>HEROIN</b>  <b>55</b> 	Key points	55
	Main forms	56
	International trends	56
	Domestic trends	57
	Domestic market indicators	60
	National impact	66
	References	67

<b>COCAINE</b>  <b>69</b> 	Key points	69
	Main forms	70
	International trends	70
	Domestic trends	71
	Domestic market indicators	74
	National impact	80
	References	81



## OTHER DRUGS

# 83



Key points	83
Anabolic agents and other selected hormones	84
Tryptamines	91
Anaesthetics	95
Pharmaceuticals	99
New psychoactive substances	105
Other and unknown not elsewhere classified drugs	109
National impact	112
References	115

## CLANDESTINE LABORATORIES AND PRECURSORS

# 119



Key points	119
Main forms	120
International trends	121
Domestic trends	122
Domestic market indicators	124
National impact	131
References	132

## STATISTICS

# 133



Counting methodology	134
Data sources	134
Limitations of the data	135
Jurisdictional issues	138
Explanatory notes	142
Arrest tables	145
Seizure tables	151
Purity tables	153
Price tables	163

## APPENDIX

# 171



Significant border detections in 2017–18	172
ENIPID forensic profiling data	174

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This report contains data and analysis provided by federal, state and territory police, as well as forensic laboratories and the Department of Home Affairs.<sup>1</sup> These agencies provide significant contributions to each report and their expertise and experience, along with their continued support, have been invaluable to the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

Key contributors are listed below:

- Australian Border Force
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Federal Police, ACT Policing
- Australian Federal Police, Forensic Drug Intelligence
- Australian Institute of Criminology, Drug Use Monitoring in Australia Program
- ChemCentre
- Department of Home Affairs
- Forensic Science Service Tasmania
- Forensic Science South Australia
- National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program
- New South Wales Ministry of Health, Health System Information and Performance Reporting
- New South Wales Police Force
- Northern Territory Police
- NSW Forensic & Analytical Science Service
- Queensland Health and Forensic Scientific Services
- Queensland Police Service
- South Australia Police
- Tasmania Police
- Victoria Police
- Western Australia Police Force.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information about the data, jurisdictional issues and explanatory notes is contained in the *Statistics* chapter.



# INTRODUCTION

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission Illicit Drug Data Report (IDDR) is the only report of its type in Australia, providing governments, law enforcement agencies and interested stakeholders with a national picture of the illicit drug market. The IDDR presents data from a variety of sources and provides an important evidence base to assess current and future illicit drug trends, offers a brief analysis of those trends and informs the development of strategies to combat the threat posed by illicit drugs. The purpose of this report is to provide statistics and analysis to assist decision-makers in developing evidence-based illicit drug supply, demand and harm reduction strategies. The data also assist the Australian Government to meet national and international reporting obligations.

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission collects data annually from all state and territory police services, the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Home Affairs, state and territory forensic laboratories and research centres. Illicit drug data collected and presented in this report for the 2017–18 financial year include:

- arrest
- detection
- seizure
- purity
- profiling
- price.

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission uses the National Illicit Drug Reporting Format (NIDRF) system to standardise the arrest, seizure and purity data received from police services and contributing forensic organisations.

The current format and structure of the IDDR provides a more concise report, while still retaining key illicit drug market information and insights. Similar to previous reports, each chapter in the 2017–18 report provides an overview of changes since the previous reporting period and also includes some longer-term trends in key market indicators—including border detections, national seizures and arrests, price, purity, forensic analysis, wastewater analysis and drug user survey data—which inform and enhance our understanding of Australia’s illicit drug markets and the ability to identify changes within them. To provide greater accessibility to the valuable and unique data contained in the report, some of the information and data from the 2017–18 report will be made available on the Crime Statistics Australia website hosted by the Australian Institute of Criminology.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See <<http://www.crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY<sup>3</sup>

Variation exists in drug markets, both internationally and domestically, within and between states and territories and over time. No single data set provides a national picture of Australian illicit drug markets and it is only through the layering of multiple data—both current and historical—that we are able to enhance our understanding of illicit drug markets.

Cannabis and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) remain the two primary illicit drug markets in Australia, and their predominance is reflected in most supply and demand indicators. By number, cannabis was the most commonly detected illicit drug at the Australian border in 2017–18, with the weight of ATS detected this reporting period exceeding the combined weight of cannabis, heroin and cocaine detections. Cannabis accounted for the greatest proportion of the number of national illicit drug seizures and arrests this reporting period, with ATS accounting for the greatest proportion of the weight of illicit drugs seized nationally in 2017–18.

Overall, based on supply and demand indicators for the main illicit drug markets in Australia in 2017–18:

- The ATS market, which in Australia is chiefly comprised of methylamphetamine, is large and relatively stable.
- The cannabis market remains large but relatively stable.
- The heroin market is small and relatively stable.
- The cocaine market is undergoing expansion.
- Indicators of demand and supply for other drugs provide a mixed picture, although overall the markets in other drugs are small. There is potential expansion of the anaesthetics market, particularly GHB/GBL.

## PROFILE OF ILLICIT DRUG DETECTIONS AT THE AUSTRALIAN BORDER

### Number of illicit drug detections—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)		Cannabis	Heroin	Cocaine
ATS (excluding MDMA)	MDMA			
-15.6%	-25.9%	58.2%	9.0%	-26.2%
2,905 → 2,451	4,763 → 3,530	10,987 → 17,383	243 → 265	3,715 → 2,741

Cannabis accounted for the greatest number of border detections in 2017–18, followed by MDMA, cocaine, ATS and heroin.

- The number of ATS<sup>4</sup>, MDMA and cocaine detections at the Australian border decreased in 2017–18.
- The number of cannabis and heroin detections increased this reporting period, with the record 10,987 cannabis detections in 2016–17 further increasing in 2017–18 to a record 17,383 detections and the 265 heroin detections this reporting period the second highest number reported in the last decade.

<sup>3</sup> Key for tables in the Executive Summary:

= Decrease = Relatively stable = Increase = Highest on record = Highest in last decade

<sup>4</sup> ATS border detection data exclude MDMA, which is reported separately.



### Weight of illicit drug detections—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)		Cannabis	Heroin	Cocaine
ATS (excluding MDMA)	MDMA			
<b>↑ 61.0 %</b> 1,833kg → 2,952kg	<b>↑ 59.6%</b> 890kg → 1,420kg	<b>↑ 466.0%</b> 102kg → 580kg	<b>↓ -5.7%</b> 201kg → 190kg	<b>↓ -16.5%</b> 1,109kg → 926kg

ATS accounted for the greatest proportion of the weight of border detections in 2017–18, followed by MDMA, cocaine, cannabis and heroin.

- The weight of heroin and cocaine detected at the Australian border decreased in 2017–18.
- The weight of ATS, MDMA and cannabis detected increased this reporting period, with the weight of ATS detected in 2017–18 the second highest on record, the weight of cannabis detected the highest recorded in the last decade and the weight of MDMA detected the second highest in the last decade.

### Proportion of illicit drug detections, by importation stream in 2017–18

Drug Type	Importation stream, by number, 2017–18		Importation stream, by weight, 2017–18	
<b>ATS (excluding MDMA)</b>	<b>International mail</b>	<b>87.1%</b>	<b>Sea cargo</b>	<b>63.9%</b>
	Air cargo	11.5%	Air cargo	27.0%
	Air passenger/crew	1.1%	International mail	8.2%
	Sea cargo	0.2%	Air passenger/crew	0.8%
<b>MDMA</b>	<b>International mail</b>	<b>98.9%</b>	<b>Air cargo</b>	<b>72.4%</b>
	Air cargo	0.7%	International mail	21.1%
	Air passenger/crew	0.4%	Sea cargo	6.4%
	Sea cargo	0.1%	Air passenger/crew	<0.1%
<b>Cannabis</b>	<b>International mail</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>Air cargo</b>	<b>57.7%</b>
	Air cargo	15.7%	International mail	41.8%
	Air passenger/crew	0.4%	Air passenger/crew	0.3%
	Sea cargo	<0.1%	Sea cargo	0.3%
<b>Heroin</b>	<b>International mail</b>	<b>84.9%</b>	<b>International mail</b>	<b>68.0%</b>
	Air cargo	14.3%	Air cargo	29.9%
	Air passenger/crew	0.8%	Air passenger/crew	2.1%
<b>Cocaine</b>	<b>International mail</b>	<b>94.1%</b>	<b>Air cargo</b>	<b>76.2%</b>
	Air cargo	5.2%	International mail	10.6%
	Air passenger/crew	0.6%	Sea cargo	10.6%
	Sea cargo	0.1%	Air passenger/crew	2.6%

The international mail stream continues to account for the greatest proportion of the number of illicit drug detections at the Australian border, however the importation stream accounting for the greatest proportion of the weight detected varies by drug type.

## PROFILE OF NATIONAL ILLICIT DRUG SEIZURES

### Number of national illicit drug seizures—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

National	ATS	Cannabis	Heroin	Cocaine	Other and unknown drugs
↔ -0.6%	↔ -0.7%	↓ -1.4%	↑ 1.3%	↑ 11.6%	↓ -1.4%
113,533 → 112,827	37,351 → 37,093	60,006 → 59,139	1,951 → 1,977	4,567 → 5,096	9,658 → 9,522

The number of national illicit drug seizures has increased 67.0 per cent over the last decade, increasing from 67,559 in 2008–09 to 112,827 in 2017–18.<sup>5</sup>

- The number of national illicit drug seizures remained relatively stable this reporting period and is the third highest number on record.
- In 2017–18, cannabis accounted for the greatest proportion of the number of national illicit drug seizures (52.4 per cent), followed by ATS (32.9 per cent), other and unknown drugs (8.2 per cent), cocaine (4.5 per cent) and heroin and other opioids (2.0 per cent).<sup>6</sup>
- The number of national cannabis and other and unknown drug seizures decreased this reporting period, with the number of other and unknown drug seizures decreasing from a record 9,658 in 2016–17 to 9,522 this reporting period, the second highest number on record. The number of ATS seizures remained relatively stable in 2017–18.
- The number of national heroin and cocaine seizures increased this reporting period, with the record 4,567 cocaine seizures in 2016–17 further increasing in 2017–18 to a record 5,096 seizures, and the 1,977 heroin seizures this reporting period the second highest number reported in the last decade.

### Weight of national illicit drug seizures—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

National	ATS	Cannabis	Heroin	Cocaine	Other and unknown drugs
↑ 11.3%	↑ 48.0%	↑ 14.7%	↑ 1.9%	↓ -57.4%	↑ 13.5%
27.4t → 30.6t	7,571kg → 11,205kg	7,547kg → 8,655kg	224kg → 229kg	4,623kg → 1,970kg	7,524kg → 8,540kg

- The weight of illicit drugs seized nationally has increased 130.0 per cent over the last decade, from 13.3 tonnes in 2008–09 to a record 30.6 tonnes in 2017–18.<sup>7</sup>
- The weight of illicit drugs seized nationally this reporting period further increased from a record 27.4 tonnes in 2016–17.

<sup>5</sup> A figure displaying the number of national illicit drug seizures over the last decade will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

<sup>6</sup> A figure for the number of national illicit drug seizures in 2017–18 will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. A proportional figure displaying the number of illicit drug seizures, by state and territory and drug type in 2017–18 will also be available. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

<sup>7</sup> A figure displaying the weight of illicit drugs seized nationally over the last decade will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.



- In 2017–18, ATS accounted for the greatest proportion of the weight of illicit drugs seized nationally (36.6 per cent), followed by cannabis (28.3 per cent), other and unknown drugs (27.4 per cent), cocaine (6.4 per cent) and heroin and other opioids (1.2 per cent).<sup>8</sup>
- Although the weight of cocaine seized nationally this reporting period is less than half the record 4,623 kilograms seized in 2016–17, the 1,970 kilograms seized in 2017–18 is the second highest weight on record.
- The weight of ATS, cannabis, heroin and other and unknown drugs seized nationally increased in 2017–18, with the weight of ATS seized this reporting period the second highest on record and the weight of cannabis seized the second highest recorded in the last decade.

**Comparison of the weight of methylamphetamine, MDMA, heroin and cocaine seized nationally in 2017–18 and estimated consumption**

Drug	Estimated consumption <sup>a</sup> (kilograms per annum)	2017–18 national seizures (kilograms)	Percentage of total estimated consumption seized (%)
<b>Methylamphetamine</b>	9,847	5,064 <sup>b</sup>	51.4
<b>MDMA</b>	1,162	2,033	175.0
<b>Heroin</b>	750	229	30.5
<b>Cocaine</b>	4,115	1,970	47.9

a. Consumption estimates are based on data derived from Year 2 of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program.

b. At this time it is not possible at a national level to provide a further breakdown of drugs within the amphetamines category. As such national seizure figures reflect the weight of amphetamines seized. Amphetamines include amphetamine, methylamphetamine, dexamphetamine and amphetamine not elsewhere classified. Based on available data, methylamphetamine accounts for the majority of amphetamines seized.

Wastewater analysis provides a measure of licit and illicit drug consumption within a given population. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission has used wastewater data collected between August 2017 and August 2018 as part of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program (NWDMP) to estimate the annual weight of methylamphetamine, MDMA, heroin and cocaine consumed nationally. While these estimates are conservative, they provide valuable insight into illicit drug markets in Australia.<sup>9</sup> Based on the reported weights seized nationally by Australian law enforcement in 2017–18 and consumption estimates from the NWDMP:







- the weight of amphetamines seized equated to 51.4 per cent of the total estimated weight of methylamphetamine needed to meet national demand
- the weight of MDMA seized exceeded the total estimated weight of MDMA needed to meet national demand (175.0 per cent)
- the weight of heroin seized equated to 30.5 per cent of the total estimated weight of heroin needed to meet national demand
- the weight of cocaine seized equated to 47.9 per cent of the total estimated weight of cocaine needed to meet national demand.

8 A figure for the weight of illicit drugs seized nationally in 2017–18 will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. A proportional figure displaying the weight of illicit drugs seized, by state and territory and drug type in 2017–18 will also be available. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

9 The public NWDMP reports are available on the ACIC website. See <<https://www.acic.gov.au/publications/intelligence-products/national-wastewater-drug-monitoring-program-report>>.

## PROFILE OF NATIONAL ILLICIT DRUG ARRESTS

### National illicit drug arrests—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

National	ATS	Cannabis	Heroin and other opioids	Cocaine	Other and unknown drugs
 <b>-4.1%</b> 154,650 → 148,363	 <b>-5.6%</b> 47,531 → 44,887	 <b>-6.7%</b> 77,549 → 72,381	 <b>2.0%</b> 2,970 → 3,029	 <b>28.5%</b> 3,366 → 4,325	 <b>2.2%</b> 23,234 → 23,741

The number of national illicit drug arrests increased 76.9 per cent over the last decade, from 83,873 in 2008–09 to 148,363 in 2017–18.<sup>10</sup>

- The number of national illicit drug arrests decreased this reporting period from a record 154,650 arrests in 2016–17, with the number of arrests reported in 2017–18 the third highest number on record.
- In 2017–18, cannabis accounted for the greatest proportion of national illicit drug arrests (48.8 per cent), followed by ATS (30.3 per cent), other and unknown drugs (16.0 per cent), cocaine (2.9 per cent) and heroin and other opioids (2.0 per cent).<sup>11</sup>
- The number of national ATS and cannabis arrests decreased this reporting period.
- The number of national heroin and other opioids, cocaine and other and unknown drug arrests increased this reporting period, with the number of cocaine and other and unknown drug arrests in 2017–18 the highest on record and the number of heroin and other opioid arrests the second highest number reported in the last decade.

Arrest data in the IDDR incorporate recorded law enforcement action against a person for suspected unlawful involvement in illicit drugs. It includes action by way of arrest and charge, summons, diversion, infringement and caution. The action taken by law enforcement is influenced by a number of factors, including but not limited to which state or territory the incident occurs in, the drug type and quantity and related legislation/regulation. In 2017–18, summons accounted for the greatest proportion of national drug arrests (43.8 per cent), followed by charge (31.6 per cent) and caution/diversion/infringement (24.5 per cent). These proportions vary between drug type, with charge accounting for the greatest proportion of national heroin and other opioid arrests (56.6 per cent), summons accounting for the greatest proportion of national steroid arrests (58.0 per cent) and caution/diversion/infringements accounting for the greatest proportion of national cannabis arrests (39.1 per cent).<sup>12</sup>

10 A figure displaying the number of national illicit drug arrests over the last decade will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

11 A figure for the number of national illicit drug arrests in 2017–18 will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. A proportional figure displaying the number of illicit drug arrests, by state and territory and drug type in 2017–18 will also be available. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

12 Figures for 2017–18 national arrests, by drug type, will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.





Males accounted for the majority of national arrests (76.0 per cent) in 2017–18, with females accounting for less than one quarter of arrests. While there was some variation in the proportion of arrests involving males across drug types, males consistently accounted for the greatest proportion of arrests across all drug types this reporting period, ranging from 72.5 per cent of national other and unknown drug arrests to 86.4 per cent of national steroid arrests.<sup>13</sup> In 2017–18, consumer arrests accounted for the greatest proportion of national arrests (90.7 per cent). While consumer arrests account for the greatest proportion of arrests across all drug types, the proportion attributed to them does vary, from 77.7 per cent of national cocaine arrests to 92.0 per cent of national cannabis arrests.<sup>14</sup>

## PROFILE OF NATIONAL CLANDESTINE LABORATORIES AND PRECURSORS

### National clandestine laboratory detections—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

No. of detections	Size and production capacity	Location
<b>-6.7%</b> 463 → 432	Addict-based 49.5% → <b>52.8%</b> Other small 27.7% → <b>26.2%</b> Medium 20.0% → <b>19.4%</b> Industrial 2.7% → <b>1.6%</b>	Residential 63.9% → <b>70.8%</b> Vehicle 12.5% → <b>9.5%</b> Rural 4.1% → <b>6.5%</b> Other 8.4% → <b>5.3%</b> Commercial/industrial 6.0% → <b>4.4%</b> Public place 5.0% → <b>3.5%</b>

- The number of clandestine laboratories detected nationally decreased for the sixth consecutive reporting period in 2017–18.
- The majority of laboratories detected in Australia this reporting period were producing methylamphetamine, with the hypophosphorous method of production the predominant process identified.
- Drug profiling data of both border and domestic seizures indicate ephedrine and pseudoephedrine remain the dominant methylamphetamine precursors.
- Of note this reporting period were increases in the number of laboratories detected producing other drugs, with a record 22 laboratories detected in 2017–18 producing GHB/GBL and the 20 laboratories detected producing MDMA the highest number reported in the last decade.
- The majority of laboratories detected in Australia continue to be addict-based and situated in residential locations.

<sup>13</sup> Figures for 2017–18 national arrests, by drug type and gender, will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

<sup>14</sup> Figures for 2017–18 national arrests, by drug type and consumer/provider status, will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.



### Number of ATS precursor border detections—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

ATS precursors	
ATS (excluding MDMA)	MDMA
<b>-39.9%</b> 552 → 332	<b>-75.0%</b> 4 → 1

The number of ATS and MDMA precursor detections at the Australian border decreased in 2017–18.

### Weight of ATS precursor detections—comparison between 2016–17 and 2017–18

ATS precursors	
ATS (excluding MDMA)	MDMA
<b>210.1%</b> 1,584kg → 4,912kg	<b>-99.9%</b> 10kg → 5g

The weight of ATS precursors detected increased this reporting period, with the 4.9 tonnes detected in 2017–18 the highest on record. The weight of MDMA precursors detected at the Australian border decreased in 2017–18.

## 2017–18 FEATURE DRUG—METHYLAMPHETAMINE

The illicit market for amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) in Australia is entrenched and enduring. The market is supplied through domestic production and the importation of precursors and finished product. Fluctuations observed this reporting period across a number of supply and demand indicators for ATS suggest small changes within a large and established market. Within the Australian ATS market, methylamphetamine is the predominant drug. Overall, available indicator data for this drug type demonstrate a large, stable market, characterised by a significant user-base that is supplied by a combination of domestically produced and imported product.

### International picture

ATS is one of the largest illicit drug markets globally, second only to cannabis. Data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime show that the weight of ATS seized globally increased 60.4 per cent between 2012 and 2016. Methylamphetamine accounted for over 60 per cent of the weight of ATS seized between 2012 and 2016, with the weight of methylamphetamine seized globally increasing 31.5 per cent during the same period.

### Border detections

While the number and weight of ATS<sup>15</sup> detected at the Australian border fluctuate across reporting periods, since 2012–13 detections have been at historically high levels. The number of ATS detections increased 525.3 per cent over the last decade, from 392 in 2008–09 to 2,451 in 2017–18. The 2,952.4 kilograms detected at the Australian border in 2017–18 is around 50 kilograms less than the combined weight of ATS detected between 2008–09 and 2012–13 inclusive.

<sup>15</sup> ATS border detection data exclude MDMA, which is reported separately.



### Seizures and arrests

The number of national ATS seizures increased 178.9 per cent over the last decade, from 13,300 in 2008–09 to 37,093 in 2017–18. The weight of ATS seized nationally increased 583.1 per cent, from 1,640.2 kilograms in 2008–09 to 11,205.2 kilograms in 2017–18. The number and weight of national ATS seizures reported in the last four reporting periods are the highest on record, with the number of national ATS seizures this reporting period the third highest on record and the weight seized nationally the second highest on record.

- In the last decade, within the broad ATS category—comprising amphetamines (primarily methylamphetamine), MDMA and other ATS—amphetamines accounted for the greatest proportion of the number of national ATS seizures. In 2017–18, amphetamines accounted for 84.1 per cent of national ATS seizures, with the proportions in the last decade ranging between 72.3 in 2009–10 and 85.9 in 2008–09.
- Similarly, with the exception of 2008–09, amphetamines accounted for the greatest proportion of the weight of ATS seized nationally in the last decade. In 2017–18, amphetamines accounted for 45.2 per cent of the weight of ATS seized nationally, with the proportions in the last decade ranging between 17.4 per cent in 2008–09 and 69.4 per cent in 2012–13.

The number of national ATS arrests increased 172.8 per cent over the last decade, from 16,452 in 2008–09 to 44,887 in 2017–18. The number of national ATS arrests increased to a record 47,531 arrests in 2015–16 and has since plateaued.

- Within the ATS category, amphetamines accounted for the greatest proportion of national ATS arrests in the last decade, with proportions ranging between 72.7 per cent in 2009–10 and 87.0 per cent in 2017–18.

### Price and purity

The national median price of crystal methylamphetamine remained relatively stable for a street deal (0.1 gram) over the last decade, ranging between \$75 and \$100. More notable price fluctuations are apparent in the reported national median prices for a gram and kilogram of crystal methylamphetamine. The median price per gram in the last decade decreased, from a decade high of \$750 per gram in 2009–10 and 2012–13 to \$350 in 2017–18, the lowest price reported in the decade. The median price per kilogram also decreased, from \$270,000 in 2010–11 to \$105,000 in 2017–18.

Since the start of the decade the annual median purity of analysed methylamphetamine samples has increased significantly, ranging between 7.2 and 13.2 per cent in 2008–09 to between 48.6 and 82.4 per cent in 2017–18. There was a notable increase in the annual median purity of methylamphetamine in 2012–13, with the successive annual median purity remaining high and relatively stable across most states.

### Clandestine laboratories and precursors

Domestic production remains a key source of methylamphetamine in Australia. Of the clandestine laboratories detected nationally, methylamphetamine remains the main drug produced.

- Of those able to be identified, clandestine laboratories manufacturing ATS (excluding MDMA) continue to account for the greatest proportion of detections (46.2 per cent in 2017–18).



The number and weight of ATS (excluding MDMA) precursors detected at the Australian border fluctuated over the last decade. The number of detections ranged from 287 in 2008–09 to 1,043 in 2012–13, with the weight detected ranging from 500.8 kilograms in 2014–15 to a record 4,912.4 kilograms in 2017–18.

Consistent with previous reporting periods, forensic profiling of both border and domestic seizures indicate ephedrine and pseudoephedrine remain the predominant methylamphetamine precursors.

After successive increases in the number of national clandestine laboratory detections between 2008–09 and 2011–12, the number of detections steadily decreased. However, a decrease in the number of detections does not necessarily equate to a decrease in the weight of drugs produced.

- Since 2011–12 when categorisation of detected laboratories reporting commenced, the proportion of addict-based laboratories decreased by a third, with the proportion of other small-scale laboratories doubling and medium-sized laboratories more than doubling over the period.

#### User reporting and consumption estimates

Collectively, data from wastewater analysis, user reporting and population surveys indicate that demand for methylamphetamine remains high and relatively stable.

- Of the substances tested by the NWDMP with known dosage levels, methylamphetamine is the most consumed illicit drug in both regional and capital city sites. When comparing data from the start of the program (August 2016) to August 2018, the population-weighted average consumption of methylamphetamine for both capital city and regional sites increased, with the estimated weight of methylamphetamine consumed annually in Australia increasing 17.2 per cent, from 8,405 kilograms in the first year of the program to 9,847 kilograms in the second year.
- According to the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, while the proportion of the Australian population aged 14 years or older reporting recent meth/amphetamines use, or use at least once in their lifetime, decreased from 2013 to 2016, the proportion of respondents reporting use at least once a week increased, with crystal/ice the main form reportedly used in the last 12 months.
- Findings from a national study of injecting drug users show the proportion of respondents reporting the recent use of any form of methylamphetamine increased over the last decade, from 67.0 per cent in 2009 to 77.0 per cent in 2018. The reported median number of days of methylamphetamine use (any form) in the six months preceding interview more than doubled over the decade, from 20 days in 2009 to 48 days in 2018. While heroin remains the reported drug of choice within this population, in 2018 methylamphetamine was reported as the drug injected most often in the last month. Crystal methylamphetamine is the most common form reportedly used in this user population.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> A figure for this data will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.



- The proportion of Australian Needle and Syringe Program Survey respondents reporting methylamphetamine as the drug last injected increased in recent years. In 2013, equal proportions of respondents reported heroin and methylamphetamine (both 29.0 per cent) as the last drug injected. Since 2014, methylamphetamine continues to exceed heroin as the last drug injected. In 2017, 41.0 per cent of respondents reported methylamphetamine as the drug last injected, compared with 30.0 per cent for heroin.
- Findings from a national study of regular ecstasy users show the proportion of respondents reporting the recent use of any form of methylamphetamine decreased over the last decade, from 54.0 per cent in 2009 to 32.0 per cent in 2018. The reported median number of days of methylamphetamine use (any form) in the six months preceding interview ranged from 3 to 6 days over the decade, remaining relatively low and stable since 2013. While powder methylamphetamine (speed) remains the most common form of methylamphetamine used within this user population, the proportion of respondents reporting the recent use of speed decreased in 2018, while the recent use of crystal methylamphetamine increased.<sup>17</sup>
- According to the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia program, the proportion of detainees testing positive for methylamphetamine continues to be higher than the proportion of detainees testing positive for MDMA, heroin, cocaine, benzodiazepines and opiates (excluding heroin). Unlike cannabis, heroin, cocaine and MDMA, the proportions of which have either decreased or remained relatively stable, the proportion of detainees testing positive for methylamphetamine has increased from the start of the decade, from 15.8 per cent in 2008–09 to 45.6 per cent in 2017–18.

<sup>17</sup> A figure for this data will be available on the Crime Statistics Australia website. See <<http://crimestats.aic.gov.au/IDDR/>>.

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>1,4-BD</b>	1,4-butanediol
<b>4-MMC</b>	4-methylmethcathinone
<b>AAS</b>	Anabolic-androgenic steroids
<b>ACIC</b>	Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
<b>ACT</b>	Australian Capital Territory
<b>AFP</b>	Australian Federal Police
<b>AIHW</b>	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
<b>ANSPS</b>	Australian Needle and Syringe Program Survey
<b>ATS</b>	Amphetamine-type stimulants
<b>CEN</b>	Cannabis Expiation Notice
<b>CIR</b>	Cannabis Intervention Requirement
<b>DIN</b>	Drug Infringement Notice
<b>DUMA</b>	Drug Use Monitoring in Australia
<b>EDRS</b>	Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System
<b>ENIPID</b>	Enhanced National Intelligence Picture on Illicit Drugs
<b>Eph</b>	Ephedrine
<b>FDI</b>	Forensic Drug Intelligence
<b>GHB</b>	Gamma-hydroxybutyrate
<b>GBL</b>	Gamma-butyrolactone
<b>IDDR</b>	Illicit Drug Data Report
<b>IDRS</b>	Illicit Drug Reporting System
<b>INCB</b>	International Narcotics Control Board
<b>LSD</b>	Lysergic acid diethylamide
<b>MDMA</b>	3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine
<b>NDSHS</b>	National Drug Strategy Household Survey
<b>NEC</b>	Not elsewhere classified
<b>NMI</b>	National Measurement Institute
<b>NPS</b>	New psychoactive substances
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>NT</b>	Northern Territory
<b>P2P</b>	Phenyl-2-propanone
<b>PIED</b>	Performance and image enhancing drug
<b>PSE</b>	Pseudoephedrine



<b>Qld</b>	Queensland
<b>SA</b>	South Australia
<b>SCON</b>	Simple Cannabis Offence Notice
<b>Tas</b>	Tasmania
<b>THC</b>	Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>Vic</b>	Victoria
<b>WA</b>	Western Australia
<b>WCO</b>	World Customs Organization