

Executive Summary

The EDRS comprises a sentinel sample of people who regularly use ecstasy and/or other illicit stimulants, recruited via social media and word-of-mouth across each capital city of Australia. The results are not representative of all people who use illicit drugs, nor of use in the general population. **Data were collected in 2025 from April-July. Interviews from 2020 onwards were delivered face-to-face as well as via telephone and videoconference, to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission; all interviews prior to 2020 were conducted face-to-face. This methodological change should be factored into all comparisons of data from the 2020-2025 samples relative to previous years.**

Sample Characteristics

In 2025, the national EDRS sample (n=690) differed in some ways to the sample in 2024. Whilst gender identity remained stable (57% male), a significant increase was observed in the median age of the sample, from 23 years in 2024 to 26 years in 2025 ($p=0.013$). A significant change was observed in current accommodation ($p=0.023$), with less participants reporting living with their parents/in their family home (26%; 34% in 2024). Drug of choice significantly changed ($p<0.001$), with more participants nominating alcohol (14%; 4% in 2024) and fewer reporting cocaine (13%; 16% in 2024) as their drugs of choice in 2025. The drugs used most often in the month preceding interview also significantly changed in 2025 ($p<0.001$), with more participants reporting alcohol (29%; 13% in 2024) and fewer reporting cannabis (29%; 33% in 2024) and ecstasy (12%; 19% in 2024) as the drugs used most often.

Non-Prescribed Ecstasy

Recent use of any non-prescribed ecstasy remained stable in 2025 (93%; 92% in 2024), as did frequency of use (8 days; 8 days in 2024). Capsules remained the most commonly used form of non-prescribed ecstasy in 2025 (55%), closely followed by crystal (51%), both of which remained stable relative to 2024. Recent use of pills (40%) also remained stable, however recent use of powder, which has consistently remained the least commonly used form of non-prescribed ecstasy, significantly decreased from 30% in 2024 to 23% in 2025 ($p=0.005$). The median price for one pill of non-prescribed ecstasy was \$30, stable from 2024, while the median price for one capsule was \$25 (IQR=20-30; \$25 in 2024; IQR=25-30; $p=0.008$). The median price for one gram of non-prescribed ecstasy powder significantly decreased, from \$250 in 2024 to \$200 in 2025 ($p=0.014$). Perceived purity and perceived availability for all forms of non-prescribed ecstasy remained stable in 2025, relative to 2024.

Methamphetamine

Recent methamphetamine use among this sample has declined over time, though remained stable in 2025 (29%), relative to 2024 (25%). Recent use of methamphetamine crystal (20%; 16% in 2024), powder (12%; 12% in 2024) and base (1%; 2% in 2024) remained stable in 2025, as did frequency of use. The price, perceived purity and perceived availability of methamphetamine powder remained stable between 2024 and 2025. The perceived purity and perceived availability of methamphetamine crystal also remained stable between 2024 and 2025, though the price for one gram of methamphetamine crystal significantly decreased, from \$300 in 2024 to \$250 in 2025 ($p=0.037$).

Non-Prescribed Pharmaceutical Stimulants

Past six month use of non-prescribed pharmaceutical stimulants remained stable in 2025 (55%), relative to 2024 (54%), as did frequency of use (7 days; 6 days in 2024). Among those who reported recent use, the majority reported using dexamfetamine (84%), although there was a significant increase in those reporting recent use of non-prescribed lisdexamfetamine (30%; 22% in 2024; $p=0.018$). Perceived availability remained stable, with 86% reporting 'easy' or 'very easy' obtainment.

Cocaine

Past six month cocaine use remained high but stable in 2025 (79%; 80% in 2024), with median frequency of use also remaining stable (5 days in 2025 and 2024, respectively). The vast majority of participants who had recently consumed cocaine reported using powder cocaine (96%). Price, perceived availability and perceived purity of cocaine remained stable between 2024 and 2025.

Cannabis and/or Cannabinoid-Related Products

Recent use of non-prescribed cannabis and/or cannabinoid-related products remained stable in 2025 (72%) relative to 2024 (75%), as did frequency of use (median of 48 days in 2025 and 2024). Hydroponic cannabis was the most used form of non-prescribed cannabis in 2025 (65%), followed by bush cannabis (55%). The price, perceived purity and perceived availability of hydroponic and bush cannabis remained largely stable in 2025 relative to 2024, with most perceiving the availability of both forms of cannabis as 'easy' or 'very easy'.

Non-Prescribed Ketamine, LSD and DMT

Recent use of non-prescribed ketamine (52%; 53% in 2024), LSD (35%; 36% in 2024) and DMT (11%; 10% in 2024) remained stable in 2025

relative to 2024. Median frequency of use remained low for all three substances, ranging between two and five days in the six months preceding interview. Perceived purity and availability for non-prescribed ketamine and LSD remained stable between 2024 and 2025, although there were significant changes in the median price for one tab of LSD and one gram of non-prescribed ketamine.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

Recent use of any NPS (excluding plant-based NPS) remained stable in 2025, relative to 2024. In 2025, a significant increase was observed in those reporting recent use of 'drugs that mimic the effects of cannabis' (2%; $n\leq 5$; $p<0.001$). In contrast, significant decreases were observed in those reporting recent use of 2-Fluorodeschloroketamine (2-FDCK) ($n\leq 5$; 1% in 2024; $p=0.039$), methoxetamine (0%; 1% in 2024; $p=0.031$) and 'other drugs that mimic the effects of ecstasy' ($n\leq 5$; 2% in 2024; $p=0.036$).

Other Drugs

Recent use of non-prescribed benzodiazepines significantly decreased in 2025 (23%; 28% in 2024; $p=0.037$), as did recent use of substances with 'unknown content' (13%; 20% in 2024; $p=0.001$). In 2025, 92% reported recent alcohol use, a significant decrease relative to 2024 (95%; $p=0.047$), though frequency of use remained stable (40 days in 2025 and 2024). Recent use of any tobacco remained stable in 2025 (72%), although there was a significant increase in the per cent reporting recent use of smoked or non-smoked illicit tobacco products (46%; 27% in 2024; $p<0.001$). Frequency of use of any tobacco products also significantly increased (120 median days in 2025; 90 median days in 2024; $p=0.041$). Recent use of nitrous oxide (31%) and amyl nitrite (33%) both significantly decreased relative to 2024 (40%; $p<0.001$ and 39%; $p=0.016$, respectively).

Drug-Related Harms and Other Behaviours

Polysubstance use and bingeing

On the last occasion of ecstasy or related drug use, 86% of participants reported concurrent use of two or more drugs (excluding tobacco and e-cigarettes).

Nearly one third (32%) of participants reported using stimulants or related drugs for 48 hours or more continuously without sleep in the six months preceding interview.

Dependence, overdose and injecting

Three quarters (73%) of participants obtained an AUDIT score of ≥ 8 , indicative of hazardous alcohol use. Seventeen per cent of those who reported recent ecstasy use obtained an SDS score of ≥ 3 , while 32% of participants reporting recent methamphetamine use obtained a score of ≥ 4 , indicating possible dependence on these substances.

Past year non-fatal stimulant overdose remained stable in 2025 (18%), however, past year non-fatal depressant overdose significantly decreased (22%; 28% in 2024; $p=0.012$).

Past month injecting drug use remained low and stable (2%).

Drug checking and naloxone awareness

Thirty-nine per cent of participants reported that they or someone else had tested the content and/or purity of their illicit drugs in Australia in the past year, a significant increase from 27% in 2024 ($p<0.001$).

In 2025, 73% of the sample reported that they had ever heard of naloxone (63% in 2024; $p<0.001$), of which 27% reported that they had obtained naloxone in the year prior to interview (10% in 2024; $p<0.001$).

Sexual activity, mental health and health service access

Almost three quarters (73%) of the sample reported engaging in sexual activity in the past four weeks, of which 79% reported using alcohol and/or other drugs prior to or while engaging in sexual activity.

Three fifths (57%) of the sample self-reported that they had experienced a mental health problem in the preceding six months. One fifth (19%) reported a score of ≥ 30 on the K10, indicating very high psychological distress.

Twenty-nine per cent of participants reported accessing any health service for alcohol and/or drug support in the six months preceding interview. Current drug treatment engagement remained low (4%).

Driving, contact with police and modes of purchasing drugs

In 2025, the per cent of recent drivers who reported driving while over the perceived legal limit of alcohol (20%; 29% in 2024; $p<0.001$) or within three hours of consuming an illicit or non-prescribed drug (44%; 50% in 2024; $p=0.033$) both significantly decreased relative to 2024.

Eight per cent of participants reported past year arrest, while 15% reported a drug-related encounter with police which did not result in arrest (e.g., stopped and searched/questioned).

In 2025, the most popular means of arranging the purchase of illicit or non-prescribed drugs in the 12 months preceding interview was face-to-face (73%), closely followed by social networking or messaging applications (70%). Most participants continued to report obtaining illicit drugs face-to-face (97%) and from a friend/relative/partner/colleague (79%), although the latter decreased relative to 2024 (84%; $p=0.042$).