

Executive Summary

The Brisbane/Gold Coast, Queensland (QLD) EDRS comprises a sentinel sample of people who regularly use ecstasy and/or other illicit stimulants, recruited via social media and word-of mouth in Brisbane/Gold Coast, QLD. 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-May. Interviews from 2020 onwards were delivered face-to-face as well as via telephone, to reduce the 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

The 2025 EDRS sample (N=101) recruited from Brisbane/Gold Coast was largely similar to the sample in 2024 and in previous years. Gender remained stable between 2024 and 2025, with three fifths (60%) of participants identifying as male (62% in 2024). Median age significantly increased, from 23 years in 2024 to 27 years in 2025 ($p=0.028$). Almost two fifths (37%) reported being current students (44% in 2024), and 68% held tertiary qualifications (59% in 2024). Almost one third (30%) of the sample reported full-time employment (24% in 2024) and 45% reported part time/casual employment (44% in 2024). Accommodation remained stable, with almost half (47%) living in a rental house/flat at the time of interview (59% in 2024). Drug of choice and drug used most often remained stable between 2024 and 2025. Equal percentages (26%, respectively) nominated cannabis (28% in 2024) and ecstasy (27% in 2024) as their drugs of choice in 2025, and one third (33%) nominated cannabis as the drug used most often in the month preceding interview (42% in 2024).

Non-Prescribed Ecstasy

Recent use of any non-prescribed ecstasy in the six months prior to interview remained stable in 2025 (93%), relative to 2024 (92%). Crystal (66%) and capsules (56%) remained the most commonly used forms of non-prescribed ecstasy, followed by pills (31%). Consistent with previous years, ecstasy powder continued to be the least commonly used form (21%). Seventeen per cent of those who had recently used non-prescribed ecstasy reported weekly or more frequent use (20% in 2024). The price, perceived purity and perceived availability of all four forms of ecstasy remained stable between 2024 and 2025.

Methamphetamine

Recent use of any methamphetamine steadily declined between 2005 and 2018, with fluctuation observed in the subsequent years. In 2025, one quarter (25%) of participants reported recent use, remaining stable relative to 2024 (18%). One third (36%) of those who had recently used methamphetamine reported weekly or more frequent use (44% in 2024). Crystal was the most commonly used form of methamphetamine in 2025 (20%; 13% in 2024), followed by powder (7%; 8% in 2024). Few participants ($n\leq 5$) reported use of base ($n\leq 5$ in 2024). The price, perceived purity and perceived availability of methamphetamine crystal remained stable between 2024 and 2025.

Non-Prescribed Stimulants

Recent use of non-prescribed pharmaceutical stimulants (e.g., dexamphetamine, methylphenidate, modafinil) increased fivefold between 2007 (12%) and 2024 (61%), though remained stable in 2025 (55%). Among those who reported recent use, dexamphetamine was the most common form used (82%; 84% in 2024), followed by methylphenidate (41%; 47% in 2024). Median days of non-prescribed

pharmaceutical stimulant use remained stable in 2025 relative to 2024 (5 days, respectively), as did price and perceived availability.

Cocaine

Recent use of cocaine has increased over the monitoring period, though has stabilised in more recent years. In 2025, almost nine in ten participants (88%) reported recent use, stable from 2024 (87%). Ten per cent of those who had recently used cocaine reported weekly or more frequent use (14% in 2024), and powder cocaine remained the form most commonly used (96%; 97% in 2024). The price, perceived purity and perceived availability of cocaine remained stable between 2024 and 2025.

Cannabis and/or Cannabinoid-Related Products

Almost four fifths (78%) reported any recent use of non-prescribed cannabis and/or cannabinoid-related products in 2025 (81% in 2024). The most commonly used form was hydroponic cannabis (68%; 68% in 2024), with 45% reporting recent use of outdoor grown 'bush' cannabis, a significant decrease relative to 2024 (72%; $p<0.001$). Few participants ($n\leq 5$) reported recent use of CBD extract, a significant decrease from 18% in 2024 ($p=0.022$), and similarly, few participants ($n\leq 5$) reported recent use of THC extract, a significant decrease from 22% in 2024 ($p<0.001$). Most market characteristics of non-prescribed hydroponic and bush cannabis remained stable between 2024 and 2025, with the exception of the perceived availability of hydroponic cannabis. Among those able to comment, more participants reported that hydroponic cannabis was 'very easy' to obtain in 2025 (73%; 48% in 2024) and fewer reported that it was 'easy' to obtain (27%; 50% in 2024).

Non-Prescribed Ketamine, LSD and DMT

Recent use of non-prescribed ketamine (48%; 52% in 2024), LSD (49%; 42% in 2024) and DMT (11%; 15% in 2024) remained stable in 2025, as did frequency of use. The price, perceived purity and perceived availability of non-prescribed ketamine and LSD remained stable between 2024 and 2025.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

Any NPS use, excluding plant based NPS, has fluctuated over time, with 14% reporting recent use in 2025, stable from 2024 (16%). Recent use of 5-MeO-DMT (7%; $n\leq 5$ in 2024) was the most common NPS used in 2025, followed by any 2C substance (6%; $n\leq 5$ in 2024).

Other Drugs

Participants who had recently used non-prescribed benzodiazepines (26%) reported a median of six days of use in 2025, stable from four days of use in 2024. Six per cent reported recent use of GHB/GBL/1,4-BD in the six months prior to interview (8% in 2024). Almost two thirds (64%) had used illicit e-cigarettes in the six months preceding interview (64% in 2024) on a median of 90 days in the six months prior to interview, stable relative to 100 days in 2024. Further, 43% of participants who had recently used illicit e-cigarettes reported daily use, stable from 42% reporting daily use in 2024. Twenty-eight per cent of participants reported recent use of amyl nitrite, a significant decrease relative to 2024 (45%; $p=0.020$).

Drug-Related Harms and Other Behaviours

Polysubstance use and bingeing

The majority (91%) of the Brisbane/Gold Coast sample reported concurrent use of two or more drugs on the last occasion of ecstasy or related drug use (excluding tobacco and e-cigarettes).

One third (36%) of participants reported bingeing on one or more drugs in the preceding six months (25% in 2024).

Dependence, overdose and injecting

In 2025, the mean AUDIT total score was 12.5, a significant decrease from 13.6 in 2024 ($p<0.001$). Almost four fifths (78%) of participants obtained a score of eight or more on the AUDIT (80% in 2024), indicative of hazardous use.

In 2025, 18% of those who reported recent ecstasy use obtained an SDS score of ≥ 3 , whilst 28% of participants reporting recent methamphetamine use obtained a score of ≥ 4 , indicating possible dependence on these substances.

Past year non-fatal stimulant (25%) and depressant (27%) overdose remained stable in 2025 relative to 2024 (20% and 28%, respectively).

Reported past month injecting drug use remained low ($n\leq 5$), stable from 2024 ($n\leq 5$).

Drug checking and naloxone awareness

One third (34%) 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, stable from 24% in 2024.

In 2025, three quarters (76%) reported that they had ever heard of naloxone, a significant increase from 61% in 2024 ($p=0.035$), of which 13% reported obtaining naloxone in their lifetime, stable from 2024 (8%).

Sexual activity, mental health and health service access

Three quarters (75%) of the sample reported engaging in some form of sexual activity in the past four weeks (80% in 2024), of which 84% reported using alcohol and/or other drugs prior to or while engaging in sexual activity (79% in 2024). Almost one quarter (23%)

reported having a test for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the six months prior to interview (24% in 2024), and 27% had had a sexual health check (32% in 2024).

Almost three fifths (57%) self-reported a mental health problem in the six months preceding interview, stable from 2024 (53%). Among these participants, depression (61%) and anxiety (56%) were the most commonly reported problems, followed by ADHD (44%), which significantly increased from 21% in 2024 ($p=0.016$). One fifth (22%) of the sample reported a score of ≥ 30 on the K10, indicating very high psychological distress.

One quarter (27%) of participants reported accessing any health service for alcohol and/or drug support in the past six months, most commonly from a GP (13%; 10% in 2024). Current drug treatment engagement remained low ($n\leq 5$).

Driving, contact with police and modes of purchasing drugs

Amongst those who had recently driven, one fifth (22%) reported driving while over the perceived legal limit of alcohol and half (50%) reported driving within three hours of consuming an illicit or non-prescribed drug in the prior six months.

Two fifths (42%) of the sample reported 'any' crime in the past month. Eight per cent reported having been arrested in the 12 months preceding interview and 14% reported a drug-related encounter with police which did not result in charge or arrest.

In 2025, the most common means of arranging the purchase of illicit or non-prescribed drugs in the 12 months preceding interview was via social networking or messaging applications (70%), followed by face-to-face (69%). Most participants reported obtaining illicit drugs from a friend/relative/partner/colleague (76%).