

## 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 2024 from April-June. 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

years in 2023). Forty-four per cent of participants reported being current students in 2024 (36% in 2023), though most participants held tertiary qualifications (59%). One quarter (24%) of the sample reported full-time employment (35% in 2023) and 44% reported part time/casual employment (35% in 2023). Drug of choice and drug used most often remained stable between 2023 and 2024, with one quarter (28%) nominating cannabis as their drug of choice (21% in 2023), and two fifths (42%) nominating cannabis as the drug used most often in the month preceding interview (31% in 2023).

### Non-Prescribed Ecstasy

Recent use of any non-prescribed ecstasy in the six months prior to interview remained stable in

2024, relative to 2023 (92%; 95% in 2023). Capsules (63%) and crystal (54%) remained the most commonly used forms of non-prescribed ecstasy. There were significant changes in the perceived purity ( $p=0.033$ ) and availability of ecstasy capsules ( $p=0.012$ ), with one third reporting purity as **High** (36%, 16% in 2023), and almost half reporting capsules as **Very easy** to obtain (46%; 32% in 2023). The perceived purity and availability of ecstasy crystal also significantly changed between 2023 and 2024 ( $p=0.022$  and  $p=0.005$ , respectively), with 54% reporting that crystal was **High** in purity (25% in 2023) and two fifths (41%) reporting that crystal was **Easy** to obtain (47% in 2023).

### Methamphetamine

Since monitoring commenced, recent use of any methamphetamine declined until 2022, followed by a significant increase in 2023. In 2024, 18% of participants reported recent use, remaining stable relative to 2023 (27%). Forty-four per cent of those who had recently used methamphetamine reported weekly or more frequent use (46% in 2023). Of participants who had used methamphetamine in the six months preceding interview in 2024, almost three quarters (72%) had used methamphetamine crystal (82% in 2023). F

(41% in 2023;  $p=0.005$ ), signifying the highest

obtained a score of eight or more on the AUDIT, indicative of hazardous use.

In 2024, 12% of those who reported recent ecstasy use obtained an SDS score of  $\geq 3$ , whilst 39% of participants reporting recent methamphetamine use obtained a score of  $\geq 4$ , indicating possible dependence on these substances.

Past year non-fatal stimulant overdose (20%; 17% in 2023) and non-fatal depressant overdose (28%; 31% in 2023) remained stable in 2024, relative to 2023.

Reported past month injecting drug use remained low ( $n = 5$ ).

Twenty-four 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, stable from 24% in 2023.

In 2024, three fifths (61%) reported that they had ever heard of naloxone, stable from 58% in 2023, of which 87% were able to correctly identify the purpose of naloxone (84% in 2023).

Eighty per cent of the sample reported engaging in some form of sexual activity in the past four weeks, (87% in 2023), of which 79% reported using alcohol and/or other drugs prior to or while engaging in sexual activity. Almost one quarter (24%) reported having a test for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the six months prior to interview (23% in 2023), whilst 54% had done so in their lifetime, stable from 61% in 2023.

Mental health remained stable in 2024, with 53% reporting experiencing a mental health problem in the six months preceding interview

(68% in 2023;  $p = 0.034$ ), with anxiety (77%) and depression (63%) most commonly reported. Seventeen per cent of the sample reported a score of  $\geq 30$  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 (10%; 11% in 2023). Current drug treatment engagement remained low ( $n = 5$ ).

Nineteen per cent of the sample reported experiencing stigma because of their illicit drug use in any health/non-health care setting in the six months preceding interview.

Amongst those who had recently driven, one quarter (27%) reported driving while over the perceived legal limit of alcohol and