

TREASURER TOM KOUTSANTONIS

Announced: Thursday, 15 June 2017

Stop the hurt caused by crystal methamphetamine

The State Government has released a strategy to reduce the growth of Crystal Methamphetamine (ice) use in South Australia through reducing supply and increasing treatment, family support and education.

In February, the Premier appointed an Ice Taskforce to develop a rapid response to the growing use of ice in the state and the far-reaching community safety and social consequences.

In line with the Taskforce's recommendations, the State Government will invest \$8 million over four years in the Stop the Hurt strategy, with measures to include:

1. Reducing supply

- \$1 million in additional funding for SAPOL covert investigations and \$549,000 for additional drug dogs and handlers.
- \$200,000 for a Crime Stoppers Dob in a Dealer style campaign.
- Increasing controls over chemicals used to manufacture ice, with South Australia now the lead state in the development of new national laws.
- Giving SAPOL power to search a person's car if they return a positive drug driving test, and increasing penalties for exposing a child to the manufacture of controlled drugs.

2. Increasing treatment

- \$3.6 million to fund a 50 per cent increase in outpatient counselling appointments, and at least 15 new regional residential rehabilitation beds.
- Legislative amendments to allow for enhancements to the Treatment Intervention Court program within the Magistrates Court.
- Enhancing the capacity of frontline workers to manage the behaviour of those affected.

3. Increasing family support

- Doubling support provided to families through an additional \$560,000 in funding.
- Establishing a single online source for information and advice.

4. Community education capacity building

- \$287,000 to boost drug testing capabilities in country areas.
- \$498,000 to support employers to better respond to ice use in the workplace.
- \$600,000 to build education and prevention strategies within community groups and grass roots sporting clubs.

In developing their response, the Taskforce consulted a range of experts and affected families and held six roundtables across the state in both regional and metro areas.

Combatting the rise of ice is a key social justice and law and order priority for the Government.

Ice is the only drug that is continuing to grow in prevalence and presents a far greater risk to the community than any other drug seen in Australia due its rising purity levels, availability and affordability.

Background

Methamphetamine use in South Australia has tripled in the past four years.

Led by Police Minister Peter Malinauskas, members of the taskforce include the Minister for Substance Abuse Leesa Vlahos, Attorney General John Rau, SAPOL Assistant Commissioner Linda Fellows, Retired District Court Judge Alan Moss, State Director of Drug and Alcohol Services SA (DASSA) Simone Cormack, and Senior Consultant at DASSA Will Liaw.

The response aligns with the South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2017-2021 and the National Ice Taskforce.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jay Weatherill

The impact of ice is far reaching and being felt across the community - it's hurting our children, our emergency services teams and causing danger on our roads. The drug is ruining the lives of individuals and tearing families apart.

We won't sit back and let this drug continue to cause damage. Through the Stop the Hurt strategy we are acting swiftly to halt the growth.

The Taskforce's recommendations are built on evidence based advice, and state-wide engagement on what is proven to work and what communities are calling for.

Now that our plan is in place, the Taskforce will quickly work to implement these measures in the hope that we will soon begin to gain ground in our flight against ice.

Quotes attributable to Police Minister Peter Malinauskas

Over the 60-day taskforce, I travelled the state hearing first-hand from users, families and expert clinicians about the devastating impacts of ice.

It was heartening to hear commitment from communities across the state to working alongside the Government in tackling this issue head on. Through the implementation of this strategy we are putting tools and measures in place to make a genuine impact.

Already legislation has been introduced to Parliament to increase penalties for drug drivers, and we have gained Federal endorsement to lead the development of national regulations to restrict the sale of the chemicals used to manufacture ice.

The Taskforce will now focus on delivering our commitments across the four priority areas and driving down the rate of ice use in South Australia.

Quotes attributable to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Minister Leesa Vlahos

The Ice Taskforce has provided us with a unique opportunity to talk with families affected by a loved one's methamphetamine use and to understand their needs.

This is why we are increasing access to treatment across the state by expanding our rehabilitation beds and outpatient counselling appointments.

We are also doubling the number of support groups for families experiencing alcohol and other drug problems.

And by providing a single online one-stop shop, we will provide a simple and easy to access resource for family members, clinicians, community workers and the general community.

Clinical evidence shows that treatment and intervention works. These extra resources are targeted to make sure that we can provide help for people to stop using harmful substances.

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