



MEDIA RELEASE

'ICE' SELECT COMMITTEE

19 November 2015

'ICE' REPORT TABLED

Mr Nathan Barrett MLA, today tabled the 'Ice' Select Committee's report *Breaking the Ice: inquiry into 'ice' use in the Northern Territory*.

"The report highlights the devastating effects that this insidious drug 'ice' can have, not only on the health and welfare of the user, but on families and the broader community" Mr Barrett said. "Ice' use can lead to interpersonal problems, domestic violence, child neglect, financial problems, increased reliance on welfare support and involvement in criminal activities."

Data shows that rates of methamphetamine use nationally and in the Northern Territory have remained stable between 2010 and 2013. However, 'ice', the most potent and harmful form of methamphetamine, is fast becoming the drug of choice among users. "While 'ice' use and its impacts are certainly a cause for concern, reports of an 'ice' epidemic and scourge sweeping across the Territory are misleading" Mr Barrett said.

The report makes 13 recommendations on how the Northern Territory can more effectively address 'ice' use in the community. "A key priority is the development and implementation of a Northern Territory Drug Strategy based on the harm minimisation framework of demand reduction, supply reduction and harm reduction. These three pillars are equally important, and we cannot effectively combat illicit drug use without strategies in each of these areas" Mr Barrett said.

"We need to review strategies that are already in place around illicit drug use and develop initiatives to prevent the uptake of 'ice' use, stop the manufacture and trafficking of 'ice', and provide treatment and support to 'ice' users and their families."

In addition to a Northern Territory Drug Strategy, the recommendations include increasing detoxification services; ensuring the availability of drug and mental health services in all correctional facilities; developing educational resources for drug users and their families; providing training to frontline workers; reviewing school based drug education and positive youth development initiatives. The report also calls for an independent review of the Department of Children and Families' practices and procedures, as well as a strategy to enhance drug diversion programs in the Territory.

To assist Police in determining the geographical distribution of 'ice' and other illicit substances, the Committee has recommended that the Government undertake a trial of waste water analysis. Mandating real time, online recording of pseudoephedrine sales in pharmacies will also aid police in the detection of clandestine laboratories. To assist Police in more accurately assessing the extent of criminal offending related to 'ice' use, the Committee has also recommended the introduction of mandatory alcohol and drug testing of individuals arrested for offences involving violence.

"While we need to ensure that the Territory is equipped to manage the impact of 'ice' and other illicit drugs, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the damage and social cost of 'ice' pale into insignificance compared with those of alcohol misuse, and strategies to address 'ice' should not be implemented at the expense of alcohol-related harm initiatives" Mr Barrett said.

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