

Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

14 December 2016

Re: Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Inquiry into Crystal Methamphetamine

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement.

This is a joint submission from Harm Reduction Australia (HRA), Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia (SSDP) and the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC).

As you will see from the number of attachments to this submission, the development and implementation of effective and evidence based policy is a core principle for IDPC, SSDP and HRA.

In addition to the information provided in the attachments for the committee's review and consideration we would also like to highlight the following issues:

- The UN General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem, held in April 2016 in New York, (UNGASS) resulted in agreement amongst member states including Australia on an Outcome Document.¹ Of particular relevance, this document encourages:
 - a) “effective measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse, including appropriate medication-assisted therapy programmes, injecting equipment programmes, as well as antiretroviral therapy and other relevant interventions that prevent the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases associated with drug use, as well as consider ensuring access to such interventions including in treatment and outreach services, prisons and other custodial settings”: paragraph 1(o), and
 - b) “alternative or additional measures with regard to conviction or punishment, in cases of an appropriate nature”: paragraph 4(j)

The International Narcotics Control Board President further reiterated during the UNGASS, that ‘there is no treaty obligation to incarcerate for minor offenses such as possession of small quantities for personal use.’²

- There is an important need to seriously consider decriminalising personal drug use, along with possession for personal use, to address the significant long term health, financial and social harm that is caused by arresting and convicting (and incarcerating in some cases) people who use drugs, including methamphetamines;

¹ United Nations General Assembly (14 April 2016), *Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem*, A/S-30/L.1, <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/S-30/L.1>

² Bewley-Taylor, D. & Jelsma, M. (June 2016), Drug policy briefing – UNGASS 2016: A broken or b-r-o-a-d consensus? UN summit cannot hide growing divergence in the global drug policy landscape (Transnational Institute & Global Drug Policy Observatory), [https:// www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/dpb_45_04072016_web.pdf](https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/dpb_45_04072016_web.pdf)

- The need to significantly increase the level of funding for drug harm reduction and demand reduction services, particularly given the substantial imbalance to the level of funding provided to law enforcement for supply reduction activities;
- The need for a much greater level of engagement and consultation with people who use drugs in the development of policy and program responses;
- The need to focus on the demographic and epidemiological data available which clearly shows that 74% of methamphetamine users are irregular or occasional users of the drug and that many young people who use methamphetamines do not inject the drug;
- The need to expand and innovate harm reduction services, to provide services directed towards people who use drugs but do not inject, and young people who use drugs, including methamphetamines;
- The need for law enforcement to share seizure data and create early warning systems to alert the public of new drugs and emerging drug trends;
- There are international standards and guidelines, as well as best practices from around the world, to guide the development of appropriate and effective drug policy, drug treatment and harm reduction measures, with specific application to methamphetamine (as presented in the 3rd edition of the IDPC Drug Policy Guide released in March 2016)³

Finally, we would like to advise that we would welcome the opportunity to speak to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement at any hearings that may be scheduled as part of the Inquiry.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Gino Vumbaca
President
**Harm Reduction
Australia**



Penny Hill
President
**Students for Sensible
Drug Policy Australia**



Ann Fordham
Executive Director
**International Drug
Policy Consortium**



³ International Drug Policy Consortium, *IDPC Drug Policy Guide 3rd Edition*, (2016)
<http://idpc.net/publications/2016/03/idpc-drug-policy-guide-3rd-edition>

HRA Documents

<http://www.harmreductionaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/HRA-Ice-Strategy-Statement.pdf>

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/the-war-on-drugs-is-a-war-against-our-own-children-friends-and-families-20151125-g17kkl.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/gino-vumbaca/the-war-on-drugs-has-become-an-embarrassment-of-orwellian-proportions_b_9233694.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/gino-vumbaca/health-warnings-on-drugs-shouldnt-be-provided-by-police/?utm_hp_ref=au-homepage

<http://www.harmreductionaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/HRA-Statement-of-Drug-Policy-Hysteria.pdf>

IDPC Documents

International Drug Policy Consortium, *IDPC Drug Policy Guide 3rd Edition*, (2016), <http://idpc.net/publications/2016/03/idpc-drug-policy-guide-3rd-edition>

International Drug Policy Consortium, *The UNGASS on the world drug problem: Report of proceedings*, (September, 2016), <http://idpc.net/publications/2016/09/the-ungass-on-the-world-drug-problem-report-of-proceedings>