

## COMMITTEE QUESTION ON NOTICE

**Question asked by:** Ms Crozier

**Directed to:** Department of Justice and Community Safety

**Asked on:** 1 June 2021

### Question:

Do most offenders through [justice] programs use multiple drugs and not just use of cannabis?

### Reply:

There are limitations in determining the quantum of justice alcohol and other drug (AOD) program participants who use cannabis in isolation from other drugs as this data is not routinely captured. Information available on cannabis use compared to polydrug use by broad program type is provided below.

#### Youth Justice AOD programs

Data collected between 1 January 2021 and 31 May 2021 shows that of the young people who either disclosed substance use during an initial primary health screen or had a substance use-related diagnosis, 22 per cent reported cannabis as their only substance use, 58 per cent reported using cannabis as well as other substances and 20 per cent did not report cannabis use.

The results of the *2019 Annual Survey of Young People in Youth Justice in Victoria* found that of the 185 children and young people detained on sentence and remand at the Parkville and Malmsbury Youth Justice precincts on 31 December 2019:

- 56 per cent had a history of both alcohol and drug use (including misuse of prescription medication)
- 29 per cent had a history of drug use (including misuse of prescription medication) only
- two per cent had a history of alcohol use only.

#### Drug Court

The Magistrates Court of Victoria operates the Drug Court, a pre-sentence program focusing on rehabilitating and treating offenders with a drug and/or alcohol dependency. Analysis of eligible Drug Court defendants over the 2019-20 financial year found 91 per cent had disclosed cannabis use, second only to amphetamines (94 per cent). However, data is not available on the proportion of defendants who had used cannabis in isolation of other drugs.

#### Adult prison-based programs

Caraniche provides AOD and harm reduction programs in some Victorian prisons. As part of Caraniche's adult prison based AOD programs, participants are asked to identify their most

problematic drug. Victorian data provided from 2009-10 and 2018-19 shows the proportion of the responses in which participants identified cannabis as their most problematic drug. However, this data does not indicate whether participants used other drugs in addition to cannabis.

	<b>Period</b>	<b>Cannabis (%)</b>
<b>Men</b>	2009/2010	16.5
	2018/2019	2.1
<b>Women</b>	2009/2010	9.5
	2018/2019	3.8

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Department of Justice and Community Safety**