

**Submission
No 209**

INQUIRY INTO THE USE OF CANNABIS IN VICTORIA

Organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Date Received: 24 August 2020



Australian Government
**Australian Institute of
 Health and Welfare**



Ms Fiona Patten
 Chair
 Legislative Council, Legal and Social Issues Committee
 Parliament House
 Spring Street
 EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Ms Patten

Submission to the inquiry into the use of cannabis in Victoria

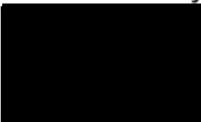
The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry into the use of cannabis in Victoria.

The AIHW is a nationally recognised independent information management agency. We produce authoritative information and statistics to inform and support better policy and service delivery decisions, leading to better health and wellbeing for all Australians. The AIHW provides accessible information and statistics on a wide range of topics about Australians' health and wellbeing. We aim to inform good decisions—and improve the health and welfare of all Australians—through strong evidence that is timely, reliable, relevant and trusted.

The *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019* contains the latest data relating to Australians' use of cannabis as well as their attitudes and perceptions towards cannabis use and cannabis possession. A summary of the survey results relevant to the inquiry's terms of reference is provided in **Attachment 1** and relevant tables are provided at **Attachment 2**. Other relevant data collections managed by the AIHW that may be of interest to the committee are specified in **Attachment 3**.

We trust that you find this information useful to your inquiry. Should the committee have any queries about the information we have provided, or wish to seek additional information from the AIHW, we are available to discuss at your convenience. Please contact Dr Gabrielle Phillips, Head of the Housing and Specialised Services Group on 02 6249 5131.

Yours sincerely



Barry Sandison
 Chief Executive Officer

24 August 2020



Attachment 1

Relevant data and information from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS)

This large population survey, conducted about every 3 years since 1985, asks people about their knowledge of and attitudes towards drugs, and their history of alcohol and other drug consumption. It provides information on the use of alcohol and other drugs in the general population. The sample is based on people living in private households—institutionalised people and others not living in private dwellings are not included in the survey.

The most recent survey was conducted in 2019 which was the 13th survey conducted under the auspices of the National Drug Strategy (NDS). It collected information from nearly 23,000 individuals across Australia.

The [National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019 report](#) contains the latest data on the use of cannabis in Australia, including patterns of use, attitudes and policy support. A list of relevant tables from this report as well as a customised data analysis are provided in **Attachment 2**.

Capturing cannabis use

The NDSHS includes a number of sections that are designed to capture:

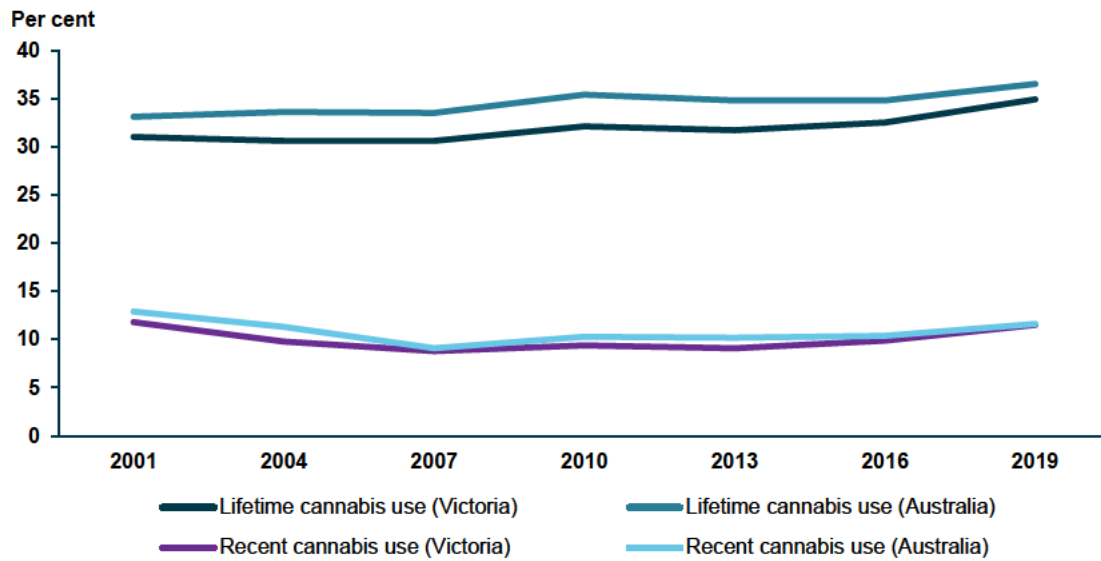
- illicit cannabis use
- frequency of cannabis use
- medicinal cannabis use
- Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)-lite risk score
- opportunity to use cannabis
- perceptions about cannabis use
- health and social characteristics, including mental health conditions and psychological distress.

Cannabis use and trends

In 2019, it was estimated that 1.9 million (or 35%) Victorians had used cannabis in their lifetime and 600,000 (or 11.5%) had used it in the previous 12 months (tables 1, 2, 3 and 4).

Similar to the national trend, the proportion of Victorians using cannabis in the previous 12 months appears to be increasing in comparison with 2016; however the increase between 2016 and 2019 was not statistically significant and prevalence is similar to use in 2001 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Lifetime and recent use of cannabis, people aged 14 and over, Victoria and Australia, 2001 to 2019

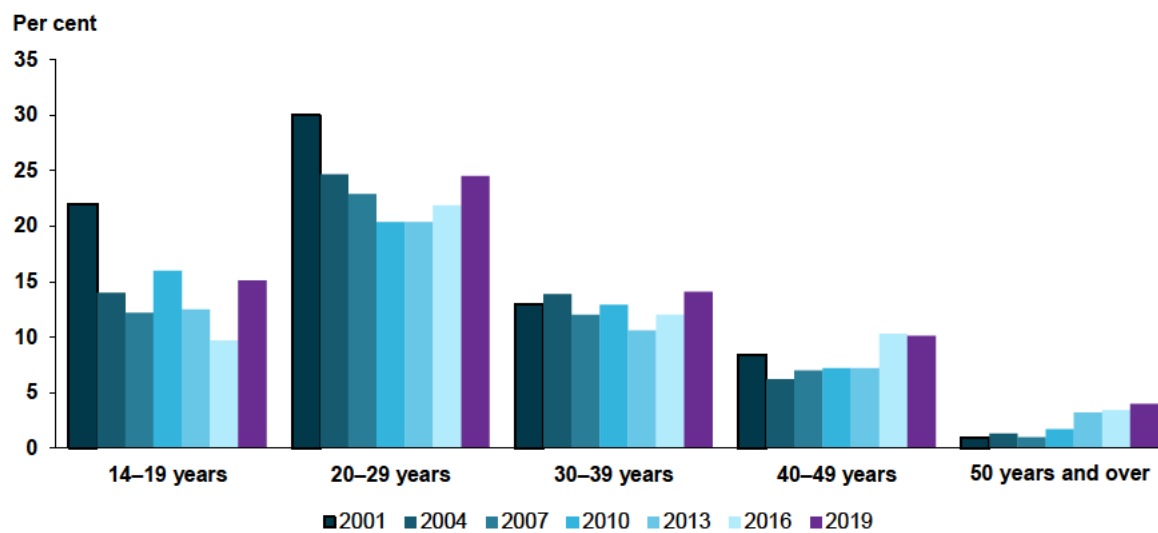


Source: tables 1 and 3; AIHW 2020d tables 4.41 and 4.43.

Age comparisons over time

Recent use of cannabis has remained relatively stable over the past 18 years but there were some changes among different age groups (Figure 2). Since 2001, recent cannabis use has generally declined in the younger age groups (those aged 14–29). In more recent years, recent use appears to be trending upwards, however the increase between 2016 and 2019 was not statistically significant. For Victorians aged in their 30s, no clear trend over the last 18 years is evident, fluctuating between 10.6% (in 2013) and 14.1% (in 2019). For people aged 50 and over, use has increased since 2001.

Figure 2: Recent use of cannabis, by age, Victoria, 2001 to 2019



Note: 2007 estimate for people aged 50 and over has a relative standard error between 25%-50% and should be interpreted with caution.

Source: Table 3.

Opportunity to use cannabis and use of cannabis among young people

In the NDSHS, people were asked whether they had been offered or had the opportunity to use selected drugs in the preceding 12 months. For Victorians aged 14 and over, almost 1 in 4 had been offered or had the opportunity to use cannabis in the previous 12 months, and more Victorians had been offered cannabis in comparison with 2016 (increased from 19.5% to 23% in 2019) (Table 5).

Opportunity to use cannabis was greater for young people with 43% of Victorians in their 20s being offered cannabis in the previous 12 months and 36% of 14–19 year olds being offered it (Table 5). People in their 20s were also the most likely age group to use cannabis in the previous 12 months with about 1 in 4 (24%) using it in 2019.

Frequency of use

Frequency of cannabis use has remained relative stable since 2010 with about one-third of Victorians who used cannabis reporting they used it once or twice a year in 2019; however 11.6% reported that they used cannabis every day (Table 6).

In addition, among Victorians aged 14 and over who had used cannabis in the past 12 months:

- those in their 40s and 50s were more likely to use cannabis weekly or more often than people in their 20s and 30s (Table 7)

- males were more likely to use cannabis weekly or more often than females (34% compared with 27%) while females were more likely to use cannabis once or twice a year than males (38% compared with 31%) (Table 6).

Health status of people who use cannabis

There appears to be a relationship between a person's cannabis use and their mental health (Table 8). For people in Victoria aged 18 years or older:

- those who had reported using cannabis in the previous 12 months (27%) were more likely to have been diagnosed or treated for a mental illness than people who had not used it in the previous 12 months (15.6%)
- those who had used cannabis in the previous month (33%) or previous 12 months (30%) were more likely to report high or very high levels of psychological distress compared with those who had not recently used cannabis (12.5%).

However, there was little variation in self-assessed health status among people who used cannabis in the previous 12 months and those who had not used cannabis (for example, 16.6% of people who had recently used cannabis rated their health as excellent compared with 18.6% of those who had not used cannabis).

Use of cannabis by social characteristics

Socioeconomic position and remoteness areas had little influence on a person's recent cannabis use (Table 9). People who were unemployed or looking for work (21%), whose highest qualification attained was a Certificate III or IV (18.7%), were never married (22%), single without children (21%), or homosexual/bisexual (30%) were more likely to use cannabis than their counterparts (Tables 10 and 11).

Medicinal cannabis

In the 2019 NDSHS, 2 new questions were included regarding medical use of cannabis:

- Have you used marijuana/cannabis for medical purposes in the last 12 months?
- Was the medical marijuana/cannabis prescribed by a doctor?

If a person indicated that they used cannabis only for medical purposes and always had it prescribed by a doctor, then they were removed from recent use of cannabis as the NDSHS focuses on illicit use.

Of Victorians who used cannabis in the previous 12 months, 5.8% said they used it only for medical purposes and 13.3% said they sometimes used it for medical purposes and sometimes for other reasons (Table 12). When asked if their medical cannabis was prescribed by a doctor, only 5% of those who said they used cannabis for medical purposes obtained it by prescription—either always or sometimes (this estimate has a relative standard error (RSE) between 25 and 50 and should be used with caution) (Table 13).

ASSIST-lite risk score

The ASSIST was developed by the World Health Organization to identify people whose substance use may be causing them harm. The ASSIST screens for harmful use of alcohol and tobacco, as well as illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals.

ASSIST scores are categorised as 'low risk', 'moderate risk' or 'high risk'. High risk scores are likely to indicate a substance dependence issue, while moderate risk scores indicate substance use that may be hazardous or harmful to the person's health.

The ASSIST-lite is an abridged version of the ASSIST, consisting of 3 to 4 questions for each substance (Ali et al. 2013). It was incorporated into the NDSHS in 2019 to estimate how many people who use substances show signs of substance dependence, or a pattern of use

that may be hazardous to their health. Results also have implications for alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia. People who receive a high risk score are likely to require specialist assessment and treatment for their substance use, while people who receive a moderate risk score are likely to benefit from a brief intervention or education of some kind.

In 2019, among people in Victoria who had used cannabis in the last 12 months:

- 3.8% were at high risk and could be dependent or experiencing severe problems, and were likely in need of referral for specialist assessment and treatment (this estimate has a relative standard error (RSE) between 25 and 50 and should be used with caution)
- 11.1% were at moderate risk and would be likely to benefit from a brief intervention
- 85% were categorised as low risk (Table 14).

Perceptions about cannabis use

Participants in the survey were asked about their support for legalisation of cannabis and penalties for the sale and supply of cannabis, as well as what actions they thought should be taken against people found in possession of cannabis.

Similar to the national findings, the Victorian community showed an increase in tolerance for cannabis use, with more Victorians approving regular adult cannabis use (from 14.2% in 2016 to 18.9% in 2019) and supporting the legalisation of cannabis (from 34% in 2016 to 40% in 2019), and fewer supporting possession of cannabis being made a criminal offence (from 26% in 2016 to 23% in 2019) or increased penalties for the sale or supply of cannabis (from 50% in 2016 to 45% in 2019) (Table 15).

When asked about appropriate action for people found in possession of small quantities of drugs, Victorians supported a range of non-criminal actions (that is, actions that equate with the decriminalisation of use/possession of illicit drugs). The action most supported for the possession of cannabis was 'a caution/warning or no action' (53%; up from 45% in 2016), followed by 'referral to treatment or education program' (24%).

If cannabis were to be legalised, the greater majority of the Victorian population (78%) aged 14 and over claimed they would still not use it. However, the proportion of Victorians that would try it increased from 7.1% in 2016 to 9.4% in 2019 (Table 16).

Young people were much more likely to try cannabis than older people with about one-quarter (24%) of 14–19 year olds stating they would try it compared with just 4.2% of people aged 50 and over. The proportion of young Victorians saying they would not use it even if it were legal and available has declined since 2010—from 73% of 14–19 year olds in 2010, to 64% in 2019; and from 72% of 20–29 year olds in 2010 to 59% in 2019 (Table 16).

Source of supply

People who use cannabis were asked where they usually obtain their cannabis (only one response was allowed). The most common source of supply was from a friend, with 67% of Victorians indicating this source in 2019, and this proportion has remained similar since 2010. A further 17.7% obtained their cannabis from a dealer, which is lower (but not significantly) than the 24% in 2010 (Table 17).

Attachment 2

Detailed data tables

Table 1: Lifetime^(a) use of cannabis, by age and sex, Victoria, 2001 to 2019 (per cent)

Age group (years)	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Males							
14–19	33.7	18.1	15.6	21.7	18.4	16.2	21.4
20–29	60.2	51.8	54.7	46.6	43.0	39.2	53.5#
30–39	50.2	52.5	48.9	55.2	55.6	49.0	47.8
40–49	40.9	38.0	45.0	49.6	40.5	52.1	47.7
50+	10.4	14.2	17.5	18.9	23.7	26.0	29.7
14+	35.0	32.6	34.2	36.1	35.2	35.9	39.7#
18+	35.8	34.2	36.0	37.4	36.5	37.4	41.3#
Females							
14–19	28.3	23.9	18.1	19.0	8.8	10.4	*14.8
20–29	53.7	49.2	44.1	42.6	39.1	36.4	37.0
30–39	40.6	48.6	47.3	48.8	44.0	45.7	42.1
40–49	33.0	32.1	35.5	35.7	41.8	42.3	43.6
50+	4.8	9.0	9.6	11.3	15.4	17.3	19.6
14+	27.1	28.6	27.2	28.1	28.3	29.1	30.2
18+	27.5	29.3	28.1	28.9	29.7	30.5	31.4
Persons							
14–19	30.9	21.0	16.8	20.4	13.7	13.7	19.0
20–29	57.1	50.5	49.3	44.7	41.1	37.8	45.3#
30–39	45.1	50.5	48.1	52.0	49.8	47.3	45.0
40–49	37.2	35.0	40.1	42.5	41.2	47.2	45.6
50+	7.4	11.5	13.4	14.9	19.3	21.4	24.4
14+	31.0	30.6	30.6	32.1	31.7	32.5	34.9
18+	31.6	31.7	31.9	33.1	33.0	33.9	36.3

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 2: Lifetime^(a) use of cannabis, by age and sex, Victoria, 2001 to 2019 (persons)

Age group (years)	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Males							
14–19	70,000	40,000	30,000	50,000	40,000	40,000	50,000
20–29	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	300,000
30–39	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
40–49	100,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
50+	70,000	100,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	300,000
14+	700,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	800,000	900,000	1,100,000
18+	600,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
Females							
14–19	50,000	50,000	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000	30,000
20–29	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
30–39	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
40–49	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
50+	40,000	70,000	80,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
14+	500,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	800,000
18+	500,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	800,000
Persons							
14–19	100,000	80,000	70,000	90,000	60,000	60,000	90,000
20–29	400,000	300,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	500,000
30–39	300,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
40–49	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	400,000	400,000
50+	100,000	200,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	400,000	500,000
14+	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,300,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,700,000	1,900,000
18+	1,100,000	1,200,000	1,300,000	1,400,000	1,500,000	1,600,000	1,900,000

(a) Used at least once in lifetime.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 3: Recent^(a) use of cannabis, by age and sex, Victoria, 2001 to 2019 (per cent)

Age group (years)	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Males							
14–19	28.0	12.8	12.9	17.3	16.6	12.7	18.3
20–29	35.5	29.4	28.9	22.4	22.9	25.0	32.8
30–39	15.3	18.1	14.8	18.5	14.5	14.6	18.0
40–49	10.6	9.0	10.4	10.0	7.5	16.0	12.5
50+	*1.3	*1.8	*1.5	2.3	4.9	5.2	5.1
14+	14.7	12.1	11.3	11.8	11.5	13.0	15.1
18+	14.0	12.3	11.6	11.6	11.2	13.3	15.4
Females							
14–19	16.1	15.3	11.5	14.6	8.4	*5.9	*12.0
20–29	24.0	20.1	17.0	18.3	17.9	18.7	15.6
30–39	10.9	10.0	9.1	7.4	6.8	9.5	9.7
40–49	6.0	3.5	*3.7	4.6	6.9	4.9	7.8
50+	*0.6	*0.8	*0.7	1.2	1.7	1.8	3.0#
14+	9.0	7.6	6.4	7.1	6.9	7.0	7.9
18+	8.6	7.4	6.1	6.7	7.0	7.1	7.9
Persons							
14–19	22.0	14.0	12.2	16.0	12.5	9.7	15.1
20–29	30.0	24.7	22.9	20.4	20.4	21.9	24.5
30–39	13.0	13.9	12.0	12.9	10.6	12.0	14.1
40–49	8.4	6.2	7.0	7.2	7.2	10.3	10.1
50+	0.9	1.3	*1.0	1.7	3.2	3.4	4.0
14+	11.8	9.8	8.8	9.4	9.1	9.9	11.5
18+	11.3	9.8	8.8	9.1	9.1	10.2	11.7

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis prescribed by a doctor, and only used it for medical purposes.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 4: Recent^(a) use of cannabis, by age and sex, Victoria 2001 to 2019 (persons)

Age group (years)	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Males							
14–19	60,000	30,000	30,000	40,000	40,000	30,000	40,000
20–29	100,000	100,000	100,000	90,000	100,000	100,000	200,000
30–39	60,000	70,000	60,000	70,000	60,000	60,000	90,000
40–49	40,000	30,000	40,000	40,000	30,000	60,000	50,000
50+	<10,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	40,000	50,000	50,000
14+	300,000	200,000	200,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	400,000
18+	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	300,000	400,000
Females							
14–19	30,000	30,000	20,000	30,000	20,000	10,000	30,000
20–29	80,000	70,000	60,000	70,000	80,000	90,000	80,000
30–39	40,000	40,000	40,000	30,000	30,000	40,000	50,000
40–49	20,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	30,000	20,000	30,000
50+	<10,000	<10,000	<10,000	10,000	20,000	20,000	30,000
14+	200,000	200,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
18+	200,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Persons							
14–19	80,000	60,000	50,000	70,000	50,000	40,000	70,000
20–29	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
30–39	100,000	100,000	90,000	100,000	90,000	100,000	100,000
40–49	60,000	50,000	50,000	60,000	60,000	90,000	90,000
50+	10,000	20,000	20,000	30,000	60,000	70,000	90,000
14+	500,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	500,000	600,000
18+	400,000	400,000	300,000	400,000	400,000	500,000	600,000

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis prescribed by a doctor, and only used it for medical purposes.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 5: Offer or opportunity to use cannabis in the previous 12 months, by age, Victoria, 2013 to 2019 (per cent)

Age group (years)	2013	2016	2019
14–19	36.4	27.9	36.3
20–29	38.0	40.1	43.0
30–39	22.7	22.8	26.4
40–49	15.8	19.7	21.2
50+	6.0	6.5	8.8#
14+	19.1	19.5	22.7#
18+	18.5	19.4	22.4#

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 6: Frequency of drug use, people who have recently^(a) used cannabis aged 14 and over, by sex, Victoria, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Frequency of drug use	Males				Females				Persons			
	2010	2013	2016	2019	2010	2013	2016	2019	2010	2013	2016	2019
Every day	14.9	7.8	13.4	12.8	10.5	11.8	11.5	*9.8	13.2	9.3	12.7	11.6
Once a week or more	17.8	20.8	17.8	21.4	14.5	11.0	14.2	17.7	16.5	17.0	16.5	19.9
About once a month	16.0	15.9	14.6	16.2	11.3	15.3	14.6	*10.7	14.2	15.6	14.6	14.1
Every few months	21.5	19.6	20.5	18.9	18.9	22.5	20.3	24.1	20.5	20.7	20.4	21.0
Once or twice a year	29.9	36.0	33.7	30.7	44.9	39.5	39.4	37.8	35.5	37.3	35.8	33.3

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis prescribed by a doctor, and only used it for medical purposes.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 7: Frequency of drug use, people who have recently^(a) used cannabis, by age, Victoria, 2019 (per cent)

Frequency of drug use	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50+	14+	15+	18+
At least weekly or more often	*31.4	26.1	24.3	44.0	46.9	31.5	31.5	32.7
At least every few months	41.3	39.0	37.0	22.9	28.9	35.2	35.2	34.4
Once or twice a year	*27.3	34.9	38.7	33.1	24.3	33.3	33.3	32.9

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

(a) Used in the previous 12 months.

Note: Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis prescribed by a doctor, and only used it for medical purposes.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 8: Self-assessed health status, health conditions and psychological distress, by cannabis use, people aged 18 and over, Victoria, 2007 to 2019 (per cent)

Health status	Not used in the previous 12 months ^(a)					Used in the previous 12 months					Used in the previous month					All persons				
	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Self-assessed health status^(b)																				
Excellent	17.5	18.7	18.8	18.5	18.6	14.3	13.7	18.8	20.8	16.6	*10.5	11.4	14.7	21.7	13.3#	17.0	18.2	18.5	18.7	18.4
Very good	39.0	37.8	40.6	39.8	40.7	33.9	38.2	39.0	36.5	38.1	32.1	35.0	34.8	33.8	37.6	38.5	38.0	40.4	39.4	40.4
Good	32.2	31.2	29.8	30.4	30.5	38.9	37.3	33.2	31.5	35.5	41.7	42.3	37.3	30.5	37.2	32.9	31.7	30.2	30.6	31.1
Fair	9.8	10.4	9.1	9.4	8.5	11.8	9.0	6.9	9.3	8.0	14.7	8.4	11.0	11.0	9.9	10.0	10.3	9.1	9.4	8.4
Poor	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.1	*1.8	*2.1	*1.8	*1.7	*1.0	*3.0	*2.3	*3.1	**2.0	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8
Self-reported health condition^(c)																				
Diabetes	5.4	5.6	6.2	6.4	6.1	**0.6	*1.2	*1.4	*1.8	*0.8	**1.1	**0.9	**0.8	**1.1	*1.4	5.0	5.2	5.9	5.9	5.5
Heart diseases ^(d)	19.5	19.9	21.4	20.9	20.9	*4.4	4.2	5.2	7.9	6.6	*4.3	*2.8	*4.4	*9.5	6.3	18.1	18.5	20.1	19.6	19.3
Asthma	8.8	8.1	9.5	9.6	9.2	10.9	10.3	8.1	10.5	9.0	*9.2	12.0	10.3	10.9	*7.0	8.9	8.3	9.3	9.7	9.2
Low iron (iron deficiency or anaemia)	7.2	7.5	9.3	9.5	11.5#	6.2	8.0	9.5	9.6	10.5	*6.0	10.4	*8.4	*10.1	10.6	7.1	7.6	9.2	9.5	11.4#
Cancer	2.4	2.7	2.9	4.1	4.1	n.p.	**0.4	*0.9	*0.9	*1.9	n.p.	**0.8	**0.8	**1.2	*2.5	2.2	2.5	2.8	3.7	3.9
Depression	7.8	8.2	9.8	11.1	11.5	11.2	15.2	17.2	20.7	21.8	14.4	20.6	25.5	23.5	24.6	8.1	8.9	10.6	12.1	12.7
Anxiety disorder	4.4	5.1	6.9	8.2	10.0#	8.2	12.3	14.0	18.1	20.4	*9.3	16.5	18.6	18.1	21.7	4.7	5.7	7.5	9.2	11.2#
Other mental illness ^(e)	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.8	1.7	*2.9	*3.5	*5.4	4.0	*4.2	**3.2	*4.5	*7.7	*5.6	*5.6	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0
<i>Any mental illness</i>	<i>10.4</i>	<i>10.7</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>15.6</i>	<i>15.4</i>	<i>20.0</i>	<i>21.6</i>	<i>25.5</i>	<i>27.3</i>	<i>17.6</i>	<i>25.4</i>	<i>30.5</i>	<i>27.1</i>	<i>29.4</i>	<i>10.9</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>15.3</i>	<i>17.0</i>
Chronic pain	n.a	n.a	9.0	10.5	9.9	n.a	n.a	7.2	8.7	12.5	n.a	n.a	9.8	10.0	14.7	n.a	n.a	8.8	10.3	10.1
Other listed condition ^(f)	3.0	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.3	*1.6	*7.1	*3.0	5.7	8.0	*2.8	*7.3	*4.5	*7.0	*9.2	2.8	1.6	1.3	1.7	2.1
Other condition not listed	5.9	5.5	4.7	6.1	6.7	*3.5	*3.3	*2.0	6.1	6.1	**2.0	*3.3	*2.8	7.5	*4.8	5.7	5.3	4.4	6.0	6.6

(continued)

Table 9: Cannabis use, people aged 14 and over, by socioeconomic area and remoteness, Victoria, 2007 to 2019 (per cent)

Characteristic	Never used					Used previously ^(a)					Used recently ^{(b)(c)}				
	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Socioeconomic area															
Least advantaged	74.9	74.0	73.8	76.6	70.5#	17.0	17.7	17.8	14.6	17.3	8.1	8.3	8.4	8.8	12.2
2	73.1	72.1	69.9	67.8	67.8	20.7	21.1	21.4	22.1	21.3	6.2	6.7	8.6	10.1	10.9
3	68.1	69.6	65.5	70.0	65.2	22.8	22.3	24.5	21.3	24.1	9.1	8.0	10.0	8.7	10.6
4	69.5	66.0	69.3	61.9	68.8#	21.0	24.3	22.7	26.7	21.9#	9.5	9.7	8.0	11.3	9.3
Most advantaged	63.6	60.1	64.4	61.1	54.9#	26.5	26.5	25.0	28.4	30.4	9.9	13.4	10.6	10.6	14.7
Remoteness															
Major cities	68.2	67.9	68.3	67.9	65.2	22.7	22.2	22.4	21.4	23.6	9.1	9.9	9.3	10.7	11.1
Inner regional	71.0	67.3	68.6	65.3	64.1	20.9	24.5	23.5	27.4	22.7#	8.1	8.2	7.9	7.3	13.3#
Outer regional	78.3	73.8	70.7	70.8	66.9	14.1	20.6	20.7	19.9	21.3	*7.6	*5.6	8.6	*9.3	11.8
Remote and very remote	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

n.p. not published because of small numbers, confidentiality or other concerns about the quality of the data.

(a) Used cannabis previously, but not in previous 12 months.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months, but excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis that was prescribed by a doctor, and only used it for medical purposes.

(c) Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis that was prescribed by a doctor and only used it for medical purposes.

Notes

1. From 2019, Remoteness Areas were defined using the 2016 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). In 2013 and 2016, Remoteness Areas were defined using the 2011 ASGS. Prior to this, the 2006 Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) was used. These data are considered comparable but trends should be interpreted with caution.

2. From 2019, socioeconomic quintiles were calculated using the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. In 2013 and 2016, socioeconomic quintiles were calculated using the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. Prior to this, the 2006 Census of Population and Housing was used. These data are considered comparable but trends should be interpreted with caution.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 10: Cannabis use, people aged 14 and over, by education and labour force status, Victoria, 2007 to 2019 (per cent)

Characteristic	Never used					Used previously ^(a)					Used recently ^{(b)(c)}				
	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Education^(d)															
Year 11 or less (Certificate I or II)	n.a.	n.a.	67.9	60.9	59.7	n.a.	n.a.	23.1	28.4	27.9	n.a.	n.a.	9.0	10.7	12.4
Completed year 12	n.a.	n.a.	62.4	64.9	59.0	n.a.	n.a.	28.9	24.8	29.1	n.a.	n.a.	8.8	10.3	11.9
Certificate III or IV	n.a.	n.a.	55.1	53.1	44.7#	n.a.	n.a.	34.2	34.7	36.6	n.a.	n.a.	10.7	12.3	18.7#
Diploma	67.7	57.7	58.4	53.9	63.6#	26.0	31.8	35.1	34.3	28.3	6.3	10.5	6.5	11.8	8.1
Bachelor degree or higher	58.4	57.7	55.7	57.3	57.2	33.9	34.6	35.7	33.9	33.8	7.7	7.7	8.6	8.8	9.0
Labour force status															
Currently employed	59.7	58.8	58.4	57.2	55.7	30.1	31.2	30.8	31.2	30.8	10.2	10.1	10.8	11.6	13.5
Student	77.3	74.1	81.5	79.5	80.7	8.5	6.9	6.4	8.1	5.7	14.2	19.0	12.2	12.5	13.6
Unemployed/Looking for work	63.1	73.3	65.4	69.3	58.2#	17.1	12.9	18.2	12.4	20.6#	*19.8	13.9	16.5	18.3	21.2
Solely engaged in home duties	68.7	63.6	61.5	73.5	64.8	26.6	33.1	34.1	25.5	27.5	*4.7	*3.3	*4.4	**1.0	*7.7#
Retired or on a pension	92.2	91.6	91.2	87.8	86.8	6.7	7.1	7.2	9.9	11.7	*1.1	*1.3	*1.6	2.3	*1.5
Volunteer/Charity work	n.a.	80.4	85.3	78.4	92.2#	n.a.	*14.7	*7.6	*17.3	**7.0	n.a.	**4.9	**7.1	**4.3	n.p.
Unable to work	77.5	69.2	66.2	67.1	60.9	*17.7	15.2	20.8	20.3	23.2	**4.8	*15.6	*13.0	*12.6	15.9
Other	65.8	65.5	68.8	68.0	60.2	*14.8	28.5	*14.5	24.3	29.9	*19.3	*6.0	*16.7	*7.7	*10.0

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

** Estimate has a high level of sampling error (relative standard error of 51% to 90%), meaning that it is unsuitable for most uses.

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

(a) Used cannabis previously, but not in previous 12 months.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

(c) Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis that was prescribed by a doctor and only used it for medical purposes.

(d) Base is people aged 25–64.

Note: Prior to 2013, the 'highest qualification obtained' question did not differentiate between Certificate levels. As a result, data for 2010 categories below 'Diploma' are not comparable, and have not been reported.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 11: Cannabis use, people aged 14 and over, by marital status, household composition and sexual orientation, Victoria, 2007 to 2019 (per cent)

Characteristic	Never used					Used previously ^(a)					Used recently ^{(b)(c)}				
	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Marital status															
Never married	64.2	65.2	66.4	64.6	59.9	17.2	15.3	15.3	14.9	17.7	18.6	19.6	18.3	20.5	22.4
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	78.4	76.0	75.9	73.9	68.2#	17.1	17.6	17.0	20.6	22.7	4.5	6.4	7.1	5.6	9.1#
Married/De facto	69.6	68.2	67.8	67.6	67.0	24.9	26.9	26.6	26.7	26.3	5.4	4.9	5.6	5.7	6.7
Household composition															
Single with dependents	62.0	49.7	51.9	50.2	52.9	28.7	36.4	36.2	32.5	30.6	9.3	13.9	11.9	17.3	16.5
Couple with dependents	57.7	56.8	58.7	59.5	60.1	35.9	38.1	35.2	34.6	32.3	6.4	5.1	6.2	5.8	7.6
Parents with non-dependent children	83.2	83.6	79.5	75.3	75.1	14.0	12.6	15.8	19.6	19.2	*2.8	3.8	4.6	5.1	5.7
Singles without kids	67.7	63.6	62.6	62.5	56.2	18.3	20.2	19.7	17.8	22.5#	13.9	16.2	17.8	19.7	21.3
Couple without kids	76.7	76.2	75.7	73.1	68.7	17.4	18.7	19.0	19.6	22.9	5.9	5.1	5.3	7.2	8.4
Other ^(d)	70.8	71.3	74.4	74.0	69.7	15.7	13.1	11.2	12.4	13.8	13.5	15.6	14.4	13.7	16.5
Sexual orientation															
Heterosexual	69.0	67.8	68.0	67.2	65.0	22.5	23.2	23.5	23.5	24.2	8.5	9.0	8.5	9.2	10.8
Homosexual/Bisexual	39.4	43.9	38.1	43.7	38.3	22.9	31.3	28.6	22.3	31.4	37.8	24.9	33.3	33.9	30.3
Not sure/Other	86.3	91.5	76.6	82.9	82.0	*11.8	*5.3	*6.8	*9.2	*8.5	**1.9	**3.2	*16.5	*7.8	*9.4

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

** Estimate has a high level of sampling error (relative standard error of 51% to 90%), meaning that it is unsuitable for most uses.

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

(a) Used cannabis previously, but not in previous 12 months.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

(c) Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis that was prescribed by a doctor and only used it for medical purposes.

(d) People who live in a household with children, but are not the parent/guardian, younger people living with their parents or respondents who selected 'other household type'.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 12: Use of cannabis for medical purposes^(a), persons aged 14 and over, Victoria, 2019 (per cent)

Used cannabis for medical purposes in the previous 12 months	Persons
Used cannabis recently^(b)	
Yes, only for medical purposes	5.8
Yes, sometimes for medical purposes and sometimes for other reasons	13.3
<i>Used for medical purposes^(c)</i>	19.1
No, did not use it for medical purposes	80.9
Total population	
Yes, only for medical purposes	0.7
Yes, sometimes for medical purposes and sometimes for other reasons	1.5
<i>Used for medical purposes^(c)</i>	2.2
No, did not use it for medical purposes	9.3
Has used cannabis, medical use status unknown	**<0.1
Has not used cannabis in the previous 12 months	88.4

** Es imate has a high level of sampling error (relative standard error of 51% to 90%), meaning that it is unsuitable for most uses.

(a) Refers to self-reported use of marijuana/cannabis for medical purposes in the previous 12 months. This includes both prescribed and non-prescribed marijuana/cannabis.

(b) Base is people who used cannabis in the previous 12 months.

(c) Includes those that only used cannabis medically and those that did so sometimes.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 13: Whether the medical cannabis was prescribed by doctor, persons aged 14 and over, Victoria, 2019 (per cent)

Was the cannabis prescribed by a doctor	Persons
Used cannabis for medical purposes^(a)	
Yes, prescribed by a doctor (always and sometimes)	*5.0
No, was not prescribed by a doctor	95.0
Recently used cannabis for any purpose^(b)	
Yes, prescribed by a doctor (always and sometimes)	*1.0
No, was not prescribed by a doctor	99.0

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

(a) Base is people who used cannabis for medical purposes in the previous 12 months. This includes both prescribed and non-prescribed marijuana/cannabis.

(b) Base is people who used cannabis in the previous 12 months.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 14: Risk score^(a) for cannabis, people who have recently^(b) used cannabis and all people aged 14 and over, by sex, Victoria, 2019 (per cent)

Risk score	Males	Females	Persons
Among people who recently used^{(b)(c)} cannabis			
Low risk	83.6	87.8	85.2
Moderate risk	11.8	10.1	11.1
High risk	*4.7	**2.1	*3.8
Total population (14+)			
Low risk	97.5	99.1	98.3
Moderate risk	1.8	0.8	1.3
High risk	*0.7	**0.2	*0.4

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

** Estimate has a high level of sampling error (relative standard error of 51% to 90%), meaning that it is unsuitable for most uses.

(a) Risk calculated using questions from the ASSIST-Lite. 'High risk' scores may indicate a substance dependence issue, while 'moderate risk' scores indicate use that may be hazardous or harmful. People who receive a high risk score are likely to require specialist assessment and treatment for their substance use.

(b) Used in the previous 12 months.

(c) Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis that was prescribed by a doctor and only used it for medical purposes.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 15: Perceptions towards cannabis use, people aged 14 and over, Victoria, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016	2019
Support ^(a) for the legalisation of cannabis ^(b)	26.7	21.0	24.3	25.3	34.4	39.7#
Believe the possession of cannabis for personal use should be a criminal offence ^(c)	n.a.	n.a.	33.3	32.9	25.8	23.0#
Support ^(a) for increased penalties for the sale or supply of cannabis ^(b)	58.5	64.4	62.2	58.4	50.5	44.8#
Personal approval ^(a) of regular adult cannabis use	n.a.	5.8	7.6	10.1	14.2	18.9#
Choice of action^(d) that should be taken against people found in possession of cannabis						
A caution/warning or no action	n.a.	n.a.	38.3	42.9	45.2	53.3#
Referral to treatment or education program	n.a.	n.a.	30.1	29.1	28.1	23.9#
Fine	n.a.	n.a.	17.6	16.2	15.7	14.0
Community service or weekend detention	n.a.	n.a.	5.9	5.6	5.0	4.4
Prison sentence	n.a.	n.a.	6.9	5.0	4.5	3.7
Some other arrangement	n.a.	n.a.	1.1	1.2	1.4	0.8#

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

(a) Support or strongly support/approve or strongly approve.

(b) Base is people that were informed enough to indicate their level of support.

(c) Base excludes people that were unsure or did not know.

(d) Respondents could only select one response.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 16: Likely usage of cannabis if it was legalised, people aged 14 and over, by age, Victoria, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Age group (years)	Not use it, even if it were legal and available				Try it				Use it about as often as you do now				Use it more often than you do now				Use it less often than you do now			
	2010	2013	2016	2019	2010	2013	2016	2019	2010	2013	2016	2019	2010	2013	2016	2019	2010	2013	2016	2019
14–19	72.6	71.9	74.1	64.2#	14.0	15.6	16.6	24.1	10.8	9.1	5.6	*5.7	*2.0	*2.7	*2.4	*5.0	**0.6	n.p.	**1.3	n.p.
20–29	72.4	72.4	65.9	58.5#	8.9	9.2	14.2	16.3	15.2	16.1	15.9	18.1	*2.5	*1.3	3.1	6.6#	**1.1	*1.0	*1.0	**0.5
30–39	84.0	82.4	77.0	74.3	2.6	5.0	7.5	9.6	11.1	9.3	12.4	12.4	*1.7	2.9	2.9	3.1	**0.5	**0.4	**0.2	**0.7
40–49	88.7	87.7	84.6	81.4	4.3	4.0	4.9	6.6	6.1	7.0	9.5	8.8	*0.6	*0.9	*0.8	2.5#	**0.3	**0.4	**0.1	**0.7
50+	96.5	94.6	93.5	91.0#	1.4	2.0	2.8	4.2#	1.9	2.8	3.2	4.0	**0.1	*0.2	*0.4	*0.7	**<0.1	*0.3	**0.1	**0.2
14+	86.4	85.4	82.7	78.3#	4.6	5.3	7.1	9.4#	7.4	7.5	8.2	9.0	1.1	1.2	1.5	2.8#	*0.4	*0.5	*0.4	*0.5
18+	87.2	86.2	82.9	78.7#	3.9	4.7	6.8	8.5#	7.4	7.5	8.5	9.4	1.1	1.1	1.5	2.9#	*0.5	*0.5	*0.3	*0.5

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

** Estimate has a high level of sampling error (relative standard error of 51% to 90%), meaning that it is unsuitable for most uses.

Statistically significant change between 2016 and 2019.

n.p. not published because of small numbers, confidentiality or other concerns about the quality of the data.

Note: Base excludes people that unsure or did not know.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

Table 17: Usual source of cannabis, people who have recently^{(a)(b)} used cannabis aged 14 and over, by drug type, Victoria, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Source	2010	2013	2016	2019
Friend	66.6	63.9	66.8	67.3
Relative or partner	*5.4	*4.5	6.6	5.3
Dealer	23.8	20.1	19.8	17.7
Grew my own	*3.4	*4.2	*2.7	*2.8
Other ^(c)	**0.8	7.3	*4.1	6.9

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

** Estimate has a high level of sampling error (relative standard error of 51% to 90%), meaning that it is unsuitable for most uses.

(a) Used cannabis in the previous 12 months.

(b) Excludes people that only used marijuana/cannabis that was prescribed by a doctor, and only used it for medical purposes.

(c) Includes 'prescription', 'internet', 'stole/steal it' and 'other' in 2019.

Notes

1. Base is people who used cannabis in the previous 12 months.

2. The list of response options changed across survey waves. Comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

Source: NDSHS 2019.

List of national data tables

Comparable published national data tables are accessible on the AIHW website:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/national-drug-strategy-household-survey-2019/data>

Table 4.41: Lifetime use of cannabis, by age and sex, 2001 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.42: Lifetime use of cannabis, by age and sex, 2001 to 2019 (persons)

Table 4.43: Recent use of cannabis, by age and sex, 2001 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.44: Recent use of cannabis, by age and sex, 2001 to 2019 (persons)

Table 4.39: Proportion of people who recently used illicit drugs among those who had the opportunity to use them in the previous 12 months, by age and by sex, 2013 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.20: Frequency of drug use, people who have recently used each drug aged 14 and over, by sex, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.21: Frequency of drug use, people who have recently used each drug, by age, 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.48: Self-assessed health status, health conditions and psychological distress, by cannabis use, people aged 18 and over, 2007 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.47: Cannabis use, people aged 14 and over, by social characteristics, 2007 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 6.1: Use of cannabis for medical purposes, persons aged 14 and over, 2019 (per cent)

Table 6.3: Was the medical cannabis prescribed by doctor, persons aged 14 and over, 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.49: Risk score for cannabis, people who have recently used cannabis and all people aged 14 and over, by sex, 2019 (per cent)

Table 9.23: Support for the legalisation of selected illicit drugs, people aged 14 and over, by sex, 2004 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 9.15: Believe the possession of cannabis for personal use should be a criminal offence, people aged 14 and over, by sex, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 9.27: Support for increased penalties for the sale or supply of selected illicit drugs, people aged 14 and over, by sex, 2004 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 9.7: Personal approval of the regular use by an adult of selected drugs, people aged 14 and over, 2007 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 9.32: Choice of action that should be taken against people found in possession of selected illicit drugs for personal use, people aged 14 and over, by drug use, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 9.17: Likely usage of cannabis if it was legalised, people aged 14 and over, by sex, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Table 4.101: Usual source of illicit drugs, people who have recently used them aged 14 and over, by drug type, 2010 to 2019 (per cent)

Attachment 3

Other related collections

A number of other collections managed by the AIHW may also be of interest to the committee. These include:

- The Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set, which is an annual administrative collection of data from publicly funded treatment services in all states and territories, including those directly funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. Included are all publicly funded government and non-government agencies that provide one or more specialist alcohol and/or other drug treatment services and all clients who have completed one or more treatment episodes at an alcohol and other drug treatment service. It contains data on clients and treatment episodes where cannabis was identified as a drug of concern.

In 2018–19, the Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set (AIHW 2020b) showed that, nationally, cannabis was a drug of concern (principal or additional) in 37% of episodes and was the third most common principal drug of concern (over 41,100 closed treatment episodes for a client's own drug use, or 20% of clients). In almost half (45%) of episodes with cannabis as the principal drug of concern, the client reported additional drugs of concern. This was most commonly alcohol (31%), nicotine (25%) or amphetamines (22%). Male (68%) and female (64%) clients with cannabis as their principal drug of concern were most likely to be aged 10–29.

In Victoria, cannabis was a drug of concern (principal or additional) in 33% of episodes and was the third most common principal drug of concern (over 10,000 closed treatment episodes for a client's own drug use, or 18% of clients). Nearly two-thirds (65%) of clients with cannabis as their principal drug of concern were aged 10–29 (AIHW 2020b and 2020c).

- The National Hospital Morbidity Database which contains data on hospitalisation at essentially all public and private hospitals across Australia. Data items of relevance include principal and additional diagnoses, treatments provided, Indigenous status and other patient demographics, and geographical location. Relevant diagnoses may include mental and behavioural disorders due to use of cannabis and evidence of cannabis involvement in hospitalisations for injury and poisoning.

In 2017–18, nationally there were 6,461 hospital separations for cannabinoids, accounting for 4.7% of hospital separations with a drug-related principal diagnosis (AIHW 2020a). The number of hospital separations for cannabinoids has increased since 2013–14 (4,991 separations, or 4.3% of hospital separations with a drug-related principal diagnosis). State and territory disaggregations are not available.

- The National Prisoner Health Data Collection contains data on prisoners' use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs in the 12 months before entry into prison and while in prison. Prison entrants are able to specify which illicit drugs they were using before they entered prison, including cannabis.

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