



The social impact of illicit drugs

Illicit drug use can impact directly and/or indirectly on all Australian communities, families, and individuals.

Impacts can include:

Health

Studies show that drug use increases the risk of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis. They can seriously affect driving skills making it more likely to have an accident. It can also facilitate:

- injury
- chronic conditions and preventable diseases
- mental health problems
- road trauma.

Sport

Sports people and professional athletes who use illegal substances risk damaging not only their physical health, but also their reputation and the integrity of their sport.

Social and legal

Drugs can change behaviour and they can affect relationships with family and friends. There is an increased risk of injury and/or assault to both the drug taker and other people.

If caught taking, manufacturing or selling illicit drugs, individuals can be fined, or sent to prison. If convicted of a drug offence, individuals could end up with a criminal record – this can make it harder to get a job, apply for a loan, or travel overseas.

Other legal implications include:

- violence and other crime
- associated criminal activity
- unhealthy childhood development and trauma
- contribution to domestic and family violence.

Economic

Illicit drug use causes a significant burden to the Australian economy. For example, the estimated total social costs for methamphetamine alone are around \$5 billion annually – through crime, loss of productivity and increased health care costs.

Taking illicit drugs can also lead to:

- unemployment
- homelessness
- poverty.

(Adapted from The Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care [Last updated: 15 July 2019], [What are the effects of taking drugs?](#))



Activity: Making Connections

Read the Social impact of illicit drugs then complete the table below.

Making Connections!
Using my own experiences and what I know to help me understand this text.
Text to self (This reminds me about)
Text to text (I read another text that said)
Text to world (It made me think about)