



Contact officer for this report

Commander David Bachi Manager International Strategy Australian Federal Police

Chair

Assistant Commissioner Scott Lee National Manager International Operations Australian Federal Police

Purpose of the Strategy

The Commonwealth Law Enforcement International Engagement Methamphetamine Disruption Strategy provides a framework for the Australian Government's international engagement to encourage interdepartmental cooperation towards disrupting the supply of crystal methamphetamine and its precursors into Australia.

Agencies/departments that contributed to the Strategy:

Lead agency









Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Health

AUSTRAC

Department of Defence

Department of Immigration and Border Protection

FOREWORD



Methamphetamine usage continues to rise, with Australia the highest per capita consumer in the world. Methamphetamine consumption has tripled in Australia in the past five years to around 270,000 users. Seizures of methamphetamine and its precursor chemicals have increased rapidly, but high prices indicate that domestic demand in Australia remains strong, as demonstrated by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's wastewater analysis, which confirmed that of the substances analysed, methamphetamine is the highest consumed illicit drug across all regions of Australia.

Increased usage in Australia is part of growing global demand for methamphetamines. In the Indo Pacific region, India and China are major sources of chemical precursors used in methamphetamine production; China and Myanmar are major producers, and Mekong countries are significant transit points. Organised criminal groups control the trade, with links between organised crime groups in Asia, Mexico and West Africa becoming more established. The trade is dynamic, with new source and transit countries emerging, most recently the Philippines.

In response to these challenges, this Government established the National Ice Taskforce in 2015. The Final Report of the National Ice Taskforce recommended Commonwealth agencies strengthen international engagement and coordination to disrupt the supply of methamphetamine to Australia. The work of the Taskforce also informed the Council of Australian Governments' (CoAG) National Ice Action Strategy (NIAS), that calls for development of an international supply disruption strategy.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has since led an inter-agency Working Group to identify ways to more effectively disrupt the supply of methamphetamine to Australia, including development of this strategy, along with a classified version.

A review of existing international engagement and activities, undertaken in 2016, identified that, while extensive international activities and training programs were already underway, more can still be done by Commonwealth agencies to better coordinate their activities and operations in Australia, and overseas.

This international engagement strategy sets out twelve priority actions that cut across four pillars of activity, to better focus and align agencies' resources and effort. Implementing these actions will leverage the skills and capabilities of a number of Commonwealth agencies to ensure a more coordinated and effective approach to disrupting the supply of methamphetamines and precursors into Australia.

This strategy will ensure Commonwealth disruption efforts are focussed, effective and that they adapt to changes in methamphetamine production and trafficking. The Government will continue to strongly support our law enforcement agencies in their pursuit of international criminal organisations seeking to target Australia with imports of illicit drugs, particularly methamphetamine, including 'ice'.

Minister for Justice

The Hon. Michael Keenan MP

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THE **STRATEGY**

This Strategy provides the framework for the Australian Government's international engagement to disrupt the supply of crystal methamphetamine ('ice') and its precursors to Australia. It identifies the international engagement that Australian Government agencies will support as part of implementation of the NIAS.

Australia's international engagement to disrupt the supply of methamphetamine will leverage existing programs and resources while ensuring their complementarity across government agencies to deliver more effective and targeted outcomes. Efforts will be focussed across four cross-cutting pillars as follows:

1 Understand the international environment.

The first step in disrupting the international methamphetamine trade is to understand the dynamic production and distribution mechanisms used by organised criminal groups.

Australian Government agencies will reinforce and build on existing information sharing arrangements with international partners such as INTERPOL and Europol to develop criminal intelligence assessments focussing on the convergence of organised crime groups. This will underpin the enhanced efforts to disrupt these groups and the methamphetamine trade.

Working with counterpart law enforcement agencies in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Mekong region is a priority focus of the strategy. Australian Government agencies will also seek to better understand the impact on the supply of methamphetamine and precursors to Australia from Mexico, Malaysia, the Philippines, India, Iran, Germany, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Pacific Islands.

2 Enhance law enforcement and border security cooperation.

Australian Government agencies will reinforce cooperation between law enforcement agencies, both domestically and internationally, to disrupt the supply of methamphetamine and precursors before they reach Australia.

Agencies will look for further opportunities for joint operations, collaboration and high-level strategic agreements with priority countries.

Agencies are already establishing innovative approaches to joint law enforcement partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region, for example, with Thailand (Taskforce Storm), Cambodia (Strike Force Dragon) and China (Taskforce Blaze). These arrangements are led by the AFP.

The death penalty for drug offences, where implemented by other countries, may limit the breadth of law enforcement engagement and information exchange in some cases. Australia opposes the death penalty in all situations and is committed to protecting individuals of any nationality from the death penalty where possible. The Australian Government will continue to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty.



3 Targeted capacity building and capability development.

Law enforcement and border security cooperation is complemented by activities to build capacity and develop the capabilities of partner agencies to disrupt methamphetamine production and trafficking. These programs are delivered by several Australian Government agencies.

AFP, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and its operational arm Australian Border Force, Attorney-General's Department, Department of Defence, Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre and other Commonwealth agencies will continue their international capacity building programs and seek further opportunities to engage with their counterparts to build their enforcement capacity relevant to tackling the illicit methamphetamine and precursor trade.

However, to maximise the return on investment, Australian Government agencies will strengthen their communication and coordination of such efforts, including through increased engagement at diplomatic posts.

4 Maximise advocacy and political engagement.

Sustained engagement on methamphetamine trafficking with decision-makers and key officials is critical to building political support and obtaining buy-in from governments for law enforcement cooperation efforts.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will register the need for greater bilateral cooperation with foreign governments to disrupt the supply of methamphetamine and precursors, including through regular dialogues and in relevant regional fora.

Australian Government agencies will ensure consistent and coordinated messaging in our engagement with foreign countries on disruption of methamphetamine production and trafficking. Through engagement opportunities, such as visits and meetings between Ministers and senior officials, we will seek to secure the political support needed to jointly disrupt the production and trafficking of methamphetamine.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Strategy will be monitored by an AFP-led inter-agency Working Group, to ensure alignment with the dynamic international environment, with shifting patterns of production and changes to supply routes over time. Strengthened coordination will ensure that Government resources will be targeted to where they can be most effectively utilised to deliver the best outcomes.

The Group will meet quarterly and update the Government on progress through portfolio Ministers, relevant CoAG Councils and Department of Health-led reporting mechanisms for the NIAS.

COMMONWEALTH LAW ENFORCEMENT

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT METHAMPHETAMINE DISRUPTION STRATEGY

To disrupt the supply of methamphetamine (including 'ice') and its precursors to Australia

Understand the international environment

A sound understanding of the production and distribution mechanisms used by international organised criminal groups will provide a clear picture of the international environment Australian operational agencies operate in.

Enhance law enforcement and border security cooperation

Close cooperation between counterpart law enforcement, security and border agencies will build long-term relationships between Australian and international partner agencies, their key executives and lead illicit drug investigators.

Targeted capacity building and capability development

Providing training and technical assistance in key areas can assist partner agencies in building their own resources and capabilities. This approach enhances their ability to provide support and cooperation in targeting illicit drug production and distribution.

Maximise advocacy and political engagement

Sustained engagement on methamphetamine trafficking with decision makers and key officials in priority countries is critical to building political support and obtaining buy-in from regional governments on coordinated law enforcement efforts targeting ice.

Areas of focus:

Enhance information sharing; develop targeted criminal and financial intelligence assessments; monitor methodologies, emerging criminal networks and convergence with other crime groups.

Areas of focus:

Develop and align bilateral cooperative agreements, including across multiple agencies; establish joint taskforces and operations with priority source and transit countries; collaborate with other key destination countries for methamphetamine.

Areas of focus:

Coordinate capacity
building across Australian
agency and other donor
programs; collaborate and
develop relevant technical
capabilities; continue
funding for UNODC illicit
drug-related projects as
appropriate.

Areas of focus:

Enhance agency engagement with diplomatic posts; increase political advocacy to encourage greater enforcement of precursor regulations; support multilateral law enforcement and border security engagement; assist regional programs targeting ice trafficking and production.

Strengthening our international engagement through priority actions

Australian Government agencies will tailor our approach to each country or region, focussing on the most significant production locations and criminal networks.

Priority Actions: Engage priority countries to disrupt production and distribution of methamphetamine, and regulate precursor diversion.

