

New drugs campaign launches with hard-hitting 'ice' ad

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The third stage of the National Drugs Campaign, which aims to prevent young people using illicit drugs, was launched today by the Minister for Ageing, Christopher Pyne, who has Australian Government responsibility for drug policy.

"I call on parents and carers throughout Australia to talk to their children about drugs. Talk to them today," Mr Pyne said. "There's strong proof that this works in helping stop them from using drugs.

"The new stage of the campaign will provide parents and young people with the information they need. It covers the negative consequences of marijuana, ecstasy and speed, with new material on crystal methamphetamine or 'ice'.

"This new element of the National Drugs Campaign will raise awareness about ice, educate families about the harm done by illicit drugs, and strongly discourage young people from using them.

"The emergence of ice is of great concern, as it is more potent than other forms of methamphetamine and has been associated with higher levels of addiction," Mr Pyne said.

There are about 73,000 dependent methamphetamine users in Australia.

From this week, a new anti-ice commercial will be broadcast as the start of the stage three drugs campaign. Don't let ice destroy you features a clinician in an emergency department who treats someone suffering from psychosis caused by using ice.

The campaign's advertising will run in print media, television and online.

The National Drugs Campaign targets people aged 13 to 17 and their parents with messages about the harm caused by cannabis, ecstasy and speed. The new stage will target people aged 18 to 25 who, research shows, are the main users of ice and other forms of methamphetamines.

To support the advertising campaign, there will be a national mail-out of the updated educational booklet for parents, Talking with Your Kids about Drugs, to every Australian household, and resources for youth and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, as well as other support materials for service providers and stakeholders.

Mr Pyne said the Government's National Drugs Campaign had played a strong role in educating families about the dangers of illicit drugs and in helping to prevent young people from taking up drugs.

Since 1998, the number of people who had used an illicit drug recently has fallen from 22 per cent to 15 per cent in 2004. There has also been a significant decline in the number of opioid overdose deaths, dropping from 1,116 in 1999 to 374 in 2005.

Over the past decade Australian law enforcement agencies have prevented more than 14 tonnes of illicit drugs from reaching Australian streets.

The Government has provided \$32.9 million over four years to continue the National Drugs Campaign prevention strategy.

For more information about the campaign see:

<http://www.drugs.health.gov.au/internet/drugs/publishing.nsf/Content/media>

View Mr Pyne's YouTube campaign message at: www.youtube.com/v/XiJYIvqJv4U

Media contact: Adam Howard 0400 414 833

Attention: TV NEWS

Please be aware that the 'ice' TVC has received an 'M' classification from CAD/FreeTV.

The scenes that relate to this classification are below and should not be broadcast before 9.30 pm:

1. the mother and son fighting and being pushed
2. the difficult behaviour in the hospital which show the doctor being punched
3. the close-up of the girl picking her arm

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr07-cp-pyn092.htm>