

DRUG USE ANALYSIS

**815. Mr A.J. DEAN to the Minister for Health:**

Will the minister inform members about the latest analysis of drug use in Western Australia?

**Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I also thank him for the excellent work he has been doing with local drug action groups and others within his electorate. Following the Community Drug Summit in 2001, the Drug and Alcohol Office has collated what is probably the most comprehensive report on regional and state drug use called "Indicators of Drug Use in Western Australia". It is available on web site [www.dao.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au). It is a warts-and-all report that divides the State into areas governed by health and clearly reflects the situation. The report highlights the usage rate of not only alcohol and tobacco, but also illicit drugs. It shows that drug usage in Western Australia was 22 per cent compared with the national average of 16.9 per cent. Cannabis usage was 17.5 per cent, versus 12.9 per cent; and any illicit drug usage, excluding cannabis, was 3.9 per cent versus 3.5 per cent.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member for Hillarys should listen to this because those figures occurred under his Government's policies.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You want to make it easier for yourself.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I will be pleased to see the new statistics that come out later this year. The statistics in the report are based on 1998-99 surveys, which was the period of the previous Government.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member for Hillarys and the Leader of the Opposition should clearly acknowledge that their policies failed dismally. Overall, 44.8 per cent of Western Australians had used cannabis on at least one occasion. About one in 10 Western Australians - 12.3 per cent - had used hallucinogens, and 10.6 per cent had used amphetamines; whereas fewer adults and young people - 6.9 per cent - had used ecstasy, 4.1 per cent cocaine, and 3.2 per cent heroin. I am pleased that the number of deaths that have resulted from heroin use this year is well below the number of deaths in previous years.

Several members interjected

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Regardless of any other issues, fewer Western Australians are dying now than were dying under the coalition Government. It is as simple as that.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Community Drug Summit identified the need to provide a comprehensive report of that nature so that future strategies can be planned based on evidence. It reflects the comprehensive approach to which the Gallop Government is committed in the same way that it is committed to health issues generally. Although the report focused principally on results from the 1999 survey, particularly drug use among young people, the very early indications from our 2002 data is that usage of certain categories of drugs has reduced across the board, which is very pleasing. Members opposite who are genuinely interested can download the report from the Internet on the web site I provided at the beginning of my response.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!