



People in contact with the criminal justice system

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

In 2020, **82%** of **police detainees** who provided a **urine sample tested positive** for at least one drug type. [1]

In 2020, **47%** of **police detainees** had used **cannabis** and **45%** had used **methamphetamine** in the past month.[1]

1 in 3 (33%) police detainees in 2019 indicated that **illicit drug use** contributed to their offending.[1]



In 2020, **over 1 in 4** (28%) police detainees **reported consuming alcohol** in the 24 hours prior to their arrest. [1]



In 2020, among **police detainees** who consumed alcohol in the past **24 hours**, the median number of **standard drinks consumed** was **11**. [1]

Prison entrants in 2018 were **more likely than the general population to be non-drinkers**, however those that did drink were more likely to **drink at high risk levels** than people in the general community.[2]

Prison entrants in 2018:

75% currently smoked tobacco
67% smoked tobacco daily.
[2]



In 2019–20, **8% of alcohol and other drug treatment episodes** were for clients who were referred for treatment **via police or court diversion**. [4]

65% of prison entrants in 2018 **reported using illicit drugs** in the 12 months before incarceration, with the **most common being methamphetamine** (43%).[2]



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Around 8% of **prison discharges** reported **using a needle and syringe** that had been **used by someone else** while in prison in 2018.[2]

In 2021 - 22, **9% of defendants** in the Magistrates' Courts had a principal offence of **illicit drug offences**; 68% of these were possess or use offences. [3]

References

1. Voce A & Sullivan T 2021. Drug use monitoring in Australia: Drug use among police detainees, 2020. Statistical Report 35. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Viewed 23 June 2021.
2. AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2019. The health of Australia's prisoners 2018. Cat. no. PHE 207. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 30 May 2019
3. ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2023. Criminal Courts, Australia, 2021–22. Canberra: ABS. Viewed 15 March 2023.
4. AIHW 2021. Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia 2019–20. Cat. no. HSE 250. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 16 July 2021.

Source: Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia
(<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia>).