



FROM DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CONDER

# Investigations break ice and other illicit drug operations

There has been significant media coverage over recent months regarding illicit amphetamine use in general and the use of 'ice' in particular.

## What is ice?

Ice belongs to the amphetamines and other synthetic drug family. It is the term used to describe high purity crystalline methylamphetamine or crystalline amphetamine. It is described as ice because of its crystal-like appearance (pictured).

## How is ice different?

The current misnomer is that ice is different to methylamphetamine or amphetamine. However, it is no different in chemical composition other than its purity level.

Purity levels for ice can be up to about 80% in its purest form and there are many substitutes and "cutting agents" which minimise the purity of the drug. This is a very common practice.

Ice use brings with it all the dangers associated with other forms of amphetamines, including the manufacture by criminals in clandestine laboratories which utilise an array of dangerous toxic chemicals and precursors.

From a health perspective, repeated consumption and use of ice may increase the likelihood of psychosis and violent behaviour.

The majority of seizures by police consist of methylamphetamine some of which has been cut to take on the appearance of ice. Current intelligence does not suggest an increased availability of ice within the community.

## What is the QPS doing?

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) continues to proactively investigate and target illicit drug use and manufacture by:

- Proactively targeting repeat offenders involved in the manufacturing cycle, including repeat "pseudo shoppers" who obtain key precursor ingredients such as pseudoephedrine.
- Developing and delivering a range of training and education packages for frontline police.
- High-level representation on a variety of national and state forums. The National Working Group on Prevention of Precursor Chemicals and the Queensland Government's Icebreaker Task Force are just two of the forums on which the QPS is represented.

- Specialist police and related disciplines attached to the QPS State Drug Investigation Unit who monitor, investigate and prosecute offenders involved in mid to high-level criminal activities associated with amphetamine manufacture.

- Ongoing professional partnerships with other law enforcement agencies, government and industry to develop joint initiatives, which target illicit drug use and manufacture. For example the QPS is a national leader in the fight against illicit drug manufacture with the trial of Project STOP, a joint initiative between the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and law enforcement. As a result of the introduction of Project STOP in Queensland, there was a substantial decrease of clandestine drug laboratories seizures during 2005-06 (about 25%).

- To ensure the QPS maintains international best practice in its response to clandestine laboratories, QPS State Crime Operations Command conducts a specialist two-week intensive training course to police officers to train them in all aspects of clandestine

laboratory investigation. QPS members also attend interstate and international clandestine laboratory training courses to ensure best practise is undertaken in investigation and response.

- Ongoing partnership arrangements with community groups, for example, partnerships with hotel/motel owners, real estate and letting agents to inform and advise them of the tell-tale signs of amphetamine production. Community education materials are also available such as *Putting the Balance on Speed*.

For further information on ice or any other illicit drug contact Crime Stoppers on (07) 3364 6166. ■

