

A summary of findings from the 2022–2023 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

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Introduction:

The National Drug Strategy Household survey (NDSHS) collects information on alcohol, tobacco, electronic cigarette, and illicit drug use among the general population in Australia. The NDSHS is part of Australia's National Drug Strategy 2016–2027[1], which aims to reduce and prevent the harms of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The survey has been conducted every 2 to 3 years since 1985.

Method / Approach:

Over 21,000 completed surveys were obtained from people in residential households across all 8 states and territories, including capital cities, regional and remote areas. Results were analysed by the AIHW and published online in February 2024.

Key Findings:

While tobacco use has continued to decline, use of electronic cigarettes has increased substantially since 2019. While both trends occurred across all age groups, they have largely been driven by young people. Use of illicit drugs also increased, while alcohol consumption remained stable.

Some emerging trends were also observed. Among the general population, use of hallucinogens increased, driven by an increase in the use of psilocybin which became the most commonly used form of hallucinogen for the first time. Increases in several risky behaviours, including use of illicit drugs, electronic cigarettes, and risky consumption of alcohol, were seen disproportionately among young women.

Discussions and Conclusions:

These results provide a snapshot of tobacco and electronic cigarette use before new measures and restrictions announced by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care came into effect in 2024. Future iterations of the NDSHS will respond to, and continue to monitor, changes in the use of nicotine products, as well as consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs.

Implications for Practice or Policy:

The NDSHS provides evidence to inform population-level policy interventions related to the use of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, alcohol and illicit drugs. Results also reflect emerging needs for people seeking treatment for their use of alcohol and other drugs.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The AIHW is an independent statutory Australian Government agency. The NDSHS is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

References

1. Department of Health and Aged Care (2017) *The National Drug Strategy 2017–2026*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. Available from

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-drug-strategy-2017-2026>
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