

## E. Oceania

### Major developments

620. The illicit cultivation and abuse of cannabis continue to be serious problems in most countries in Oceania, including Australia, Fiji, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

621. The illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants also continues to be a problem in Oceania. Australia and New Zealand have continued to detect and dismantle large numbers of clandestine laboratories. There is some evidence that clandestine laboratories are increasingly being used for the illicit manufacture of both methamphetamine and MDMA (Ecstasy), especially in Australia.

622. There are indications that Oceania may be emerging as a transit area for consignments of "crystal" methamphetamine (commonly called "ice"); the abuse of that drug may also be increased in the region. Both Australia and New Zealand have reported a substantial increase in seizures of crystalline methamphetamine, mainly from China.

623. Trafficking in and abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) are becoming significant problems in countries in Oceania, in particular in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, information gathered in an investigation of an attempt to smuggle a large amount of MDMA from Europe to Oceania indicates that the free flow of goods within the expanded European Union may present traffickers with new opportunities.

### Treaty adherence

624. The Board continues to be concerned that the rate of accession to the international drug control treaties is lower in Oceania than in all the other regions of the world. Of the 15 States in Oceania, only Australia, Fiji, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand and Tonga are parties to all three of the treaties.

625. The Board welcomes the accession of Samoa to the 1988 Convention and encourages it to accede to the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention without delay. The Board also welcomes the accession of the Federated States of Micronesia to the 1988 Convention; that State is now a party to each of the three international drug control treaties.

626. The Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are not parties to any of the international drug control treaties. The Solomon Islands is a party only to the 1961 Convention, while the Marshall Islands, Palau and Papua New Guinea are parties to both the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention.

### Regional cooperation

627. The Pacific Islands Forum continued to play a central role in promoting regional cooperation. At its annual meeting held in Auckland, New Zealand, in June 2005 the Regional Security Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum discussed various security issues, including the need to strengthen legislation to prevent illicit drug manufacture and trafficking. In Suva and Nadi, Fiji, in January 2005, the Forum hosted a seminar on terrorism, transnational crime and border security threats for frontline operational staff from customs, immigration and police officers from countries in Oceania.

628. Police, customs and other law enforcement officials from 15 countries and organizations in Oceania attended the South Pacific Defence and Security Seminar in Trentham, New Zealand, in March 2005. The officials discussed various regional issues, including drug-related transnational crime.

629. Oceania continued to benefit from the support of key regional agencies such as the Oceania Customs Organization and South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference.

630. In 2004, the Australian and New Zealand police assisted the police and customs of Fiji in an operation that resulted in the dismantling of a clandestine laboratory used for the illicit manufacture of crystalline methamphetamine. The raid resulted in the seizure of large amounts of drugs and precursor chemicals, as well as the arrest of six suspects associated with an organized criminal group operating throughout South-East Asia.

### National legislation, policy and action

631. New Zealand strengthened its precursor control legislation by passing the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill in June 2005. Under the new Bill, sanctions for existing offences related to the possession and supply of precursors were increased. Moreover, a new offence was added, making persons who import precursor chemicals "without reasonable excuse" liable for a

maximum penalty of one year in prison. An additional amendment of the new Bill enables law enforcement officers to carry out controlled deliveries in cases involving precursors. In addition, New Zealand has spent US\$ 19 million on non-invasive inspection equipment, including mobile container inspection trucks, fixed site cargo inspection units and a “backscatter van”, which can scan moving vehicles.

632. In 2005, New Zealand launched its Illicit Drug Monitoring System, a database containing information on drug abuse, illicit drug manufacture and drug trafficking that is to act as an early warning system for policymakers. Information collected during 2005 will be compared with data for 2006 and 2007. In addition, New Zealand announced that, in 2005, it would be testing a pilot version of its Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring programme, an international monitoring programme, the objective of which is to measure drug abuse among individuals who have recently been arrested.

633. The Board is pleased to note that the Cook Islands and Nauru have been removed from the list of countries and territories considered by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering to be “non-cooperative” in efforts to counter money-laundering. The United States provided financial assistance to the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat to support activities to combat money-laundering in Oceania.

#### **Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse**

##### *Narcotic drugs*

634. The illicit cultivation and abuse of cannabis continue to be prevalent in most countries in Oceania, including Australia, Fiji, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. Cannabis originating in Papua New Guinea has been seized in Australia and New Zealand. New Zealand has reported a new form of cannabis resin commonly called “ice hash”, which is manufactured from cannabis buds and smoked in pipes. Cannabis is often abused in combination with other drugs. In New Zealand, the majority of cannabis abusers are between 15 and 24 years old. Cannabis continues to be the drug of choice among drug abusers throughout the region, due to its availability and low price.

635. Both Australia and New Zealand reported increased seizures of cocaine. Australia reported having seized a larger volume of cocaine along its borders in 2004 than in 2003; the bulk of that increase was attributed to a single seizure of 100 kg of cocaine in August 2004. It appears that New Zealand is increasingly being used as a major transit area for illicit drugs destined for Australia and the United States. In New Zealand, over 18 kg of cocaine were seized in 2004, compared with only 7 kg in the previous year. Follow-up investigations indicate that most of the cocaine seized in New Zealand originated in Brazil or Chile and was destined for Australia.

636. In Australia, authorities continued to seize heroin in small quantities. In 2004, the number of heroin detections increased, while there was a decline in the total amount of heroin seized. In April 2004, the Board was informed of the seizure by Australian law enforcement officials of an ocean freighter registered in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The Australian Federal Police arrested eight suspects on charges of aiding and abetting the importation of 150 kg of heroin into Australia.

##### *Psychotropic substances*

637. Amphetamine-type stimulants continue to be illicitly manufactured in Oceania. In Australia, the authorities dismantled 358 clandestine laboratories during the period 2003-2004; the majority of those laboratories (221) had been used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. In 2004, authorities in New Zealand dismantled 182 clandestine laboratories used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine; although that figure is slightly less than the figure for 2003 (202), it is still high compared with the figure for previous years.

638. Australia made one of its largest seizures of crystalline methamphetamine in October 2004, when a consignment of 125 kg of that substance originating in China was seized. In New Zealand, while less than 1 kg of crystalline methamphetamine was seized in 2003, over 17 kg were seized in 2004 and 9.5 kg were seized already in the first half of 2005. Most of the seized crystalline methamphetamine originated either in China or Malaysia. In June 2004, six suspects were arrested and 5 kg of crystalline methamphetamine and 700 litres of liquid methamphetamine and a large amount of precursor chemicals were seized.

639. In New Zealand, seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, precursor chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, continued to increase. Over 1.8 million capsules of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were seized in 2004. Due to tightened controls over ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, there are indications that traffickers are finding it more difficult to procure those substances locally and are attempting to smuggle them instead. Furthermore, during November 2004, a large number of pseudoephedrine tablets were seized in a post office in New Zealand, which may signify that traffickers have turned to using the postal system to smuggle such precursors.

640. Australia and New Zealand continued to seize substantial quantities of MDMA (Ecstasy), in line with a worldwide increase in seizures of MDMA and other hallucinogens in 2004. In April 2005, Australia arrested four suspects in connection with the attempted smuggling of over 1 ton of MDMA tablets (worth an estimated US\$ 191 million) hidden in a shipping container of tiles from Italy. Australia reported a significant increase in seizures of MDMA in 2004. It seized over 800 kg of MDMA, which purportedly originated in Poland, in air cargo from Germany. Over 45,000 tablets of MDMA were seized in New Zealand in 2004. The majority of the seized MDMA originated in China, in particular in the Hong Kong SAR of China. The amount of MDMA seized in New Zealand in 2004 fell compared with the figure for the previous year; authorities attribute the decline to several factors, including the use of more elaborate trafficking and concealment methods. Australia reported the lifetime prevalence rate for the abuse of MDMA was higher than the rate for all other drugs except cannabis and methamphetamine.

641. Seizures of ketamine, GHB and GBL are also increasing in New Zealand. For example, while small amounts of GBL were seized in previous years, 43 litres of GBL were seized in 2004.

*Substances not under international control*

642. Increased seizures of khat (*Catha edulis*) were reported in New Zealand. Over 27 kg of khat was seized in 2004. The majority of the khat originated in Ethiopia and was sent through the international mail centre.