

reported slight increases, however, while other countries reported increases in injecting risk behaviour or low coverage of prevention services among injecting drug users.

## E. Oceania

### 1. Major developments

800. The rates of abuse and illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in Oceania are still among the highest in the world. This trend is particularly well documented in Australia and New Zealand, although methamphetamine abuse is reported to be stable or declining in those countries. While domestic illicit manufacture in Australia and New Zealand is widespread, the recent crackdown on precursor chemicals used in domestic manufacture has caused the price of amphetamine-type stimulants to rise, which has in turn attracted the attention of foreign traffickers seeking to take advantage of the potential for profits. The result has been that incidents of seizures of methamphetamine have increased, owing to higher interdiction rates. However, the lack of information on drug control from other countries in the region, in particular the Pacific island States, many of which have not ratified any of the international drug control conventions, means that a comprehensive and effective understanding of the drug trafficking situation is lacking. Nevertheless, research indicates that methamphetamines are available and that there is much abuse by youth, even in fairly remote areas.

801. Cocaine abuse is also increasing, and large seizures have been reported in the region, in particular in Australia. This trend is in keeping with indications from previous years that traffickers are targeting Australia and New Zealand as markets with high growth potential. The increasing prevalence of “legal highs” poses serious challenges for Australian health, law enforcement and regulatory agencies owing to the large number of substances available, confusion about their legal status and the complexity related to their manufacture and supply; it is also a notable trend in terms of developing drug abuse patterns. While cannabis is still the illicit drug of choice in the region, evidence suggests that new stimulant-type drugs are becoming more popular among younger age groups.

802. The Board welcomed the decisions by the Governments of Nauru and Niue to accede to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and urged both Governments to build on that momentum by

acceding to the other two international drug control treaties.

803. However, the fact remains that nine States in Oceania have yet to become parties to all three of the international drug control treaties, and this continues to be a matter of grave concern for the Board, particularly in the light of increased reports of trafficking in and illicit manufacture of drugs in the region. High prevalence rates for the abuse of cannabis and knowledge of illicit methamphetamine manufacture in Oceania make it an area particularly susceptible to organized crime. The Board continues to urge all States concerned, namely the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, to accede without further delay to any of the three international drug control treaties to which they are not yet parties. Those States may easily become used by traffickers who want to supply the Australian and New Zealand markets.

### 2. Regional cooperation

804. A number of regional conferences have been organized in the region, allowing for greater coordination and cooperation on issues related to drug control.

805. The 2012 meeting of the Regional Security Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum was held in Fiji in June. The meeting's discussions focused on transborder issues, in particular transnational organized crime; border management and counter-terrorism; national and regional law enforcement challenges; and human security, human rights and governance issues.

806. Trafficking in precursor chemicals in Oceania continues to be a major source of concern for officials in the region. As part of efforts to tackle this problem, a joint meeting of the Project Cohesion and Project Prism Task Forces was convened in Canberra from 4 to 7 October 2011. Task Force members from Australia, China, Germany, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation and the United States, as well as representatives of the European Commission, INTERPOL and the International Narcotics Control Board secretariat, attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed operations and activities conducted under the auspices of those two Projects, and Task Force representatives gave an overview of the latest trends observed in their regions with regard to cocaine, heroin and MDMA (“ecstasy”). A number of future actions were agreed, including an information-gathering exercise and improved reporting of seizures related to non-controlled substitutes. It was also agreed to pilot



the International Narcotics Control Board Precursors Incident Communication System.

807. Cooperation and capacity development in terms of customs and law enforcement have also continued to be developed. The 40th annual Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Conference was held in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, from 23 to 25 August 2011. The Chiefs of Police discussed how to improve coordination and the use of donor resources, identifying gaps in services and how to support and oversee the building of sustainable training capacities within individual Pacific police organizations. The Oceania Customs Organization secretariat held its 14th Annual Conference in Pago Pago, American Samoa, on 3 May 2012. Delegates from 18 member countries and areas attended the meeting, namely American Samoa, Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Norfolk Island, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Discussions focused on new strategic approaches, such as customs networking and the use of risk management techniques based on intelligence and information-sharing and exchange.

808. Australia further invested significant amounts of resources in its Pacific Police Development Programme. By the end of the four-year Programme, just under 100 million Australian dollars will have been invested in new skills, leadership and community training with the aim of improving both effectiveness and public confidence in police of Pacific island countries. The Programme gives country-specific support to the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu, but also seeks to support efforts to address Pacific-wide policing issues. In 2012, this has been done through a variety of train-the-trainer courses, conferences and workshops.

### 3. National legislation, policy and action

809. As reported in 2011, the Government of Australia endorsed a national drug strategy for the period 2010-2015, which is based on the three pillars of demand reduction, supply reduction and harm reduction. Its aim is to build safe and healthy communities by minimizing alcohol-, tobacco- and other drug-related harm among individuals, families and communities. Before that, in mid-2008, the amphetamine-type stimulant strategy was released by the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy. The Government of Australia recently extended the amphetamine-type stimulant strategy to 2015, in order for it to conclude at the same time as the national drug strategy.

810. As part of its national drug campaign, Australia, with one of the highest levels of MDMA (“ecstasy”) abuse in Oceania, launched an initiative in December 2011 aimed at warning youth about the dangers of “ecstasy” and other illicit drugs. That awareness-raising initiative highlighted the risks and potential harm associated with taking “ecstasy” in order to reduce the high consumption rates among youth. In addition, the Australian Government provided further funding for activities of the National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre, which seeks to prevent cannabis uptake and provide evidence-based information on the harms associated with cannabis abuse, as well as interventions for cannabis users.

811. In May 2012, Australia amended the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons to include synthetic cannabinoids. In addition, with respect to Commonwealth legislation, 4-methylmethcathinone (4-MMC), ketamine and BZP were included and new thresholds for methcathinone and phenylpropanolamine were defined.

812. Following a period of consultations on the review of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975, the New Zealand Law Commission published its final report in May 2012, which made recommendations to the Government about how New Zealand drug laws could be updated. The review contained a number of key proposals, including a full-scale review of the current drug classification system that would be based on an assessment of a drug’s impact in terms of harm as well as a proposal for the establishment of a pilot drug court, which would allow the Government the opportunity to defer sentencing until some offenders had undergone court-imposed treatment for drug abuse.

813. In 2011, the New Zealand Government presented legislation to make domestically produced medication containing pharmaceutical preparations of pseudoephedrine available only by prescription. In March 2012, under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975, it also placed a 12-month ban on the supply and sale of a number of synthetic cannabinomimetic substances (AM-1248, AM-2232 and UR-144). Cannabinomimetic substances are those that have been incorporated into products traded as legal alternatives to cannabis. In addition, as of early April 2012, 1,3-dimethylamylamine, a common ingredient in “party pills” and some weight-loss and sports-performance supplements, was banned. Furthermore, pseudoephedrine and ephedrine were reclassified. All imports and exports of the substances now require a permit for each consignment, as well as the issuance of a pre-export notification.



814. In an effort to address the rapid growth in new psychoactive substances, which can be synthesized so as to be one step ahead of existing controls, new legislation was introduced by the Government of New Zealand in July 2012. The legislation prohibits the sale of all psychoactive substances unless approved by a regulator.

815. After a review of the 1994 Fiji National Drug Policy, the Fiji Government approved the National Medicinal Products Policy in June 2012. The new policy will seek to improve the accessibility, quality and rational use of medicines by health professionals and consumers. As of 2012, Papua New Guinea has significantly increased the annual budget for its National Narcotics Bureau and other drug enforcement agencies with a view to education, raising awareness, treating and rehabilitating users and enforcing existing drug laws. In addition, a recommendation is being prepared, to be presented to the Prime Minister and the National Executive Council, to establish a ministerial task force that will study, among other things, appropriate penalties for drug crimes, the establishment of treatment and counselling centres and the possible updating of the Papua New Guinea Controlled Substance Bill.

#### 4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

##### (a) Narcotic drugs

816. Cannabis remains the most prevalent illicit drug, in terms of abuse, production and seizures in Oceania. Prevalence rates in the region are estimated at between 9.1 and 14.6 per cent, among the highest in the world, with Australia ranked as the region's largest market for cannabis. In Australia, in the period 2010-2011, cannabis seizures accounted for 72 per cent of national seizure incidents involving illicit drugs. In that period, 2,137 cannabis detections were made at the Australian border and 50,073 cannabis seizures were made, the largest number of seizures reported in Australia over the last 10 years.

817. New Zealand also reported a high prevalence rate; cannabis was the most commonly abused illicit drug in the country, with about 1.2 million New Zealanders reporting having abused the drug in their lifetimes. However, the abuse of the drug appears to have decreased in the 18-24 age group in response to health concerns about smoking, combined with an increasing preference to abuse new, uncontrolled stimulants.

818. The abuse of cannabis and cultivation of cannabis plant also occur at high rates in many Pacific island States. Concerns that profits from this "cannabis industry" will be reinvested in the illicit manufacture of

methamphetamine, in addition to other drugs, have previously been raised by the Board. The proximity of the islands to major markets for illicit drugs, combined with the difficulty of policing the Pacific islands owing to their geographic situation, appeals to drug traffickers, who have increasingly targeted the region. While eradication campaigns have been reported, recent cannabis abuse is estimated to be as high as 40 per cent of persons surveyed in Palau, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Abuse of cannabis in Papua New Guinea is also significant: officials there have reported that cultivation of the plant is one of the country's leading sources of revenue. The Marshall Islands reported the lowest prevalence rate of cannabis abuse in the Pacific islands, with 6 per cent of men and 3 per cent of women reporting lifetime use.

819. Although cocaine seizures in Oceania account for only 0.3 per cent of total world seizures, the increased amounts seized in 2011 suggest that the market for the substance in the region has expanded and that Oceania is increasingly being used as a smuggling route for the drug.

820. In the period 2010-2011, the number of cocaine detections at the Australian border increased by two thirds and the total weight of substances detected increased by 81 per cent from the levels of the previous period. Six seizures accounted for 78 per cent of the total amount of cocaine seized, with one of those seizures alone accounting for 401 kg. The diversification of embarkation points for smuggling of cocaine into the country is a notable trend, with the main embarkation points in terms of numbers being Argentina, Panama, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States. However, it is worth noting that the single seizure of 401 kg of cocaine was detected on a small craft travelling from Ecuador. The vast majority of detections in terms of numbers involve small amounts of the substance sent via parcel.

821. The 16.2 kg seized in New Zealand in the first seven months of 2012 represent an exponential increase from the 615 grams seized in 2011. While New Zealand is a transit country for trafficking of the drug to Australia, evidence suggests that most of the cocaine seized was for domestic consumption. Most of the cocaine detected came directly from South America, departing in particular from Argentina and Chile, with internal concealment being the most common form of its transportation. However, West African drug trafficking networks are also involved in the trafficking of cocaine into the country.

822. The prevalence of opioid abuse in Oceania is similar to that in many other developed countries with a dependable heroin supply, although abuse of the drug lags



substantially behind the abuse of other illicit drugs such as cannabis and amphetamine-type stimulants. In Australia, heroin abuse has remained stable since 2001, although the weight of national heroin seizures increased substantially in the period 2010-2011 to 375.7 kg, the largest amount seized since 2005-2006. Heroin from South-West Asia accounted for the most heroin in terms of quantity seized, whereas incidents of seizures originating from South-East Asia were the most frequent. In terms of weight, the primary embarkation points identified were Malaysia, Pakistan and Viet Nam, whereas India, Malaysia and Singapore were the countries from which the seized heroin most frequently departed.

823. In New Zealand, opioids are the third most prevalent drugs abused. The number of persons admitted for drug treatment for the abuse of heroin, morphine and opiates (including pharmaceutical opioids) accounted for 44 per cent of all drug-related hospital admissions in 2010. The trafficking and abuse of heroin and opium are not widespread in New Zealand, where many opiate abusers use “homebake” heroin, or diverted medicines such as oxycodone.

#### (b) Psychotropic substances

824. A record seizure of 558 kg of illicit drugs, of which 306 kg was crystal methamphetamine and 252 kg was heroin, was seized in Sydney in July 2012. That followed another major seizure, in May 2011, in which the Australian Federal Police seized more than 230 kg of methamphetamine in a raid in Sydney. The seizure in 2012 highlights the continued and substantial domestic demand for amphetamines in Australia, which is principally serviced by domestic illicit manufacture. A total of 13,982 arrests related to amphetamine-type stimulants were made in the period 2009-2010, representing 16 per cent of all drug-related arrests, second only to cannabis-related arrests. In the period 2010-2011, there were 556 detections of amphetamine-type stimulant (excluding MDMA (“ecstasy”)) laboratories and 16 MDMA laboratories were detected, down from 17 in the period 2009-2010.

825. Despite this substantial domestic illicit manufacturing presence, trafficking of amphetamine-type stimulants into the country still takes place. Parcels accounted for over 90 per cent of detections, while air cargo accounted for 47 per cent of total weight detection for amphetamine-type stimulants (excluding MDMA (“ecstasy”)) at the Australian border. The most popular embarkation points for amphetamine-type stimulants were Canada, China (including Hong Kong), India and Ireland. Seizures of “ecstasy” were also on the

rise: 112 kg of “ecstasy”-group substances were seized in 2010, compared with 54 kg in 2008 and 59 kg in 2009.

826. In New Zealand, abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants has grown rapidly over the last two decades, and it remains the most commonly abused illicit drug after cannabis. A well-developed domestic amphetamine-type stimulant manufacturing capability has shown itself to be adaptive and responsive to demand. Although pseudoephedrine extraction laboratories were seized in New Zealand, the total number of clandestine laboratories detected has fallen, and a notable shift to rural and semi-rural locations has been seen as illicit manufacturers of amphetamine-type stimulants try to avoid being detected. However, the detection of polydrug manufacturing laboratories represents a new development in illicit drug manufacture in the country.

827. The New Zealand Government has identified the reduction of the availability and abuse of methamphetamine as its highest law enforcement priority, with 12 per cent of all drug-related arrests in 2010 involving methamphetamine. This prioritization has also led to methamphetamine seizures increasing by 45 per cent in 2010 over seizures in 2009. However, those seizures may also signal the increased appeal of selling the drug in the country, where the price of methamphetamine is comparatively high and profitable and as such has attracted attention from organized criminal groups from Asia, West Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is evidenced in part by the border seizure of 19.5 kg of methamphetamine in 2010, representing an 81 per cent increase over the amount in 2009. As in Australia, seizures of “ecstasy”-type substances increased over those of previous years: the 12 kg reported in 2010 matched the level of seizures reported in 2004.

#### (c) Precursors

828. As a result of legislative changes making it more difficult for traffickers to divert ephedrine and pseudoephedrine in Australia, criminal groups have responded by innovating and adapting the domestic manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants.

829. Australian authorities detected 702 illicit laboratories in the period 2010-2011, the largest number ever recorded. New Zealand dismantled 130 illicit manufacturing laboratories in 2010, primarily for methamphetamine manufacture or the extraction of pseudoephedrine, a slight decrease from the 135 laboratories dismantled in 2009. This figure also includes a clandestine manufacturing laboratory that was extracting ephedrine and pseudoephedrine from ephedra plant material and pharmaceutical preparations. The use



of ephedra by methamphetamine laboratories represents a small but growing trend in the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in New Zealand, first identified in 2005.

830. The extraction of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine from preparations, in particular from ContacNT, a distinct granular pharmaceutical formulation containing pseudoephedrine, which is sourced from China, remains the main method of obtaining the precursor chemicals needed for the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. In 2010, New Zealand reported seizing 949 kg of pseudoephedrine preparations, mainly in the form of ContacNT, and in May 2011 alone, New Zealand seized almost 68 kg of ContacNT. In 2011, Australia and New Zealand combined accounted for the seizure of 1.7 tons of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, mostly in the form of preparations.

831. It is clear that the market for MDMA (“ecstasy”) in Australia is still attractive. In April 2011, Australian authorities dismantled an organized crime syndicate in Sydney and made the largest seizure of safrole in Australian history, seizing more than 2,800 litres of low-concentration safrole oil, misdeclared as liquid hair and cleaning products originating from China. The low safrole content corresponded to approximately 288 litres of pure safrole. This potentially could have led to the manufacture of 2.3 million “ecstasy” tablets.

832. In 2010, Australia reported 43 cases involving seizures of ephedra, which can be used in the manufacture of methamphetamine, totalling 3 kg. Most of the seizures were detected in the postal system and originated in the United States in the form of dietary or weight-loss supplements, although these may not have been intended for use in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

#### (d) Substances not under international control

833. In Australia, authorities are increasingly being challenged by the emergence of new amphetamine-type stimulant analogues. The analogues mimic the effects of MDMA (“ecstasy”) and methamphetamine and are designed in such a way that they circumvent national drug control legislation. Although present in Australia since early 2000, the appeal of such substances, often sold as “legal highs”, has evolved to such an extent that a separate and distinct market has been established. Detection of ketamine, which has a wide range of effects that include hallucinations, remained stable: 22 detections in the period 2009-2010 compared to 23 detections in the period 2010-2011.

834. Other psychoactive substances, such as mephedrone and methylenedioxypyrovalerone, are also increasingly

being detected. Mimicking the effects of controlled substances, their presence has been detected in drugs sold as “ecstasy”. The most prominent sources for BZP, mephedrone and 4-methyl-*N*-ethylcathinone are Ireland and the United Kingdom, although China has also been identified as a point of origin for sourcing the substances. The use of piperazines also continues to be reported. A number of laboratories in New Zealand have been discovered extracting large quantities of *gamma*-butyrolactone from horticultural fungicides (Fandango and Mogul).

### 5. Abuse and treatment

835. As noted above, cannabis remains the most abused drug in Oceania. A report released in 2012 estimated that up to 14.8 per cent of persons aged 15-64 had used cannabis in Oceania in 2009, making it the top region for abuse of the drug in the world.

836. In New Zealand, it was estimated that in 2011, 3.5 per cent of the population needed treatment for drug abuse, with 86 deaths reported as being related indirectly to the abuse of illicit drugs and psychotropic substances. Of the 9,451 persons brought into formal contact with the New Zealand police and justice system for drug-related offences, 8,085 of the cases were in connection with personal cannabis-related offences.

837. Cannabis abuse in the smaller Pacific island States is also notable, particularly among youth. Recent results from the 2011 Global School-based Student Health Survey found lifetime use of cannabis ranging from 4 per cent to 14.3 per cent among students aged 13 to 15 years, with boys much more likely to abuse cannabis than girls. The figures were as follows: for the Cook Islands, 9.2 per cent; Kiribati, 4 per cent; Solomon Islands, 14.3 per cent; and Tonga, 6.5 per cent.

838. In 2010, 2.1 per cent of the Australian population aged 14 years and older reported recent abuse of amphetamines, and 5.9 per cent of those in the 20-29 age group reported using the substance, making the latter the age group with the highest prevalence rate. Nevertheless, the figure reported in 2010 is the lowest since 1995.

839. Of alleged criminals held in custody in Australia, 21 per cent tested positive for methamphetamine. Compared to 2010, this represents a 6 per cent increase, although it is still below the highest result, recorded in 2003 and 2004, when 30 per cent of detainees tested positive. The Australian Institute of Criminology, which conducted the study, also reported that users thought the quality of the drug had significantly improved and its availability had increased.



840. After cannabis, amphetamine-type stimulants are the second most prevalent class of abused drug in New Zealand. In 2011, abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, including MDMA (“ecstasy”), amphetamine and methamphetamine, was stable, and six deaths related to their abuse were reported. However, an increase in intravenous abuse of amphetamine and methamphetamine was reported over the reporting period.

841. In the Pacific islands, considerable challenges remain with regard to the reporting of statistics relating to illicit drug use, production and trafficking.

Nevertheless, the use of kava (*Piper methysticum*) and abuse of cannabis are considered to be widespread. Furthermore, the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants among secondary students is reported in many Pacific islands: the Marshall Islands reported a prevalence rate of 13.1 per cent and Palau 7.1 per cent. Evidence exists of intravenous methamphetamine abuse in many Pacific island territories, and in Vanuatu, where methamphetamine is injected by 41 per cent of injecting drug users aged 15 to 24.