

A CCI SPECIAL INVESTIGATION



ICE LAND

**WA WORKPLACES FIGHT
DEADLY DRUG**

NEV POWER:
**'WE MUST
STAND UNITED'**

MICHAEL KEENAN:
**'THIS IS A
MIND-EATING DRUG'**

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

CARRIE COX

Business Pulse Editor

An informal chat two months ago with the head of our Employee Relations Advice Centre set in train this special edition of *Business Pulse* – a comprehensive and confronting investigation into the scope and seriousness of ice in WA workplaces. She mentioned her team had been receiving increasingly more calls from business owners dealing with apparent ice use and abuse in their workplaces, often in industry sectors not traditionally associated with meth and ice use. Employers are suitably worried – ice is a game-changer on the drug landscape and throws up entirely new safety concerns.

This is not a party drug. It is, in the words of Justice Minister Michael Keenan writing exclusively for our magazine, a “mind-eating, personality-distorting, life-ending drug” destroying families and livelihoods.

We’ve spoken to former ice addicts who almost lost their businesses, a high-performing addict who manages to evade testing, the doctor running one of WA’s busiest rehab facilities, a toxicologist and drug tester, and many others in this space. Importantly, this edition includes helpful, timely advice for employers who are dealing with this situation now or who will, more than likely, do so in future.

We’d love to get your feedback on this special edition and also hear about your business’s own experiences. Please email editor@cciwa.com



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TAKING UP ARMS AGAINST ICE

A MESSAGE FROM THE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



“
**ACROSS THE
COUNTRY,
MORE THAN
270,000
AUSTRALIANS
CURRENTLY
USE METH**
”

We've all heard about ice, but we're now seeing a new frontline in the epidemic – the Australian workplace.

CCI's Employee Relations Advice Centre has seen a five-fold increase in calls since 2012 from employers who need help dealing with drug abuse – particularly ice – within their workforce.

In light of these heightened concerns, CCI decided to conduct a special investigation into how methamphetamine has infiltrated WA businesses and undermines safety, productivity and staff engagement.

Across the country, more than 270,000 Australians currently use methamphetamine (ice is meth in its purest form) and 81 per cent of this group – or at least 220,000 people – are employed.

For this edition, CCI spoke with employers, users, doctors, government and industry to paint a holistic picture of how ice is impacting businesses and the wider community.

Our Members tell us that to fight this new battle, business needs meaningful industrial relations reform that will allow employers to effectively protect their staff and organisation from the significant threats posed by ice abuse.

Reforms should empower employers to conduct workplace drug tests and remove workers for serious drug-use breaches. Unfortunately, current unfair dismissal laws place a disproportionate emphasis on procedural requirements, which stops employers terminating

employees even where there is a valid reason.

The *Fair Work Act* must also be amended to recognise the obligation employees have to their employer and their co-workers. At present, there is a common view that what an employee does outside of work is their own business, but this is simply not the case when drug use impacts the ability of the employee to perform their duties and threatens the safety and integrity of the workplace.

The WA Government has recognised the critical role the State has to play in fighting the epidemic. As he handed down the 2016-17 State Budget, Treasurer Mike Nahan noted that 3.8 per cent of the WA population aged over 14 use methamphetamines – this is significantly higher than the national average of 2.1 per cent.

One of the budget's key announcements was a new \$15 million Methamphetamine Strategy that will support specialised medical and community services combating ice in metropolitan and regional WA.

Drug abuse is a complex social issue that workplace laws alone cannot address, so it's paramount the problem continues to be tackled at its source within the community, to ensure our workplaces and employees can be protected.

In addition to the new anti-ice measures, the State Budget also set forth a measured economic plan to regain the AAA credit rating and broaden the WA economy.

Despite significant budget challenges – and a whopping forecast deficit of nearly \$4 billion – we are pleased the Government has not lost sight of the economic big picture.

In addition to expenditure reductions and greater efficiencies in the public sector, the budget proposal to privatise Western Power and sell Horizon Power's poles and wires in the Pilbara will wipe significant debt off the budget balance sheet, reduce interest payments and reassure the market that WA has the budget under control.

CCI believes this budget listened to the voice of the business community – you, our Members – and went beyond budget repair to support the success of growth industries that will enrich WA's economy for successive generations.

New funding initiatives to boost the tourism, agriculture, innovation, aquaculture and defence and shipbuilding industries are important to drive new opportunities, allow businesses to grow and create jobs and ultimately build a broad, agile economy for the future. ■

Deidre Willmott

Deidre Willmott
Chief Executive Officer

TO GET INVOLVED:

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 [@CCI_CEO](https://twitter.com/CCI_CEO)

BUSINESS'S NEW BATTLEFRONT

EXCLUSIVE

BUSINESS HELPLINE CALLS INCREASE FIVE-FOLD

FORTESCUE BO

Crystal meth – or ‘ice’ – has infiltrated the WA workplace. And businesses are fighting back

CARRIE COX

Australia's ice epidemic has turned up for work – and WA employers are looking for answers.

Enquiries about drugs – particularly ice – to CCI WA's business helpline have increased five-fold since 2012, with employers desperate to know the best way forward for substance testing and workplace safety.

CCI CEO Deidre Willmott says the number of calls has spiked this year – a trend she attributes to the increased prevalence of ice use.

"Based on the calls our

Employee Relations Advice Centre team is taking and the feedback they provide, this increase can directly be attributed to ice," Willmott says.

"Two or three years ago, our consultants rarely received these types of queries, but now they're receiving calls from employers every week on how to deal with people on ice in their workplaces."

CCI's new figures come as industry captain Nev Power, CEO of Fortescue Metals Group, expressed concern about the limits placed on businesses to provide information about ice use that could help WA's law enforcement effort.

"One frustration I experience is that businesses are prevented from sharing intelligence with police which may otherwise assist in their efforts to curtail supply by better understanding the distribution networks," Power says.

► **Nev Power, page 7**

Employers seeking advice from CCI's hotline about ice abuse

are concerned about aggressive or erratic behaviour from employees who they suspect are using the drug.

"In many cases, the aggression is creating major issues among staff, and often the manager is uncertain and in some cases afraid to approach the individual out of concern for their own safety," Willmott says.

"At best, they're seeing employees displaying erratic behaviour – vacillating between highs and lows and not showing up for work. At worst, they're dealing with violent outbursts, volatility and a dangerously compromised workplace in terms of safety."

Willmott says ice abuse is no longer quarantined to particular industry sectors.

"The scourge of ice must now be tackled in our offices as well as in our homes and in our communities," Willmott says. "We're working to help employers

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SS CALLS FOR ZERO TOLERANCE

WA USES MORE ICE THAN ANY OTHER STATE

with this issue, but they need more support in the form of specific changes to drug testing and dismissal mechanisms to properly equip them to manage the challenges of the volatile, unpredictable nature of people using this drug."

► **What business wants, page 13**

Education is key

Ice expert Dr Ken Pidd, Deputy Director (Research) of the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA), says workplace drug testing alone will not slow the scourge of ice.

"The research tells us that comprehensive workplace strategies that include appropriate drug testing, employee awareness and education and supervisor/manager training are effective in reducing risk," Pidd says.

"The key to the effectiveness of such strategies is that they are tailored to meet the identified risks and needs of individual workplaces."

Workplace drug and alcohol policies should include access

to counselling, treatment services and also offer training for supervisors on how to refer employees for help.

"This will provide a pathway to treatment where a trained clinician can determine the program that is best for the employee," Pidd says.

Deputy Premier and Police Minister Liza Harvey says the use of meth in WA workplaces, as shown in CCI's new figures, is "very disturbing".

"Unfortunately, as meth is such an insidious drug, it is not limited to back alleys and an underground drug culture.

"As Police Minister, I can assure you WA Police remains committed to helping disrupt the supply of meth in WA."

In response to CCI's special investigation, Ms Harvey says WA police needed greater powers to disrupt the transport of meth into communities and towns.

"I am looking at developing legislation that would allow police to target vehicles in suspected drug routes such as interstate access points." ■

ICE-USING MANAGER TELLS HOW HE GETS AROUND YOUR DRUG TESTING REGIME

"Being in management, I've always known even roughly when testing is coming and so I'll just not use then, even for a couple of weeks prior. I have a number of ways of getting around the 'foolproof' system and I guess it's become a requirement for survival in my role, although I never set out intentionally to make this occur.

"Firstly, testing of senior management rarely occurs and I have been subject to only one test in the last two-and-a-bit years. Secondly, over the years you become friendly with the right people who funnily enough often partake, albeit as what I would term 'Weekend Warriors'. These people are probably a lot more common than even you or I are aware. Through connections or mutual acquaintances, I have a set of ears inside the current testing company. So in advance (usually a week or two) I will get a heads up there may be a random test and will either have an offsite appointment that particular day if I am concerned or have a break for a couple of weeks prior.

"Lastly if by an unfortunate turn of events I was subject to a test and failed, I would deny all knowledge, suggest the tests were mixed up somehow or that someone may have spiked a drink as I felt a bit funny at a party or pub a couple of days ago and was wondering why. Given my track record of delivering large commercial projects, I think I would have the backing of my senior management to have the testing facility prove otherwise." ■

HELP FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

Ten things you need to know about dealing with ice in your business

CARRIE COX AND GABRIELLE CAMPION

The addictive nature of ice and its rapid take-up put the drug beyond the scope of most existing workplace drug and alcohol policies. So if you think you're prepared for ice rearing its head in your business, you might need to think again.

"Even if you have a drug and alcohol policy in place, it may not be sufficient to deal with every situation relating to drug use and its effects at work," says CCI's CEO Deidre Willmott. "This is why a robust policy is critical, with all possible situations considered."

Willmott recounts a recent call from an employer who had terminated an employee who

had been absent from work for weeks with no explanation or contact. A few weeks later, the company's HR manager saw the ex-employee on a TV current affairs show being arrested for drug offences.

"When the employee realised he had been terminated, he came back to the workplace with a gun and demanded to speak to the HR manager," Willmott says.

"The HR manager bravely met him and told him in no uncertain terms that he was no longer employed – stating his TV appearance and the fact he hadn't been to work in months as their reasons.



"The ex-employee proceeded to bribe the HR manager with a bag of ice."

How to devise a robust policy

An effective workplace drug and alcohol policy should cover these 10 key issues:

- 1. Your overriding position.** Explicitly stating that drug use in the workplace and drug-affected behaviour have no place in your business is an excellent starting point for your drug and alcohol policy. Make it clear this is not about meeting legislative requirements but part of your core business.
- 2. Drug testing.** If being drug tested in any capacity is a condition of employment, this should be made very clear to employees up front – not just in the fine print or on page 126.
- 3. Framework.** You must outline the manner in which drug and/ or alcohol testing will be carried out (eg random, weekly, monthly).
- 4. Targets.** You must outline the specific drugs that may be tested for (eg illicit, prescription, synthetic).
- 5. Methods.** Clearly detail the type of testing that will occur (ie oral fluid, urine or both).
- 6.** Your business's impairment cut-off limits.
- 7.** Processes for managing positive/non-negative test results.
- 8. Duty of care.** Spell out both your duty of care as an employer and also your employees' duty of care. This section may include advice for workers who suspect and/or are worried that a colleague is working under the influence of drugs.
- 9. Workplace support.** Incorporating addiction education into your business's safety approach may prove a worthwhile investment. For the best advice and resources, visit Australia's National Research Centre on Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce development at nceta.flinders.edu.au
- 10. Further treatment.** Society's response to drug use can't be only punitive. Many addicts can recover with support. A full list of rehabilitation facilities in WA is available at adin.com.au ■

Ice: the facts

- ▶ **270,000** Australians currently use methamphetamine. At least **220,000** – or **81 per cent** – are employed.*
- ▶ Ice is the purest form of methamphetamine and can be snorted, injected or dissolved into alcohol.
- ▶ An ice high produces feelings of intense euphoria, exhilaration and increased arousal and activity. Users feel immediately alert, energised, talkative, happy, confident and powerful – the 'low' afterwards is very different.
- ▶ Physical effects of an ice high include dilated pupils, increased heart and breathing rate, reduced appetite and an increased sex drive.
- ▶ **2.5 million** work days are lost annually due to alcohol and other drug use – a cost of more than \$680 million to the Australian economy.
- ▶ CCI's Employee Relations Advice Centre can answer your questions about drug use in the workplace. The *CCI Employer's Guide to Managing Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace* also includes a comprehensive drug and alcohol policy you can download and customise. For more information, call (08) 9365 7660 or email advice@cciwa.com

* Source: National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

FORTESCUE TO POLICE: LET US HELP YOU

Only a united front can disrupt the supply of the drugs destroying our communities, writes Fortescue Chief Executive Nev Power

EXCLUSIVE

We know from intelligence shared by our police and security agencies that organised crime elements are targeting WA as a place to profit from dealing in drugs and we are calling for a tougher approach to cut supply to our communities.

As the beneficiaries of close cooperation with the law enforcement agencies, businesses like Fortescue have been able to take a hard line on drugs to protect our people and our operations.

But our concern is that, at least anecdotally, communities are not faring as well in this war on drugs and, in particular, the highly addictive and destructive methamphetamine known as 'ice'.

Recently Judge Philip McCann described WA's ice epidemic as the worst in the civilised world and both the National Ice Taskforce and Royal Flying Doctor Service have reported a strong correlation between remoteness and ice usage.

As a society, we need to consider what more can be done to tackle this problem at the source of supply. One frustration I experience is that businesses are prevented from sharing intelligence

with police which may otherwise assist in their efforts to curtail supply by better understanding the distribution networks.

Governments need to take real and measurable action to eradicate this blight on society and provide increased investment in regional drug rehabilitation and support services to help build stronger communities. The State Government's \$15 million two-year plan to tackle the local ice problem delivered in the 2016 Budget is a step in the right direction, and now a multi-faceted approach is needed.

Illegal drugs do not belong in the community, just as they do not belong in our workforce. The impacts of illegal drugs, particularly ice, are widespread – they are destructive to families, corrosive to communities and potentially lethal in the workplace. Drugs destroy the very fabric of our social cohesion, and we all have a responsibility to protect our family, our community and our workplace from this unnecessary evil.

As a company that places the highest priority on the health, safety and welfare of our people, we are committed to building stronger communities and recognise our responsibility to step up and join forces with others in the fight against drugs. We stand ready to work with State Government, community leaders, other businesses

and individuals, and commend the lead that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of WA is taking to bring together the combined strength of these stakeholders to tackle the challenge head on.

At Fortescue we have zero tolerance towards use or possession of illegal drugs. Anyone who uses or possesses illegal drugs on a Fortescue site is putting the safety of themselves and their mates at risk, which is completely unacceptable.

I am proud of our close partnership with WA Police and our proactive role in their industry-wide anti-drug operations, as well as our stringent policies and procedures on drugs and alcohol, which includes random drug and alcohol testing across all of our sites and the use of sniffer dogs to ensure incoming crews are protected from illegal drugs.

Fortescue is a company guided by our embedded values and we take very seriously our vow to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Our 'Speak Up' program empowers our people to take responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and their mates by reporting concerns about the use of alcohol or illegal drugs, either by themselves or their mates, in a fair, balanced and confidential manner.

If an employee voluntarily comes forward with a drug problem, they are placed on leave and offered a range of support services. Before that employee returns to work they are required to provide a confirmed negative result.

I urge all businesses to take a zero tolerance approach to drugs in the workplace, while providing access to support services to help users remove drugs from their life and have the opportunity for a fresh start.

The health and safety of our families, our communities and our workplaces depends on all of us taking a strong, united stand to rid society of illegal drugs. ■



REAL STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE

Each case is different, but a thread of concern runs throughout

**CARRIE COX AND
GABRIELLE CAMPION**

“
**EMPLOYERS
HAVE TOLD
CCI THEY’VE
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SUSPECTED
ICE USERS**
”

Calls to CCI from business owners dealing with apparent ice use in their workplace are often emotion-laden, ranging from mounting concern about employees they genuinely care about through to descriptions of powderkeg situations that compromise safety on site.

Some employers have told CCI they’ve been too frightened to confront suspected ice users in the workplace due to their aggressive and erratic behaviour.

One employer reluctantly terminated a high-performing, valued employee because their positive meth result contravened the company’s drug and alcohol policy. Another called because it had come to their attention that an employee who was uncharacteristically under-performing was using ice and their colleagues were concerned for their wellbeing.

Alcohol and drug policies come into the firing line too. One CCI Member was aware that 90 per cent of his workforce smoked marijuana with little effect on their work. When he began to realise a number of his

employees were also using ice, he was faced with a difficult decision – the ice users were a danger on site, but blanket drug testing risked him being left with just 10 per cent of his staff.

Another interesting case crossed the team’s desk last year when an employer expressed concern about an employee’s sobriety. The employee was a recovering addict and had been prescribed methadone to manage his addiction, meaning a certain level of positivity in drug tests was expected to account for the prescribed methadone. Initial tests came back negative, however as months went on follow-up tests came back with levels of drugs other than the prescribed methadone. The employee had to be terminated for non-compliance.

Unfortunately, cases don’t always involve adults and employers must tread cautiously when they are dealing with minors. One employer described a tricky situation in which an under-18 trainee tested positive for drugs, and ice was suspected. Under the traineeship contract, the employer had a duty of care



to the trainee but wasn’t sure how best to proceed – should the parents be informed? Should they have known about the test in the first place? Is age immaterial?

Worried about a staff member? Need help drafting your drug and alcohol policy? Contact CCI’s Employee Relations consulting team on (08) 9365 7730 ■

Ice at work: what to look for

The most common signs of recent ice use are:

- ▶ extreme tiredness or blurred vision
- ▶ mood swings
- ▶ paranoia, depression, irritability or agitation
- ▶ difficulty concentrating, poor performance
- ▶ trouble making decisions and planning
- ▶ unexplained patterns of absenteeism or lateness
- ▶ lack of concern about otherwise serious matters
- ▶ poor appetite, palpitations, infected injection sites or lesions

‘PHIL’: ‘I know my own triggers and I know when to stop’

“I’m a project manager on Tier 1 and Tier 2 building sites in the city. I’ve smoked ice on and off continuously since my first try about 15 years ago. Eight years ago I started to smoke in the mornings too.

“Ice gives me massively increased alertness. I get twice as much done. I outperform. I can honestly say that my ice use doesn’t affect my family [Phil is married with two children] or my work. Either you control the drug or the drug controls you – and I can manage my use. I know my own emotional triggers and I know when to stop. At the most

it’s got to being an \$1800-a-week habit and that’s when I know to pull my head in.

“On the low, yes, there’s a week when it hurts physically ... you get the sweats at times, you’re a little depressed, you eat too much, but you keep going – it’s not pleasant but you manage it.

“In my social and professional circles, ice is prolific – doctors, nurses, engineers, lawyers. They’re not ditch diggers. It’s a drug right across all the boundaries. For social users, it’s a pressure release. I still source it through old school contacts and associates and they’re not

dodgy people operating in dirty labs at the back of their house. They’re professionals with families.

“I’ve got rid of workers on my site for obvious ice use – uncontrolled behaviour, aggressive behaviour. They can’t control it. You have to take responsibility for your actions, and I do. Self-awareness is the key to managing ice use.”

Editor: *A couple of days after this interview, Phil wanted to qualify some of his earlier statements – he was in a very different mood.*

“My addiction is not something I am proud of (it’s

actually something I have clouded in secrecy over the years and) if I am honest about the way I feel, it’s an embarrassment. I see it as a weakness in my character, a flaw in the armour, so to speak.

“Regular use of any drug is something I would like to think I am finally outgrowing, even just for the probable health concerns that I imagine would eventually catch up with me after long-term sustained use. But I’d like to think I could still use it for special occasions – a good friend’s birthday, a trip away with mates.” ■

‘DAMIAN’: ‘The monster just gets bigger and bigger’

‘Damian’ and his wife run a trucking company employing 10 people. Two years ago, Damian’s addiction to ice very nearly cost him his business and his family.



“It’s very commonly used in our industry because it helps keep you awake on long drives. It made an immediate positive difference for me. But then it fast becomes a habit. The monster just gets bigger and bigger. It’s a very evil drug.

“Within a couple of years I had a \$5000-a-week habit. It cost me a small fortune. Not a small fortune – a huge fortune – all of it through the business. It gets to the point where you need to start dealing yourself to afford it, but I was using so much that it became hard to deal; I used it all.

“My wife saw a thing on *A Current Affair* about George O’Neil’s naltrexone implants and she rang Fresh Start the next day. The implant worked straight away for me, but I’ve since gone back for a few more.

I’ve been off ice for a while now and I believe that’s how it will stay. Now I just do the job normally – if you’re tired, you have to sleep.

“I think our industry is starting to get cleaner now that they’re drug testing all drivers. There needs to be more education about just how bad this drug is and what it can do to your life. It’s a hugely different ballgame to any other drug. In my case, it made me a very angry person – I developed a serious anger problem and that made a huge impact on my family and my work.

“I can tell when other drivers are using it. It produces certain mannerisms – agitation, difficulty concentrating. If they’re on a low, they’re likely to be very lethargic and angry.” ■

‘SHAUN’: ‘If I hadn’t sought treatment, I’d be dead’

“I started using ice in a sort of ordinary, socially acceptable way – just smoking pipes with friends. I could have a small amount and still be able to sleep that night. It was very manageable and enjoyable for about six months or so, but then I needed more. I started injecting and from there things quickly spiralled out of control.

“You hear about people who say they can manage their ice use long term, but they are the exceptions rather than the rule. They’re playing Russian roulette with their lives. During the five years I was using, I didn’t think I was addicted. I thought I had control of my usage and could stop when I wanted to. It wasn’t until I actually tried to stop, after the birth of my daughter, that I realised I couldn’t.

“I was a computer programmer and a property developer. But you need a really clear mind to do programming for a living and so that quickly went by the wayside. Then as I started to have to spend more and more of my money on ice, the property development side of my career also collapsed.

“In the last nine months of my addiction, before I hit rock bottom and sought help, I went through \$350,000 of cash and about \$1 million worth of opportunities I’ll never get back. I lost my family [Shaun has since regained full custody of his youngest daughter, now six]. I was sitting all alone in a wrecked house.

“I know for sure I would be dead now if I hadn’t had [naltrexone] treatment. It saved my life. The

implant gives you a window of time – for me it was 5-6 months – where I could do proper rehabilitation without having to manage withdrawal at the same time. And I did intensive rehab – some people go once a week to counselling; I went every day. It was really hard, but I was very determined. I’m a grandfather now and I have a lot to live for.” ■



“**I WENT THROUGH \$350,000 OF CASH AND ABOUT \$1 MILLION WORTH OF OPPORTUNITIES I’LL NEVER GET BACK**”

How to ice-proof your business

1. Educate

Develop and implement a robust drug and alcohol policy that is suited to your business. Ensure all staff are educated on the policy and that regular refresher training is provided. Appoint a guardian of the policy to ensure it is reviewed and updated regularly. Make sure any procedures outlined in the policy are consistently applied. Management and staff charged with enforcing the policy should be provided with separate, tailored training and support.

2. Define

Ensure the policy clearly defines “drug” (ie illicit, prescription, synthetic etc) and appropriate cut-off levels are identified. For some industries and roles this may be zero. Explicitly outline employee rights and obligations regarding drug use and drug-affected behaviour in the workplace. Detail any testing processes, include how you will test, what you’ll test for and the actions to follow a non-negative result.

3. Plan

Source a reputable provider to undertake testing, either on or off site. Put mechanisms in place to minimise the ability for staff to provide fake samples or switch samples. Determine how you’ll safely get an employee home following a non-negative test result. Consider when to undertake a confirmatory test and a follow-up test to ensure the employee’s system is clear of the substance before return to work. Consider temporary cover where an employee is stood down due to a non-negative result – depending on the drug and the length of time it takes to exit the employee’s system, this could be weeks.

CCI’s Employee Relations Advice Centre can answer your questions about drug use in the workplace. For more information, call (08) 9365 7660 or email advice@cciwa.com

TACKLING THE ICE SCOURGE IS NOW EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

WA uses more ice than any other state – and it's destroying lives, writes Federal Justice Minister Michael Keenan



Sadly, in WA and across our nation, the growing addiction to this mind-eating, personality-distorting, life-ending drug is causing family violence, unemployment, car accidents – putting nurses, doctors, ambulance officers and police at risk – and it is fuelling crimes such as burglary, robbery, theft, assault and even murder.

We know that proportionally, Australia uses more methamphetamine than almost any other country in the world, and in WA its usage is higher than any other state.

That is why tackling the ice scourge is not solely an issue for law enforcement – it's for everyone: governments, law enforcement, agencies, health, education, industry, non-government organisations, community leaders, parents, colleagues, teachers, peers and the addicts themselves.

The final report of the Coalition Government-commissioned National Ice Taskforce found the use of ice is particularly prevalent in industries such as wholesale trade, construction, mining, hospitality and among tradespeople.

During consultations conducted by the National Ice Taskforce, the use of ice in workplaces was raised as a significant issue. Ice use by fly in/fly out workers was also raised as a serious concern that is not only impacting the workplace but surrounding communities as well.

Of great concern, the Taskforce found 2.3 per cent of the Australian workforce used some form of methamphetamines in the past 12 months.

The Coalition Government is committed to addressing this threat by ensuring we have well-designed and flexible treatment services, including detoxification, counselling, rehabilitation and follow-up services. This will be achieved through our major investment of an additional \$300 million over four years to improve treatment, after-care, education, prevention, support and community engagement – on top of the up to \$310 million already allocated for treatment services.

This commitment will also build on the significant investments we've already made in policing our borders and our streets to block the supply of ice, through increased international cooperation, enhanced intelligence sharing and better controls of the precursor chemicals used to make ice.

The Government also recently released the Australian

Crime Commission's Precursor Chemicals Information Resource (PCIR) – a tool designed to educate industry about what indicators to look out for in relation to the diversion of chemicals from the legal market to the illegal market, which in turn will assist law enforcement in combating the illicit manufacture of drugs.

The chemicals and methods in the PCIR are those which have either been directly linked to illicit manufacturing events, or which are considered viable and likely to be used in a clandestine laboratory environment, posing significant risks to the community. For example, for every kilo of pure methylamphetamine produced, between 10 and 20 kilos of chemicals are used and up to 10 kilos of hazardous and toxic waste is created.

The PCIR is another excellent example of Government and industry working together to harden the environment against organised crime groups and illicit drugs, because we know that to help people stop using ice, we need to get the right mix.

That is why we are making sure the right type of help is available, services are effectively targeted and our frontline workers, including law enforcement, health professionals, industry and educators, have the tools they need to combat this scourge. ■

“
AUSTRALIA USES MORE METHAMPHETAMINE THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD
”

YOUNG TRADIES OFFERED ICE

A recent case prompts a warning from construction body



Fair Work Building and Construction (FWBC) last month warned that young workers – including apprentices and second- and third-year tradespeople – are being encouraged to take ice and methamphetamines on a private building project.

FWBC has notified the relevant law enforcement and workplace health and safety agencies.

Contractors covered by the *Building Code 2013* have responsibilities in relation to the management of drugs and alcohol on all building projects.

"For private sites, contractors are required to have a work health safety and rehabilitation system that shows the way in which drug and alcohol issues in the workplace will be managed to help ensure that no person attending site to perform building work does so under the influence of alcohol or other drugs," FWBC said in a statement.

"For sites that meet the threshold for Commonwealth funding, mandatory random drug and alcohol testing is required at least monthly."

The *Building Code 2013* requires particular substances to be tested for, including methamphetamines and ice – minimum requirements are set out in Schedule 3.

FWBC encouraged contractors, workers and others who are aware of building sites with drug and alcohol issues to report them to the organisation and other relevant authorities.

Have information to share with FWBC? Contact the hotline on 1800 003 338. You may remain anonymous if you wish. ■

METH DEPENDENCE MORE THAN DOUBLED IN PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 24 BETWEEN 2009 AND 2014

National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre, February 2016.

The typical ice user

NCETA's Dr Pidd says the typical ice user is male, single, heterosexual, lives in a major city and is aged 25-35. "In the workforce they are likely to be blue collar, trades or skilled workers," he says.

Seventy per cent of ice users use the drug on average less than once a week. These people will often be able to hide their drug use, however if use leads to addiction, the effects will usually spill into the workplace.

"An addict is more likely to use at work and risk safety due to intoxication and is more likely to suffer behavioural and psychological problems while at work," Dr Pidd says.

Symptoms are more likely to become more obvious with increased use of the drug.

YOU SUSPECT AN EMPLOYEE MAY BE AFFECTED BY ICE AT WORK – WHAT NEXT?

1. Act – don't wait

Unlike other drugs, ice can produce unpredictable, aggressive, paranoid and even psychotic behaviour. The immediate safety of everyone in your workplace – including the affected employee – should be paramount. Immediate removal of the affected employee from the work environment is critical. Remember: both you and your employees are legally bound by duties of care.

2. Test

Carry out drug testing in accordance with your company's drug and alcohol policy. While waiting for test results, the employee should be stood down with pay. On receipt of a non-negative test result, a confirmatory test should be undertaken.

3. Arrange leave

Where it is confirmed the employee is not fit for work due to the effects of drugs, they may be able to access personal leave.

4. Follow through

In some cases, disciplinary action may be appropriate, up to and including dismissal. Professional counselling or other support mechanisms may also be a strategy you wish to look into. One CCI Member contacted ERAC for advice about two employees who'd tested positive for ice. As a small business, they were valued employees and the owners preferred to go down the rehabilitation road rather than sack the employees, a decision that ultimately proved successful. ■



HOPE FOR ADDICTS

WA doctor George O'Neil offers a controversial treatment for drug users – and ice has tripled his 'business'



CARRIE COX

“
**ICE
ADDICTION IN
PARTICULAR
HAS BECOME
A MASSIVE
PROBLEM IN
THIS STATE**
”

Unfortunately, Perth doctor George O'Neil's business is booming.

The founder of the Fresh Start Recovery House pioneered treating opioid addiction with Naltrexone implants about 16 years ago. But his original focus on heroin addiction has been overshadowed in recent years by ice.

"Ice addiction in particular has become a massive problem in this state, and more and more people are finding out that this treatment has a good success rate," O'Neil says.

At his Subiaco clinic, patients wait in rows of plastic chairs to

see him as they try to end their dependency on ice, heroin, cocaine or alcohol. There aren't enough chairs to match demand. More than half of the people there on any day will be seeking treatment specifically for ice addiction.

Many of O'Neil's patients come to him after "managing" their ice use for an extended period.

"For a long time they feel very confident about their habit – they might use week on, week off, and in their minds there's no problem. They're not fully addicted," he says. "But it's rarely sustainable and after a while it's usually their family or a spouse who bring things to a head. They're the ones who notice that half the family's income is disappearing or that their loved one is in a different zone most of the time – an unnatural state of communication without context. In reality, these users are sitting ducks for losing everything."

O'Neil estimates he's treated 10,500 users and addicts since opening Fresh Start. The last two years have seen a 350 per cent increase in demand for naltrexone treatment and Fresh Start's associated counselling services.

Most of his patients work in manual labour roles, but O'Neil says he's treated doctors and lawyers too.

"Some people can use ice at low doses and keep the doses low and function well – some would say they function even better than without ice," O'Neil says.

"But then that \$50 a day habit becomes \$200 and then \$400 and then \$600 – once you get to \$1000 a day, you need to be dealing as well as holding down a job."

O'Neil also runs a recovery facility in Northam, numerous halfway houses and a company specialising in the development of medical products and research (Go Medical Industries Pty Ltd). He treats many people who will likely never be able to pay off their treatment.

O'Neil believes the business sector should get behind the Fresh Start program now that ice use is pervading workplaces and spilling into new areas.

"I think successful rehab is a better option than simply sacking people," he says. "Better for business, the community and families."

freshstart.org.au ■



WHAT BUSINESS WANTS



CCI joins with Nev Power in standing ready to work with the State Government, the community, businesses and individuals to join forces in the fight against ice and other drugs. We advocate that there are real industrial relations reforms that could empower employers to protect their employees and their businesses more effectively.

CCI WA is calling for:

- ▶ Amendment of the Fair Work Act to stop the Fair Work Commission and unions putting up barriers against workplace drug testing and interfering with drug testing methodology. Ice in the workplace threatens the safety of all workers and the community – privacy concerns must come second to the more immediate need for workplace safety and employers should have the discretion to choose which drug testing method is most suitable for their industry.
- ▶ Amendment of the Fair Work Act to recognise the obligation employees have to their employer and their co-workers. Conventional wisdom currently says that what a worker does outside of work is their own business, but this is not the case (particularly with ice) when the employee is impaired in the workplace and is a serious threat to the safety of others.
- ▶ Empowerment for businesses to remove workers outright for serious drug-use breaches. The unfair dismissal laws' current focus on procedural requirements means that businesses can be stopped terminating an employee because of a procedural error. So, if an employee is caught red-handed on ice, the employee can be reinstated – despite the breach – if there was an error in the dismissal procedure.
- ▶ Stronger prevention programs. Governments must do more to support education and rehabilitation programs. Workplace reform can only go so far – ice is a multi-faceted social problem that must be treated at its source in the community.

COULD ICE BE IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

CCI's Employee Relations Consulting team is able to assist employers with drug and alcohol concerns in their workplace. Our experienced consultants can provide;

- ▶ advice on managing employees with substance abuse issues
- ▶ assist with resolving disputes arising from these issues
- ▶ mitigate issues through reviewing or drafting effective policies, contracts or enterprise agreements and;
- ▶ training with all employees, including specialised training for managers and supervisors.

To find out how we can assist your business visit cciwa.com, call (08) 9365 7730 or email erconsulting@cciwa.com.

NEED THE TOOLS TO ICE-PROOF YOUR BUSINESS?

The CCI Employer's Guide to Managing Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace

The CCI Employers' Guide to Managing Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace offers practical information on how to introduce drug and alcohol testing at work, create and implement drug and alcohol policies, current drug testing methods, performance management, termination due to drug and alcohol possession or use at work, up-to-date legislation on drug and alcohol use in the workplace and much more. The guide also contains a comprehensive drug and alcohol policy and will be regularly updated in line with legislative changes and/or key decisions by tribunals and court.

The CCI Employer's Guide to Managing Privacy and Surveillance at Work

The CCI's Employers' Guide to Privacy and Surveillance at Work outlines the various types of surveillance devices that may be utilised in and about the workplace. The Guide considers the practical implications of introducing surveillance devices at work, managing employee personal surveillance devices, how surveillance devices may be used for performance management purposes, general privacy principles at work including storage of personal information, regulating email and internet usage at work and emerging case law on social media usage both in and out of work hours including when and how this can be managed. The guide contains pro-forma template documents including a privacy policy and checklists for implementing surveillance devices and will be regularly updated in line with legislative changes and/or key decisions by tribunals and court.

Special offer – purchase both guides now and get 40% off.

Member price \$156

Non-member price \$294

To find out how you can receive this offer contact CCI's Employee Relations Advice Centre on (08) 9365 7660 or email advice@cciwa.com