

## 2015 Drug Policy Modelling Program (DPMP) Symposium

‘Trends and Solutions’

Customs House, Circular Quay, Sydney

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 9:30am to 4:30pm

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| 9:00-9:30am   | <b>Registration</b>  |
| 9:30-9:35am   | <b>Welcome</b>   |
| 9:35-10:50am  | <p><b>Session 1: Three hot topics</b></p> <p>In the opening session, we consider three current hot policy topics: treatment for methamphetamine; the extent of the drug problem (under-reporting in the household survey); and medicinal cannabis.</p>   |
|               | <p><b>Evidence based service system design for methamphetamine users: Using what we know to improve treatment. A/Prof Nicole Lee, The LeeJenn Group and NCETA</b></p> <p>Methamphetamine poses particular challenges for treatment. This paper summarises how we can improve service and treatment responses based on what we know from research on methamphetamine trends and effects.</p> <p><b>General population surveys: is there systematic under-reporting? Dr Jenny Chalmers, DPMP</b></p> <p>This paper presents new data on the ways in which the National Drug Strategy Household Survey may result in under-reporting of certain drugs, and possible reasons why.</p> <p><b>Medicinal cannabis: a review of findings in relation to policy impacts. Prof Alison Ritter, DPMP</b></p> <p>This paper will summarise the existing published USA literature on the effects of medicinal cannabis laws on cannabis use, driving, treatment seeking and other relevant policy outcomes.</p>  |
| 10:50-11:15am | <b>Morning tea</b>   |
| 11:15-12:30pm | <p><b>Session 2: Laws and law enforcement</b></p> <p>Laws and law enforcement underpin much drug policy. In this second session, three papers concerned with Australian drug laws, policing and law enforcement will be presented, across diverse research methods.</p>  |
|               | <p><b>Police diversion programs for cannabis: A cost effectiveness analysis. Dr Marian Shanahan, DPMP</b></p> <p>This paper outlines the findings from a recent evaluation of cannabis diversion schemes in Australia and their cost-effectiveness. These results provide added evidence for the continuation of diversion but raise questions as to whether therapeutic benefits could be further enhanced.</p> <p><b>Drug traffickers using ‘portfolios of trade’: Estimating the scale and implications of poly-drug trafficking at the Australian border. Dr Caitlin Hughes, DPMP</b></p> <p>International law enforcement agencies have suggested that there is a rise in poly-drug trafficking: drug traffickers choosing to trade in more than one illicit drug at the same/similar time. This paper presents the first estimates of the scale of poly-drug trafficking at the Australian border; and explores the strategic benefits and costs of this.</p> <p><b>Laws prohibiting peer distribution of injecting equipment in Australia: A critical analysis of their effects. Kari Lancaster, DPMP</b></p> <p>This paper critically considers the material-discursive ‘effects’ of laws prohibiting peer distribution of needles and syringes. By analysing the <i>discursive</i>, <i>subjectification</i> and <i>lived effects</i> of these laws, we suggest that there is a need for timely policy and legislative</p> |

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|              | reform in New South Wales and other Australian jurisdictions.  |
| 12:30–1:30pm | <b>Lunch</b>   |
| 1:30–2:45pm  | <p><b>Session 3: Harm reduction</b></p> <p>Australia has previously led the way in relation to harm reduction policies. Peer administered naloxone and drug-checking (pill testing) are common harm reduction programs. This session offers new research insights in harm reduction.</p>   |
|              | <p><b>The evaluation of the ACT take-home naloxone program, and its broader implications. <i>Dr Anna Olsen &amp; David McDonald, ANU</i></b></p> <p>Australia's first take-home naloxone program commenced in the ACT in 2012. We conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of the program, focussing on implementation while attending to a range of intermediate outcomes as well. In this presentation we will describe our methods and key findings, and highlight implications for other jurisdictions, settings and population groups.</p> <p><b>Testing the content and purity of illicit drugs: does it reduce harm? A literature review. <i>Dr Monica Barratt, DPMP</i></b></p> <p>In this paper, the existing published literature on the effectiveness, impacts and outcomes associated with drug checking programs will be reviewed and summarised, providing the basis for advancing policy in this area in Australia.</p> <p><b>Advocacy: insights from the field. <i>Dr Will Tregoning; Unharm</i></b></p> <p>Reflecting on experience in advocating for harm reduction and drug law reform, and on the history of harm reduction in Australia, this paper considers the limitations and promises of incremental and transformative visions of change.</p> |
| 2:45–3:15pm  | <b>Afternoon tea</b>   |
| 3:15–4:15pm  | <p><b>Session 4: Alcohol</b></p> <p>While much research focusses on illicit drugs, we know that alcohol remains one of the biggest harm-related drugs in Australia. We should not lose sight of the importance of better alcohol policies. The two papers in the session examine alcohol policies.</p>   |
|              | <p><b>Understanding trends in Australian alcohol consumption - an age, period, cohort model. <i>Dr Michael Livingston, DPMP</i></b></p> <p>This paper examines trends in Australian alcohol consumption over the last twenty years and finds that shifts in drinking between generations explain most of the changes seen in overall consumption.</p> <p><b>Lockouts and Last Drinks: The impact of the January 2014 liquor licence reforms on assaults in NSW, Australia. <i>Dr Patricia Menéndez, Dr Don Weatherburn, Prof Kyp Kypri and Jacqueline Fitzgerald</i></b></p> <p>The January 2014 NSW Liquor Licensing reforms appear to have reduced the incidence of assault in the Kings Cross and CBD entertainment precincts. The extent to which this is due to a change in alcohol consumption or a change in the number of people visiting the Kings Cross and Sydney Entertainment Precincts remains unknown.</p>  |
| 4:15–4:30pm  | <b>Summary, reflections and close</b>  |