



NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE BUREAU
Joint Operation of Customs, Health & Police



Wastewater Pilot Programme

Wastewater Pilot Programme – March 2017 Update

We know that drug use causes significant harm in our communities so in December 2016 New Zealand Police began a wastewater pilot programme to get an accurate assessment of the prevalence of drug use in the community.

The results will be primarily used by the National Drug Intelligence Bureau within Police to:

- inform treatment and enforcement strategies
- measure the effectiveness of education and enforcement interventions
- make comparisons with international data.

Wastewater collected from Christchurch and Auckland's Rosedale treatment plant is tested by the Institute of Environment Science and Research for methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, alpha-PVP (a-PVP) and MDMA.

The \$220,000 pilot programme, funded through the Proceeds of Crime fund, will assess the value of the information obtained before considering expanding testing to other areas.

National Drug Intelligence Bureau

The National Drug Intelligence Bureau (NDIB) is a multi-agency intelligence unit, comprised of representatives from the New Zealand Customs Service, the Ministry of Health and New Zealand Police.

It provides information to a range of workgroups within Police and to a wide range of government agencies including New Zealand Customs Service, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and Department of Corrections.

The NDIB provides authoritative strategic intelligence and advice on illicit drugs, potentially illicit drugs and precursors, to support reduction in drug-related harm through supply control and demand reduction measures.

NDIB receives and shares information with overseas law enforcement jurisdictions and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The NDIB has reporting responsibilities on behalf of New Zealand to the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board.

Release of Results

Data is collected from the wastewater facilities for one week every month and will be reported publicly on a quarterly basis through this report. The latest update is available on the Police website at www.police.govt.nz.

As the programme pilot began in December 2016, the initial testing will be used to form a baseline to inform the future analysis of results.



The Results

The following tables outline the key results for the three rounds of testing.

Testing Site: Christchurch	Total Grams per Week		
	December 2016	January 2017	February 2017
Methamphetamine	731	458	798
Cocaine	Not detected	6	25
a-PVP	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected
MDMA	261	142	120
Heroin	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected

Testing Site: Auckland	Total Grams per Week		
	December 2016	January 2017	February 2017
Methamphetamine	734	648	730
Cocaine	92	40	49
a-PVP	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected
MDMA	111	97	51
Heroin	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected

Not detected means the concentration of the drug or metabolite in the wastewater sample was below the method limit of detection.

Commentary

With only three rounds of testing having taken place to date, it is too early to offer an interpretation about what these results represent for New Zealand's drug using environment.

However, the results do indicate that a-PVP and Heroin are not being found in these sites during testing which, at this initial stage of testing, is encouraging to see. The absence of these drugs will not mean they will no longer be tested for, rather if either begin to appear in future testing it will give authorities an early warning that these are emerging.

The current focus of the programme is to establish a baseline of what consumption looks like among the population covered by the two testing sites. The establishment of a normalised baseline will then allow both law enforcement and health agencies to identify any increases or decreases, and tailor their responses and resourcing appropriately.