

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
MEDIA RELEASE

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**ADDRESSING METHAMPHETAMINE USE:
MORE FUNDING REQUIRED**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) is supporting calls from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) for increased funding for both the prevention and treatment of methamphetamine use. A paper released by the AMA today highlights the growing challenges for public health and related community services that are struggling to cope with methamphetamine use.

“The AMA has said that more funding is required for both treatment and prevention programs. In other words, we need to focus on both the fence at the top of the cliff and the ambulance at the bottom. The challenge is to arrest rates of methamphetamine use through education and prevention initiatives, while ensuring access to appropriate treatment for those who are already dependent,” said PHA Chief Executive Officer, Michael Moore.

“Australian hospitals faced a more than fourfold increase in the number of episodes of drug-induced psychosis over the 10 years to 2004. This is not just a concern for drug users and their families – it also presents a new set of challenges for workers in both the health and community service sectors.

“The AMA’s suggestions are consistent with the Australian Government’s National Drug Strategy, which emphasises a comprehensive approach that includes supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction strategies. They are also in line with the particular priority areas outlined for the Strategy from 2004-2009, which include identifying and responding to emerging trends.

“The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released a report on the weekend identifying a recent reduction in methamphetamine use in Australia. This is encouraging but it’s certainly not time to rest on our laurels. Current rates of use are still causing significant concern for families and the broader community.

“The PHA wholeheartedly supports the AMA’s calls for increased funding to address rates of methamphetamine use in Australia,” said Mr Moore.

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