

## The Australian (illicit) drug policy timeline: 1985-2013

The Australian (illicit) drug policy timeline provides a list of key events, policy and legislative changes that have occurred in Australia between 1985 and February 28 2013. Events are listed by jurisdiction, at the national and state/ territory level. All events added in the last six months are highlighted in **blue**.

Here we list events in **New South Wales only**. For events in other jurisdictions please see the relevant timeline.

DPMP will continue to update the timeline every June and December. Please feel free to email through any comments or suggested inclusions.

### Suggested citation:

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| 2013 | Nineteen individuals, including the national president of the Hells Angels, the vice president of the Rebels and other high-ranking members of the Comancheros motorcycle gang were arrested following a 21 month investigation into the supply of drugs, guns and explosives to organised crime groups within NSW. The operation, known as Strike Force Alistair, was led by the NSW Police Force Organised Crime Squad and the NSW Crime Commission, with assistance from the Gangs Squad and is one of the biggest operations in the state's history. Also seized were pistols, rifles, ammunition, counterfeit cash, 2 clandestine laboratories and an estimated \$6 million worth of drugs (Mar).   |
| 2012 | <p>NSW Legislative Assembly Legal Affairs Committee launched: "Inquiry into law reform issues regarding synthetic drugs." The inquiry sought to examine law reform issues regarding the prohibition of synthetic drugs and to consider the adequacy of current NSW legislation. Submissions were received from Feb-Apr (Feb 16). Former NSW Health Minister, John Della Bosca, said the 'war on drugs' has failed, &amp; called for another drug summit to reassess Australia's approach to drug policy (Apr). The NSW Youth Drug and Alcohol Court was axed. NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, said the program was too expensive. The closure occurred without consultation (Jul 1).</p> <p>The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, tabled the NSW Law Reform Commission's report on the Bail Act. Of note, the report outlined there had been many reversals of the presumption of bail for drug trafficking offences. Recommendations of the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Bail Act should be drafted in plain English language, so as to be readily understandable, and with a clear and logical structure;</li> <li>• The scheme of presumptions, exceptions and exceptional circumstances in the current legislation should be replaced with a uniform presumption in favour of release applicable to all cases except those covered by an entitlement to release &amp; appeal.</li> <li>• The authority must consider: (a) The entitlement of every person in a free society to liberty and (b) The presumption of innocence.</li> <li>• In decisions on bail, a person must not be detained unless a custodial sentence is likely (Jun).</li> </ul> <p>NSW drug education unit abolished (Jun).</p> <p>The NSW Liberals &amp; Nationals Government announced in the 2012-13 Budget they will expand prisoner rehabilitation programs including through the new Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment program (Jun).</p> <p>The NSW Liberals &amp; Nationals Government announced that the Grafton Correctional Centre, a minimum and medium security prison on the far north coast of NSW, will be downsized (from 243 to 64 inmates) to become a transient and remand centre (Jun).</p> <p>Mental Health Act Review Discussion Paper released with submissions invited until Dec 2012 (Sep).</p> <p>Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Kings Cross and Railways Drug Detection) Bill 2012 adopted. This authorised the use by police officers of dogs for general drug detection (without warrant) on the streets and other public places in the Kings Cross precinct (Oct 29).</p> <p>Inquiry commenced by a Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee into "Drug and alcohol treatment": evaluating current polices with a particular focus on deterrence, treatment and rehabilitation (Nov).</p> <p>Inquiry commenced by a Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee into "The use of cannabis for medical purposes". Key issues include the efficacy and safety of using cannabis for medical purposes; if and how cannabis should be supplied for medical use; the legal implications and issues and any other related matters. A total of 122 submissions were received. The inquiry is due to report in May 2013 (Nov).</p> <p>NSW HIV Strategy 2012-2015 adopted. As part of this the NSW Coalition Government committed to expand Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) access. Key strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more outlets for NSP distribution</li> <li>• more automatic dispensing machines that allow 24hr access &amp;</li> <li>• permitting people who obtain equipment from NSP outlets to distribute that equipment to peers without criminal penalties (Dec).</li> </ul> |

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| 2011 | <p>NSW Premier Kristina Keneally opened the state's second Drug Court in Toronto, citing the success of the Paramatta drug court. A third drug court was promised if Labor won re-election (Mar).</p> <p>New Liberal Premier Barry O Farrell elected (28 Mar).</p> <p>New report released by the NSW Auditor-General: "Effectiveness of cautioning for Minor Cannabis Offences". Key conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 39,099 people cautioned.</li> <li>• Cautioned people reoffended less than those charged.</li> </ul> <p>Yet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth were less likely to be cautioned in 2009-10 than 2000-01</li> <li>• Huge variation in caution rates between police commands e.g. 74% in Eastern suburbs vs. 26% in Parramatta.</li> </ul> <p>Recommended reviewing barriers to cautioning, particularly for young offenders (Apr).</p> <p>New crime squad will be established on Sydney Harbour to target drug trafficking and organized criminal through NSW ports. A key motivator was declining levels of inspections by Australian Customs and Border Control: just 3.6% of shipping containers over the last 12 months. Operation Polaris, led by Detective Superintendent Peter McErlain will comprise 25 NSW Police officers, 15 AFP agents, and operatives from the NSW and Australian Crime Commissions (May).</p> <p>Mental Health Minister Kevin Humphries made headlines when he was photographed with a synthetic cannabinoid, Kronic, on Oxford Street: "Why is this MP buying a bag of weed?" The Minister highlighted concerns the product could have a potency up to 100 times greater than marijuana and cause hallucinations and psychosis (14 Jun).</p> <p>NSW Government announced ban on the sale and use of synthetic cannabinoids including Kronic, Spice, Kaos Voodoo, Mango and Northern Lights. From 8 July 2011 cannabinoids will be listed under Schedule 1 of the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (along with cannabis and heroin etc) and require retailers and consumers to arrange for safe destruction of all supplies (28 June).</p> <p>Former assistant director investigations for the NSW Crime Commission, Mark Standen, was found guilty of conspiring to import and supply 300kg of pseudoephedrine and conspiring to pervert the course of justice. During the trial Crown prosecutor Tim Game, SC, alleged that given thirty years of involvement in law enforcement agencies, including Australian Customs, Australian Federal Police and intimate involvement in gathering intelligence on drug syndicates and money laundering, it was harder to imagine a 'greater breach of trust'. He was later sentenced to 22 years imprisonment: HR v Standen [2011] NSWSC 1422 (8 December 2011). (Aug and Dec).</p> <p>The finding that Mark Standen was involved in organized crime sparked renewed calls for a Royal Commission of the NSW Crime Commission (Aug).</p> <p>NSW Police Minister Mike Gallacher rejected calls for a full Royal Commission, but established a special commission of inquiry into the NSW Crime Commission to review the commission's structure and accountability (Aug).</p> <p>NSW 2021 plan released. NSW 2021 is the 10 year strategic plan setting immediate priorities for action and guiding resource allocation in conjunction with the NSW Budget. Key priority actions include: establish dedicated metropolitan drug treatment facilities focused on treatment and rehabilitation; encourage greater use of non-custodial punishment for less serious offenders and create availability and access to diversionary program; review treatment and intervention programs to identify ways to increase completion rates; improve the way government agencies share information to deliver integrated services and management of offenders; assist in diverting people with mental health problems out of the criminal justice system and into services which meet their needs (Sep).</p> <p>Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the New South Wales Crime Commission released. The report by retired judge David Patten found no evidence that any members are engaged in criminal activity, but concluded that the existing accountability mechanisms were inadequate. Key recommendations included that an Inspector be appointed to oversee the NSW Crime Commission, ensure compliance with the law, assess the effectiveness of procedures and deal with complaints of misconduct (Nov).</p> <p>Attorney General, Greg Smith SC announced the establishment of the first dedicated alcohol and drug rehabilitation prison facility in NSW, which will provide an Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) for male and female inmates. The first phase will involve a 62-bed unit for male inmates at John Morony Correctional Centre, to open in February 2012. Further units will open in July 2012 and then in July 2013. Eligible offenders will be sentenced inmates with a documented history of problematic drug and/or alcohol use, with a minimum or medium security classification (Nov).</p> <p>Attorney General, Greg Smith SC announced the establishment of the second metropolitan drug court: at the Downing Centre Local Court, opposite Hyde Park (Nov).</p> <p>Figures obtained by the NSW Greens through Parliamentary questioning showed that NSW police sniffer dogs were wrong 4 out of 5 times when they indicate people had drugs on them. This led Greens MP David Shoebridge MLC to conclude the high error rate, and high level of public humiliation, showed the program must be halted (Dec).</p> |
| 2010 | <p>NSW Health funded KPMG to conduct a new and independent evaluation into the effectiveness and efficiency of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre.</p> <p>Media reports increasing use of an ecstasy like stimulant – mephedrone or miaow miaow – following increased border seizures and accounts of use in dance scenes including Newcastle where it was reported to have been sold for \$2 a hit (Mar).</p> <p>Arrests for possession and use of cocaine in NSW increased 55% from 486 in 2008 to 753 in 2009 prompting calls by the NSW Bureau of Crime Research and Statistics that more cocaine was getting into the country (Apr).</p> <p>An integrated mental health, drug and alcohol and community health facility – the O'Brien Centre – was opened at St Vincent's Hospital. The centre aimed to provide a</p>  |

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|      | <p>more coordinated one-stop approach to meeting needs e.g. detox, opioid treatment, anxiety disorder units and mental health workers (May).</p> <p>NSW attorney general announced that eleven years following the established of the 1st NSW drug court in Parramatta a 2<sup>nd</sup> drug court would be established in Toronto, NSW. The cited reason was recent evidence of effectiveness (17 Jun).</p> <p>Opposition leader Barry O'Farrell said he remained "concerned" that the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre had "not met its goal of providing a pathway for users to access services to end their addiction" and he wanted proof that the centre was helping to end addiction before he would consider calls for the centre to be made permanent (16 Jun).</p> <p>The Greens candidate for the federal seat of Wentworth, Matthew Robertson called on the NSW Government and Opposition to end the trial period for the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) and make it permanent (27 Jun).</p> <p>BOCSAR released new report: "Trends in property and illicit drug crime around the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Kings Cross: An update." Report concluded there was no evidence that the MSIC had caused a negative impact on robbery, property crime or drug offences in Kings Cross (Sep).</p> <p>KPMG evaluation of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) from 2007-2010 released. Core findings were that since introduction MSIC had received approximately 70,000 visits per year and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• managed 3,426 overdose events with no deaths onsite;</li> <li>• provided a gateway to drug treatment and other services, with 8,508 referrals (3,871 to drug treatment) since commencement; &amp;</li> <li>• reduced problems with public injecting, as evidenced by a decrease in reported sighting of public injecting from 55% in 2000 to 27% in 2010 (Sep 14).</li> </ul> <p>Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2010 adopted. This removed the trial status of the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, thereby enabling the centre that had been operating since May 2001, to become a permanent fixture. The bill was adopted with 22 votes of support and 15 against (4 Nov).</p> <p>NSW Director of Public Prosecutions Nick Cowdery QC, who is set to retire in March 2011, released his own legislative agenda that included decriminalising drug use, possession and small-scale trafficking. He said that the current approach to illicit drugs was "ineffective, wasteful and inconsiderate of the human rights of those concerned"(Nov).</p> <p>Former NSW Police analyst Terry Gregoriou sentenced to 14 months imprisonment for leaking confidential police documents to the Comancheros motorcycle gang (Dec).</p> <p>New interactive website providing drug and alcohol information for young people – Your Room – was launched. The website, an initiative of NSW Health and the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS), provides an A to Z of drugs and their effects, helplines, campaigns and treatment options (Dec).</p> |
| 2009 | <p>The NSW Supreme Court ruled that the NSW Department of Human Services had been in serious abuse of their position in demanding that parents who use cannabis were unfit to care for a child, and ordered the return of two removed children (Jan).</p> <p><i>NSW Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act</i> enacted which provides for the involuntary treatment of persons with a severe substance dependence. The act is being trialed for an initial period of 18 months in Auburn, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Lithgow, Parramatta and Penrith council areas and The Hills Shire. Under the act health workers, family members and other interested parties may refer a severely drug or alcohol dependant person to a medical practitioner for assessment. Individuals will be involuntarily detained for treatment (for an initial period lasting up to 28 days) provided they meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that they have a severe substance dependence, &amp;</li> <li>• care, treatment or control of the person is necessary to protect the person from serious harm &amp;</li> <li>• the person is likely to benefit from treatment for his or her substance dependence but has refused treatment &amp;</li> <li>• no other appropriate and less restrictive means for dealing with the person is reasonably available. The trial will be evaluated by KPMG (Feb).</li> </ul> <p>Research by BOCSAR into the link between methamphetamine and violence found that after adjusting for a number of risk factors for re-offending (e.g. age, sex, Indigenous status), offenders with a prior conviction for an amphetamine offence were no more likely than those with no prior drug offences to be subsequently charged with a violent offence (Feb).</p> <p>NSW Health commenced a state-wide Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Traineeships program in the non-government sector. The program aimed to increase the number of tertiary qualified Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol workers in the non-government sector (Jun).</p> <p>Draft NSW Youth Health Policy released 2010-2015 for consultation (Dec).</p> <p>NSW Health commenced a 4 month statewide social marketing campaign aimed at warning people aged 18-25 of the dangers of club drugs: "Don't let drugs use you this summer party season." NSW Health partnered with festival organizers e.g. Homebake and used posters and advertisements in street press, music and festival websites, nightclubs and outdoor music events (Dec).</p>   |
| 2008 | <p>Crimes Amendment (Drink and Food Spiking) Bill 2008 adopted. Bill created a new summary offence of spiking a person's drink or food with an intoxicating substance with intent to harm the person (max penalty 2 years imprisonment or \$11,000 fine, or both) (Mar).</p> <p>MSIC survey of pharmaceutical opioid (PO) injectors showed 72% commenced PO use subsequent to heroin injection. PO use appeared associated with lesser harms. e.g. Rate of heroin overdose was 0 – 2.5 per 1000 visits for PO injectors compared to 4.7 – 11 per 1000 visits for heroin injectors (Mar).</p>   |

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|      | <p>NSW Mental Health/Drug and Alcohol Comorbidity framework for action adopted. Framework sought to increase the capacity and competency of both the mental health and drug and alcohol workforce to manage and respond to comorbidity and to address systemic barriers to communication and collaboration. Key areas of work include workforce planning and development, infrastructure and systems development, and improved responses for priority clients e.g. amphetamine users with mental health issues (Apr)</p> <p>Proposal by Lemma Government to trial medical use of cannabis. Needed support of Federal Government to allow importation of the oral spray – Sativex (May).</p> <p>Mark Standen, Assistant Director of NSW Crime Commission, arrested for conspiring to import 600kg of pseudoephedrine, enough to produce \$120 million of “ice” and conspiring to pervert the course of justice (Jun).</p> <p>The NSW Government recalled and pulped a drug education booklet “Choosing to use ... but wanna keep your head together?” saying its advice about what people should do if they take drugs was unacceptable (Jun).</p> <p>A preliminary evaluation of NSW Stimulant Treatment Program released. Report showed during the first 6 months 214 people accessed the program and 50% participants had not previously sought any formal treatment. Key outcomes included significant reductions in drug use, severity of dependence, distress, mental health problems and crime (Jun).</p> <p>Inaugural MSIC Director Ingrid van Beek resigned saying that her one regret was that the MSIC continued to operate as a trial as the trial status was a barrier to its effective practice and meant it remained a political football (Jul).</p> <p>NSW Police run series of forums on ice, targeting children aged 12-18. The series aimed to reduce reported use amongst teenagers, change perceptions that use was glamorous and tell parents about the signs their child was using (Aug).</p> <p>The Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office commenced discussions with stakeholders regarding the Opioid Treatment Strategic Plan 2010–2015 (Aug).</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> BOCSAR report on trends in property and illicit drug-related crime in Kings Cross released. Report showed very little difference in the incidence of robbery and property crime in Kings Cross versus the rest of Sydney with both having declined. There were differences in regards to use/possess offences, with less heroin use/possess and deal/traffic offences but more cocaine use/possess offences in Kings Cross (cfed to Sydney). But spatial analysis was unable to conclude whether this was due to the MSIC or other factors associated with Kings Cross (Sep).</p> <p>First women charged in NSW with large-scale supply of Oxycodone, the prescription drug known as “hillbilly heroin” (Sep).</p> <p>Two children were taken into foster care after the NSW Department of Community Services (DOCS) reported concerns over their parents’ use of cannabis. This followed demands by DOCS that the parents remain “drug free” and provide random urine samples (Sep).</p> <p>A re-evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the NSW Drug Court showed the cost of the Drug Court was estimated to be \$32.752 million (\$16.376 million per annum). The cost of conventional sanctions was \$36.268 million (\$18.134 million per annum) which meant the drug court gave a net saving of \$1.758 million per annum (Sep).</p> <p>Media reports asserted NSW doctors were being pressured into wrongfully prescribing Oxycodone, a drug that was later being sold on the streets for profit (Oct).</p> <p>Second evaluation of the NSW Drug Court released. The study concluded that offenders who attended the drug court were 17% less likely to be reconvicted for any offence and 30% less likely to be reconvicted for a violent offence than drug dependent offenders sentenced to imprisonment through the traditional court. The program was also proven to save \$2 million a year when compared to the traditional response (Nov).</p> <p>Outcry over a brochure titled “A users guide to speed” was displayed to year 8 students attending a NSW sponsored community information day (Nov).</p> |
| 2007 | <p>20 year old Annabel Catt died after attending a Good Vibrations dance party and taking what she thought was ecstasy. The tablet was later proved to contain PMA (Feb).</p> <p>NSW Police commenced a pilot of Random Drug Driving Testing with roadside saliva testing for cannabis, amphetamines and ecstasy (Jan). Drug and Alcohol Plan 2006–2010 adopted (Mar).</p> <p>MSIC interim evaluation report no. 3 on client referral and health issues released (Mar).</p> <p>MSIC interim evaluation report no. 4 on service operation and overdose-related events released (Jun).</p> <p>Medically Supervised Injecting Centre trial continued 2007-2011 (Jul).</p> <p>Evaluation of NSW Cannabis Clinics showed that on average 31% clients experienced a reduction in their cannabis use and 42% were abstinent upon treatment completion. Key elements of effective service delivery were that cannabis clinics were marketed &amp; promoted as separate, discrete services for problematic cannabis use and that clinics were located in generic facilities, rather than in identifiable D&amp;A services. The report identified that access to cannabis clinic services was limited by factors such as geographical location, proximity to transport and hours of operation. Evaluators argued there was scope for alternative models of service delivery (Jul).</p> <p>NSW Hepatitis C Strategy 2007-2009 adopted.</p> <p>NSW Attorney General stated that the cumulative effect of amendments to the NSW Bail ACT was that NSW “now has the toughest bail laws in Australia” (Oct).</p> <p>NSW MERIT: Health Outcomes study completed. Study demonstrated that by program exit at three months, levels and types of illicit drug use and associated risk behaviours were significantly reduced and levels of physical and psychological health had improved. At exit 39% participants were abstinent from all illegal drugs &amp; the</p>   |

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|      | <p>frequency of use reduced across all drugs. Most notably daily use decreased from 45% to 11% for cannabis &amp; from 24% to 1% for heroin (Nov).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (NSW)</i> banned the possession of recipes for drug manufacturing and the possession of certain precursors and apparatus used for manufacturing illicit drugs. Penalties included \$2,200 or 2 years imprisonment for possession of drug manufacturing recipes, \$110,000 and/or 5 years imprisonment for possession of the precursors and a maximum of 10 years imprisonment for possession of apparatus for the manufacture of drugs (Nov).</p>  |
| 2006 | <p>NSW HIV/AIDS Strategy 2006-2009 adopted.</p> <p>In response to fears of higher potency of hydroponic cannabis NSW Premier Iemma and his cabinet officers introduced tougher legislation for hydroponic cannabis. Amendments to the <i>Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (NSW)</i> included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A max penalty of \$220,000 and/or 10 years imprisonment for the cultivation of 5-49 plants for individuals;</li> <li>• A max penalty of \$385,000 and/or 15 years imprisonment for the cultivation of 50-199 plants;</li> <li>• A max penalty of \$550,000 and/or 20 years imprisonment for the cultivation of 200 or more plants;</li> </ul> <p>The new penalties were 5 times greater than for non-hydroponic cultivation. Maximum penalties were also increased for the theft of electricity to power hydro houses (\$11,000 and/or 2 years imprisonment) (Feb).</p> <p>MSIC interim evaluation report no. 2 on community attitudes towards the service released (Mar).</p> <p>MSIC reported that pharmaceutical opioids had become the most commonly injected drug category, used for 40% all injecting episodes (Apr).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (NSW)</i> banned the sale, supply and display of water and ice pipes and made them punishable with \$2200 and/or 2 years imprisonment (May).</p> <p>NSW Ombudsmen report released: Review of the <i>Police Powers (Drug Detection Dogs) Act 2001</i>. This reviewed use of the drug detection dogs over their first two years of operation. Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibited drugs were only located in 26% of the searches following an indication.</li> <li>• Only 1.38% of all indications involved a prescribed 'deemed supply' quantity of a prohibited drug.</li> <li>• No evidence that the use of drug detection dogs disrupted low-level street dealing in a sustained manner.</li> <li>• No evidence of a deterrent effect on drug users.</li> </ul> <p>Review concluded: Despite the best efforts of police officers, the use of drug detection dogs has proven to be an ineffective tool for detecting drug dealers and that there should be a review of whether the legislation should be retained (Oct).</p> <p>Stimulant Treatment Program (STP) commenced in Darlinghurst and Newcastle to provide clinical interventions for people with co-morbid mental health and stimulant drug-related problems (Nov).</p> <p>Prisoner at the NSW Corrective Services complex in Surry Hills – Gary Kelso – died after failing to receive medical attention while in heroin withdrawal (Nov).</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> BOCSAR report on trends in property and illicit drug-related crime in Kings Cross released. Report showed similar patterns of theft and property offences in Kings Cross and broader Sydney (both declining) and similar trends for most use/possess and dealing/trafficking offences. Report concluded the MSIC had not at this stage had an adverse effect on crime in Kings Cross (Nov).</p> |
| 2005 | <p>MSIC interim evaluation report no. 1 on operation and service delivery released (May).</p> <p>MSIC reported they had started to see increases in injection of pharmaceutical opioids (mostly morphine and oxycodone) (Aug).</p>   |
| 2004 | <p>NSW Premier announced trial of medical use of cannabis had stalled because while the government had examined a number of options, the preferred delivery method – a metered-dose inhaler or spray – was years away from being available and the NSW (and federal) government opposed any means that allowed growing in backyards i.e. decriminalisation of cannabis cultivation or purchase on the black market (Apr).</p> <p>MERIT completed roll-out to all Area Health Services in NSW (Jun).</p>  |
| 2003 | <p>NSW Premier Carr announced that a draft exposure bill would be introduced at the earliest opportunity to provide for a 4 year trial of medical use of cannabis. It was proposed that patients would register with an Office of Medical Cannabis in the NSW Department of Health and that the trial would be tightly restricted to individuals who met strict medical conditions and were aged 18 or over and were not pregnant or on parole. This had in principle support from the Opposition Leader, John Brogden MP provided cultivation and distribution were tightly regulated. Details of how THC would be legally supplied to registered users remained to be established by the Government (May 20).</p> <p>Provisional support from Prime Minister for 4 year trial of medical use of cannabis in NSW but only if drug could be provided in non-smokeable form (May 23).</p> <p>NSW Area Health Service closed Cabramatta's Drug Intervention Service (DISC) after increased community concern over the service (Jul).</p> <p>Phase one evaluation of Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) released. During the first 18 months of operation 3,810 clients had registered to use the MSIC and there had been 56,861 visits (average of 15 per client). 409 drug-overdose related incidences occurred and were managed at the MSIC (7.2 ODs per 1000 visits). In addition to supervision of injecting, health care services e.g. vein care advice were provided every 1 in 4 visits and 1 in 41 visits resulted in referrals for further assistance e.g. treatment of drug dependence. The evaluators concluded that the MSIC was feasible and had reached target group. There was evidence the MSIC contributed to less public injecting, improved public amenity and less risky injecting practices. Public support for the service also increased. At the same time there was</p>  |



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|      | <p>no evidence that MSIC contributed to increased theft or robbery or loitering. But the predicted reduction in ODs in the area was not observed. The evaluators recommended continued monitoring if the trial were extended (Jul).</p> <p>Trial of MSIC extended until 2007 and new evaluation established (Oct).</p>  |
| 2002 | <p><b>Use of drug detection dogs commenced (22 Feb).</b></p> <p>The Ryde Needle Syringe Program was closed by the NSW Minister for Health after local media attention to unused needle and syringes being found in the grounds of the local primary school (Mar).</p> <p>MSIC trial extended additional 12 months to enable operation during evaluation (Oct).</p> <p>Launch of the NSW Hepatitis C Strategy 2003-2006 (Nov).</p>   |
| 2001 | <p>NSW Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy adopted to tackle drug and crime in Cabramatta and across the state. This included a new criminal justice plan including new laws and a new police station in Cabramatta and local crime prevention. Strategy was supported by funding of \$18.6 million over four years (Mar).</p> <p>A NSW Police Officer involved in the fatal shooting of Jim Hallinan was dismissed after testing positive to cannabis (Mar).</p> <p>Medically Supervised Injecting Centre opened in Kings Cross as 18 month trial (1 May 2001).</p> <p>Research by Maher and Dixon showed police crackdowns in Cabramatta were associated with displacement of the drug market and considerable public health risks to users including increased oral and nasal storage of heroin, decreased use of needle and syringe equipment and increased risk taking in injecting (May).</p> <p>The Police Integrity Commission report on the shooting of Ron Levi recommended the immediate introduction of <i>random</i> drug testing of all NSW Police Officers (Jun).</p> <p>Government's Police Powers (Drug Premises) Act 2001 commenced giving police the power to search and close down drug houses, arrest drug dealers and lookouts operating from drug houses and arrest any person in or entering or leaving a drug house (Jul).</p> <p>Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No 3 into Cabramatta Policing tabled its report and 25 recommendations. Report identified major deficiencies in policing in Cabramatta e.g. increasing neglect of drug-related crime which it attributed to questionable management practices (Jul).</p> <p>Random drug testing introduced in NSW Police Force. This supplemented the mandatory drug testing of officers involved in critical incidents (Sep).</p> <p><b>Police Powers (Drug Detection Dogs) Act adopted, giving police the powers to use a drug detection dog (or sniffer dog) in an authorized place (including a pub, sporting event or outdoor festival) or by warrant to aid in their detection of drug offenders. This followed their trial for general duty policing during the Sydney Olympics and made NSW the first state to adopt such provisions. In adopting the act the (then) Minister for Police, the Hon. Michael Costa MLC stated: "The bill is aimed primarily at detecting and prosecuting persons committing offences relating to the supply of prohibited drugs and plants. ... It is clear that the activity envisaged is drug dealing" (Dec).</b></p> |
| 2000 | <p>COAG-IDDI agreement signed in NSW and the first program – the Adult Cannabis Cautioning Scheme was introduced (Apr)</p> <p>Inquiry by the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No 3 into Cabramatta Policing was established. As part of inquiry Detective Sergeant Tim Priest claimed organised crime was rampant and police were being pressured to ignore the drug market (Jun).</p> <p>Lismore MERIT Pilot Program and Youth Drug and Alcohol Court were introduced (Jun - Jul)</p> <p>Report released by Working Party on the Use of Cannabis for Medical Purposes. Report agreed that THC can be useful in treating nausea, vomiting and appetite loss in patients with HIV and in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. But that crude cannabis cannot nor is likely to ever be prescribed in Australia. Recommended that further trials be conducted into administration of THC via non-oral routes and development of new synthetic cannabinoids. They further recommended that until medical cannabinoids become available individuals found obtaining, possessing or using cannabis should be exempt (for compassionate reasons) from criminal prosecution, provided they had a prior medical certification that they had a condition that might benefit from cannabis use (Aug).</p> <p>NSW Heroin Overdose Prevention and Management Strategy released involving \$670,000 (Nov)</p> <p>First NSW Hepatitis C Strategy 2000 – 2003 adopted (Nov).</p> <p>Framework for Action - NSW Drugs and Community Action Strategy (Dec).</p>   |
| 1999 | <p>NSW Police Commissioner Peter Ryan admits in an interview with Britain's Daily Mail that "we are not winning on the drugs front" and that drugs are the "root of most crime" (Jan).</p> <p>Photograph of a teenage boy engaged in injecting drug use in a lane-way in Redfern, appeared on the front page of a Sydney Newspaper and sparked debate over the effectiveness of NSW drug policy (Jan 31).</p> <p>Minister for Health, Hon A Refshauge MP, closed down the Redfern needle exchange outlet, and ordered a review of the \$9 million statewide needle exchange program (Feb).</p> <p>Premier, Hon B Carr MP, announced his government would hold a drug summit if re-elected (Feb).</p> <p>NSW Drug Court trial commenced (Feb)</p>  |

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|      | <p>Labor government re-elected under Premier Carr (Mar).</p> <p>Tolerance or T Room injecting room opened by a group of clergy, social workers and health professionals in the Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross (4-12 May).</p> <p>NSW Drug Summit held in NSW Parliament. Summit was attended by 135 NSW Parliamentary delegates; 2 Federal parliamentary delegates; 80 non-Parliamentary delegates; and 45 associate delegates (17-21 May).</p> <p>NSW Government response outlined in Government Action Plan. 172 recommendations from summit were adopted and 7 key strategic areas endorsed e.g. enhanced prevention and early intervention, fast-tracking new treatments, better case management and breaking the drugs-crime cycle. This included plans to introduce state-wide trials of a Cannabis Cautioning Scheme and Early Court Intervention Pilot (subsequently named MERIT) and an injecting room (Jul).</p> <p>NSW Government committed \$176 million towards the implementation of Drug Summit recommendations and established a new Office of Drug Policy to provide leadership and coordination.</p> <p>Working Party on the Use of Cannabis for Medical Purposes established. This followed calls by the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the Law Society of New South Wales for people with illnesses such as cancer and AIDS to be prescribed cannabis for pain relief (Aug).</p> <p>Legislation for injecting centre – MSIC passed – Drug Summit Legislative Response Bill (1999) (Nov)</p>  |
| 1998 | <p>Mandatory drug and alcohol testing introduced for NSW police officers involved in critical incidents e.g. police shootings (Jul).</p> <p>NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues inquiry into hepatitis C released report 'Hepatitis C: the Neglected Epidemic.' This made 132 recommendations including to expand prevention and control strategies, adopt a NSW strategy on Hepatitis C and to advocate for increased national attention to the prevalence and response(s) to Hepatitis C (Nov).</p> <p>Ethnographic research into heroin use in the Cabramatta drug market published in report: "Running the Risks: Heroin, Health and Harm in South-West Sydney. Report documented the patterns and contexts of heroin use, risk taking behavior, income generation and the impacts of street law enforcement activities.</p>  |
| 1997 | <p>Four Corners report on the Cabramatta outlined its decline from being a multi-cultural melting pot to the heroin capital of Australia, as evidenced by the highly visible street dealing and use. Four Corners argued that in spite of five years of police efforts the drug trade had flourished, bringing with it violence, death and police corruption (Apr).</p> <p>Woods Royal Commission report concluded that a war on drugs approach contributed towards police corruption. Recommended increased attention to alternate approaches – increased focus on harm minimisation strategies, increasing public education, expanding methadone availability and establishing a supervised injecting facility (May).</p> <p>Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues was asked to inquire into Hepatitis C (HCV) and its implications for the community (May).</p> <p>NSW Police officers Rodney Podesta and Anthony DiLorenzo shot dead a mentally disturbed man, Ron Levi. Both police officers were later found to be cocaine users, who regularly partied before work. This led to public outcry since neither officer was drug tested at the time of the shooting (Jun).</p> <p>NSW Parliamentary Joint Select Committee established to consider feasibility of a trial of a supervised injecting facility (Jul).</p> <p>Several news articles appeared citing New South Wales Health Minister Andrew Refshauge's claim that St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney received approximately five people a day being treated for GHB overdoses (Nov).</p> <p>A Drug Intervention Service (DISC) was established in Cabramatta to provide a needle syringe program and counseling service to resident and visiting drug users.</p> <p>Cabramatta police began saturation policing in efforts to disrupt and displace the burgeoning heroin market.</p> |
| 1996 | <p>Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) commenced in NSW, collecting data on illicit drug market trends</p>   |
| 1995 | <p>First ecstasy-related death reported – 15 year old Anna Wood (Oct).</p> <p>Formation of the 'Anna Wood Drug and Alcohol Project' which sought to provide more abstinence based drug education in schools.</p> <p>Evaluation of the Needle Syringe Vending Machines at Kings Cross, Rozelle and Parramatta released. Report concluded that the machines were used by a broader range of injectors compared to those who used the staffed service at the community health centres, and that there was an increase in inquiries about hepatitis C issues due to information provided at the machines.</p> <p>Cabramatta police began high profile buy-bust interventions aimed at high and mid level deals in efforts to reduce heroin market.</p>  |
| 1994 | <p>Inquiry into police corruption launched. Commissioner: The Hon Justice JRT Wood (May).</p> <p>NSW Hepatitis C Taskforce established</p>  |
| 1993 |   |
| 1992 | <p>First NSW Drug Strategy released</p> <p>12 month trial of Needle Syringe Vending Machines commenced at Kings Cross, Rozelle and Parramatta</p>   |

| Year | New South Wales  |
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| 1991 |  |
| 1990 |  |
| 1989 | User group - New South Wales Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) formed  |
| 1988 |  |
| 1987 | NSW Government amended the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 legalising possession of needle and syringes and established Needle and Syringe Exchange Programs (later called Needle Syringe Programs)<br>AIDS and Drug Information Collective formed as lobby group |
| 1986 | First Needle and Syringe Exchange Program opened in act of civil disobedience - Darlinghurst (Nov)<br>NSW Government established drug store-based needle and syringe distribution scheme (Dec)   |
| 1985 | Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 adopted   |