

## 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 **South Australia 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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Year	South Australia
2012	<p>SA Police commenced raids in Murray Bridge for MDPV and arrested four people (Jan 24).</p> <p>SA Police investigation targeted at MDPV led to seizures of manufacturing equipment and drugs: two encapsulating machines, 10,000 empty capsules, 1250 grams of MDPV, 320g of DMMC, and 300g of Ephedrine (Feb 2).</p> <p>New report released by the Office of Crime and Statistics Research: "The South Australian drug court: A recidivism study". The incidence, frequency and severity of re-apprehension was analysed for all drug court participants over a five year period (Jan 2004-Dec 2008), and compared amongst three groups: completers, terminates and a sample of prisoners generated by the Department of Correctional Services. Completers performed better than the other samples in terms of reduced incidence of and longer time to re-apprehension, but there were no significant differences in terms of the overall frequency of apprehension (May).</p> <p><b>New report from OCSAR: "Ten years of the South Australian Police Drug Diversion Initiative - Data Analysis Report." Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The no. of diversions has increased steadily over the ten year period</li> <li>The compliance rate across 10 yrs was 81%, with only a slight drop from program start (84% to 80%)</li> <li>24% of offenders had been diverted more than once.</li> <li>Individuals who comply with their diversion are significantly less likely to re-offend - 2 yrs after their first diversion offence 25% of non-compliers had re-offended vs. only 18% of compliers (May).</li> </ul> <p><b>Two new reports released from OCSAR on the "Evaluation of the 6-month drug treatment program". Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program completion rate was 40.1% (and rate of successful completion was 29.5%).</li> <li>The proportion of positive drug tests decreased significantly throughout the program: from 70.1% at baseline to 9.8% after 5 months and 0.0% at 6 months.</li> <li>54.9% participants recorded no subsequent apprehension in the 6 months after leaving, but program completers were less significantly less likely to reoffend – 26.3% reoffended compared to 58.5% of non-completers (Aug/Oct).</li> </ul> <p><b>Summary Offences (Drug Paraphernalia) Amendment Bill enacted. Led to banning of the sale of drug paraphernalia such as a cannabis pipe and bong. The maximum penalty is \$10,000 or 2 years imprisonment (Oct).</b></p> <p><b>South Australia Police and the Holden Hill Magistrates Court commenced a 6 month trial of an Offence Streaming Model, which will reduce the time between the alleged offence and appearance in court for simple matters. The policy was developed in recognition of long delays and inefficiencies in court system and additional stress this places on defendants. Trial was extended to the Adelaide Magistrates Court in March 2013 (Oct 2012).</b></p> <p><b>South Australia Police-Strategic Directions 2012-2015 adopted (Nov).</b></p> <p><b>The South Australian Naloxone Distribution pilot program commenced: an 18 month pilot (Nov).</b></p>
2011	<p>Announcement that from 1 July SA pharmacies would switch from voluntary to mandatory real-time online reporting of pseudoephedrine sales. Switch followed concern over pharmaceutical shopping &amp; recognition only 60% pharmacies reported sales (Mar).</p> <p>New wastewater study released: "Population drug use in Australia: A wastewater analysis" A study of 15 sewage treatment plants showed temporal and regional differences in illicit drug use in South Australia: MDMA was much more commonly detected in regional centres such as Port Lincoln &amp; Port Augusta, than the city (Apr).</p> <p>SA announced a ban on the possession, sale or intent to supply of seventeen synthetic cannabinoids including Kronic, Spice, Kaos Voodoo, Mango and Northern Lights. Ban was introduced by Government Gazette (Controlled Substances (Prohibition of Synthetic Cannabis) Notice 2011), pending evaluation of their harmful properties by the Controlled Substances Advisory Council and consideration of whether the substances be added to the Controlled Substances Act (Jun 17).</p> <p>The Controlled Substances Advisory Council evaluated the harmful properties of synthetic cannabinoids. The council ruled that the harmful effects were similar to those of cannabis and hence supported their inclusion in the Controlled Substances (General) Regulations 2000 (using the same threshold quantities as for cannabis). This came into effect 23 Jun (Jun 21).</p> <p>The Controlled Substances Advisory Council also made three other rulings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ban the 'synthetic MDMA-like substances' 3,4 methylenedioxypropylone (MDPV) and methcathinone;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make prescribed thresholds quantities for all new MDMA-like substances consistent with the existing MDMA prescribed amounts e.g. trafficable quantity = 2g MDPV;</li> <li>To ban MMDMG - a new precursor for manufacturing MDMA.</li> </ul> <p>These came into effect 23 Jun (Jun 21).</p> <p>The South Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2011-2016 was adopted. Five key objectives were put forward, namely to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce illicit drug use and its associated harms;</li> <li>2. Reduce the rate of alcohol-related harm;</li> <li>3. Reduce drug-related harm to young people and families of those with substance misuse issues;</li> <li>4. Reduce harm from substance misuse among Aboriginal people;</li> <li>5. Improve the timeliness of monitoring systems so trends in alcohol and other drug misuse are detected as early as possible</li> </ol> <p>One priority action of the strategy was to trial the provision of naloxone to opioid users to assess whether peer administration can assist in reducing fatal overdoses (Dec).</p> <p>First fatal overdose reported from 3,4 methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV). The deceased was a man, aged 40, from Murray Bridge (Dec).</p>
2010	<p><b>SA Police Corporate Business plan 2010-2011 adopted. Included the strategy of focussing on possession and use of illicit drugs (Jun).</b></p> <p>Independent MLC Ann Bressington tabled a new bill. The Controlled Substances (Simple Cannabis Offences) Bill 2010 proposed to reduce the expiable amount under the current Cannabis Expiation Notice Scheme from 100g to 25grams cannabis, in an effort to reduce the potential for dealers to avoid criminal prosecution (Sep).</p>
2009	<p>Statutes Amendment (Transport Portfolio-Alcohol and Drugs) Act 2009 adopted. Legislation increased penalties for individuals convicted of drug driving offences. Under the new law any driver who has expiated or been convicted of 2 or more drug driving offences in the 5 years immediately preceding the date of application for a new license will be referred to a Driver Assessment Clinic. License provision will be refused to any driver found to be drug dependent until such time as they can prove they are no longer dependent on drugs (Mar).</p> <p>Attorney-General Hon. Michael Atkinson made the first declaration of a 'criminal enterprise' under the <i>Serious and Organised Crime (Control) Act 2008</i>. The declaration applied to the Finks Motorcycle club, for reasons including that members had 173 convictions for drug offences (14 May).</p> <p>Control orders against two Finks Motorcycle club members (Donald Hudson and Sandro Tortani) requested under s14(1) of the <i>Serious and Organised Crime (Control) Act 2008</i>. Magistrates Court issued court order against Mr Hudson prohibiting him from associating with other persons who are members of declared organisations. Order against Mr Tortani adjourned after he initiated proceedings in the SA Supreme Court that s14(1) of the Act was invalid (May-Jun).</p> <p>Adoption of the <i>Controlled Substances (Controlled Drugs, Precursors and Cannabis) Amendment Act 2008</i> resulted in a number of regulatory changes. Legislative changes to the Schedules of the <i>Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 1996 Act</i> led to the banning of an additional 60 chemicals that could be used in illicit drug manufacturing. Legislative changes to the <i>Controlled Substances Act 1984</i> also created new offences in relation to possession of a controlled precursor or any prescribed equipment intending to use it to manufacture a controlled drug (Section 33J) and possession of prescribed equipment and/or prescribed quantities of controlled precursors without reasonable excuse (Section 33LB). Both offences became punishable with up to \$15,000 and/or 5 years imprisonment (Sep).</p> <p>New legislation on sale of equipment for hydroponic growth of cannabis adopted (<i>Hydroponics Industry Control Act 2009</i>) in the aim of "preventing criminal infiltration of the hydroponics industry." Under the new legislation all individuals who buy proscribed hydroponic equipment will have to submit 100 points of ID at the point of sale and all hydroponic dealers will be required to ensure all buyers pass appropriate tests regarding their criminal histories. They are also required to maintain records for every transaction involving prescribed equipment, and forward all information to the Commissioner of police by way of an online transaction monitoring system. Legislation enacted March 2010 (Oct).</p> <p>Adelaide Advertiser conducted an investigation into drug consumption patterns in Adelaide clubs and concluded that "cash-strapped clubbers were shunning high-priced alcohol" at bars in favour of cheaper illicit drugs such as ecstasy (Oct).</p> <p>SA Supreme Court decision: Totani &amp; Anor v The State of SA [2009] SASC 301. Declared s 14(1) of <i>Serious and Organised Crime (Control) Act 2008</i> invalid (Nov).</p> <p>Trial of 24 hour needle syringe vending machines commenced at two existing needle syringe program sites in Murray Bridge and Noorlunga. The 12 month trial involving the provision of with 8 x 1ml syringes for \$2.00 was initiated by Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (30 Nov).</p> <p><i>Serious and Organised Crime (Unexplained Wealth) Act 2009</i> adopted which allowed for the creation and enforcement of 'unexplained wealth orders' and amendments to the Criminal Assets Confiscation Act 2005. Under the new law the state no longer had to prove that the defendant had committed a serious offence in order to confiscate wealth. Instead an order of unexplained wealth can be applied (when current and/or past assets exceed lawfully obtained wealth) and confiscated (Nov).</p> <p>Adoption of legislation that included measures to prevent the trafficking of drugs and alcohol into the APY Lands (Dec).</p>
2008	<p>Evaluation of the Police Drug Diversion Initiative (PDDI) was completed. Report showed there had been a total of 4,689 youth and adults diverted during the first 4 years. On average 67% offenders complied, but compliance was higher amongst youth and offenders diverted for the first time. Key impacts included short and long term reductions in drug use and offending and improvements in social functioning. But impacts were not homogenous and in some offenders use and offending increased. Evaluators concluded the program appeared successful but also recommended changes including providing feedback to police and modifying the referral</p>

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	<p>system (Mar).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Summary Offences Act 1953</i> banned the sale of equipment used to consume illegal drugs, e.g. bongs, ice pipes and cocaine kits, and made such offences punishable by up to \$10,000 or two years' imprisonment for an individual and \$50,000 for a body corporate (Jun).</p> <p>Controlled Substances (Drug Detection Powers) Amendment Bill 2008 adopted, increasing police powers to screen for illicit drugs using drug detection dogs. The amendments allowed deployment of passive drug detection dogs for general duties: screening potential users and dealers inside and outside nightclubs, pubs, concerts, festivals and, major sporting events, on board public transport and at train and bus stations. The amendments also allowed police to establish and conduct specific drug-detection screening operations on identified drug-transit routes and to use drug detection dogs, electronic drug detection systems or emerging technology, e.g. odour-detecting devices &amp; swabbing wands to detect for the presence of controlled drugs, precursors or plants. This entered into force Oct 2008 (Jul).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Controlled Substances Act 1984</i> increased penalties against the cultivation of hydroponic cannabis. Maximum penalties for cultivation of hydroponic cannabis plants increased from \$500 to \$1000 and/or 6 months imprisonment and sale or possession of lamps and reflectors used to produce crops were made illegal (penalty of up to \$10,000 or two years' imprisonment) (Jul).</p> <p>New treatment facility opened – the Amata Substance Abuse Facility – for Indigenous people who live or come from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Region. The service provides residential rehabilitation and a mobile outreach for people who misuse petrol, alcohol, cannabis and other substances (Aug).</p> <p><i>Serious and Organised Crime (Control) Act 2008</i> adopted. Legislation introduced new provisions that gave the government, acting through the attorney general and state police commissioner, powers to declare 'criminal enterprises': any organisation which represents a risk to public safety and order of the State and where members associate for the purpose of organising, planning, facilitating, supporting or engaging in serious criminal activity. The legislation also allowed for the introduction of control orders on individuals to prohibit offenders from associating or communicating with other members of organized crime groups, prohibit possession of dangerous weapons and/or prevent access to specified venues and introduced offences of criminal association (Sep).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Controlled Substances Act 1984</i> made possession of 30 different pieces of equipment involved in amphetamine or cannabis manufacturing or cultivation e.g. high intensity lamps, carbon filters, tablet presses and distilling devices and possession of documents containing instructions for the manufacture or cultivation of illicit substances punishable with \$10,000 and/or 2 years imprisonment (Oct).</p> <p>Evaluation of Youth CARDS (Court Assessment and Referral Drug Scheme) showed that during the 13 month pilot there had been very low referrals (only 71, of whom 51 were put onto the program) and only half participants completed the program. But the program was associated with reductions in drug-related harm and reductions in criminal offending (down from 3.1 to 1.5 events in 6 months pre and post completion). The reviewers concluded the program was "likely to meet its objectives," but questioned the viability given the low referral numbers. This was attributed in part to mixed stakeholders views as to the merits of the program (Nov).</p> <p>South Australia Police adopted their second illicit drug strategy: 'Illicit Drug Strategy 2008 – 2011' (Dec).</p>
2007	<p>SA Government requested an assessment of the threat posed by organised crime to the South Australian community that included the identification of legislative barriers that facilitate organised crime.</p> <p>SA Premier Rann unveiled his intention to introduce a comprehensive set of laws designed to make a major dent into organised crime in South Australia. The proposed set of laws covered more coercive powers of investigation, confiscating unexplained wealth, laws against association with criminal members and toughened controls on precursor chemicals and equipment for drug manufacturing (Jul).</p> <p>South Australia Police announced the creation of a Crime Gang Task Force to enforce the states new organised crime laws (Aug).</p>
2006	<p>SA Police commenced random roadside drug testing for cannabis and amphetamines (Jul).</p>
2005	<p>Evaluation of first set of Drug Summit Initiatives completed. Concluded 2/3 initiatives had proceeded well and that initiatives had added value and capacity in SA response to drugs. Also noted need to improve management (Feb).</p> <p>South Australian Drug Strategy 2005-2010 adopted (Feb).</p> <p>SA Justice Portfolio Drug Indicators Project – first annual report released. This identified five performance targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased resilience of SA youth;</li> <li>• Prevention of illicit drug use;</li> <li>• Reduce drug related offending and severity of offending;</li> <li>• Ongoing reduction in overdose rates; &amp;</li> </ul> <p>Reduction and interruption in supply (Mar).</p> <p>Youth CARDS (Court Assessment and Referral Drug Scheme) introduced (Nov).</p>
2004	<p>SA Parliament Legislative Review Committee released report on the Cannabis Expiation Scheme (Regulations under the Controlled Substances Act 1984 and 2002). Report considered whether a one non-hydroponic plant limit undermined the original intention of the CEN scheme. The committee concluded it didn't since it enabled an average user to produce enough to supply them for a year, but also reduced risk of exploitation by crime syndicates (Feb).</p> <p>CARDS (Court Assessment and Referral Drug Scheme) introduced (Jun)</p>

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	South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services established as peak body for drug and alcohol NGOs in SA.
2003	Initial Criminal Justice Illicit Drugs Performance Indicators report presented to the Criminal Justice Leadership Group (May). SA Government expanded response to drug summit: another 14 initiatives and \$1.86 million (Sep).
2002	SA Labor Party elected (Feb) SA Premier announced the Social Inclusion Initiative and established a Social Inclusion Unit (located in the Department of Premier and Cabinet) to adopt a more integrated and effective response to complex issues. One of first target areas was drugs (Mar). SA Police launched the 'SAPOL Illicit Drug Strategy – Preventing drug use – reducing crime.' This was the first drug strategy adopted and recognized the strong links between drugs and crime and need for coordinated action (May). SA Drug Summit held. Summit was preceded by 24 community consultations across the State with 917 people participating. Summit identified new directions for SA, particularly regarding responses to amphetamines and processes of reintegrating drug users. Gave rise to 51 recommendations (24 – 28 June). SA Justice Portfolio Drug Indicators Project initiated to identify potential performance indicators to measure success in “protecting the community from the consequences of drug trafficking and abuse” (Jul). CEN scheme amended through Controlled Substances (Expiation of Simple Cannabis Offences) Regulations 2002 (No. 170 of 2002) which maintained a limit on one plant for personal use but banned cultivation of hydroponic plants (Sep). Initial response of SA Government was devised by the Social Inclusion Board. It was outlined in the “Tackling Drugs – Government and Communities Working Together” report and included 7 priority areas e.g. building resilience in young people and increased support for Aboriginal people, 21 initiatives and provision of \$12 million for first four years. Also established an Inter-Ministerial Committee led by Hon Led Stevens to implement initiatives. Response was devised by the Social Inclusion Board (Dec).
2001	COAG-IDDI agreement signed and SA Police Drug Diversion Initiative (PDDI) introduced (Jun) Cannabis Expiation Notice Scheme amended (Controlled Substances (Expiation of Simple Cannabis Offences) Regulations 1987): Number of cannabis plants attracting a fine reduced from three to one (Nov)
2000	South Australia's Drug Court commenced (May) Illicit Drug Working Party established by the Health Department to develop a comprehensive approach to illicit drug issues.
1999	Evaluations of the CEN scheme demonstrated evidence of net-widening and suggested that some people were exploiting the scheme by cultivating and selling cannabis. Cannabis Expiation Notice scheme amended: Number of cannabis plants attracting an expiation notice reduced from ten to three (Jun).
1998	First South Australian Drug Strategy, 'A Time to Act' released
1997	Cannabis Expiation Notice scheme modified by the introduction of the Expiation of Offences Act, 1996. This introduced a range of options for payment of expiation fees including payment by instalments and community service, enabled those served with an expiation notice the option of choosing to be prosecuted in order to contest being given the notice and introduced automatic criminal convictions for those who failed to expiate (Jan). Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) commenced in SA, collecting data on illicit drug market trends A series of eight unusual deaths sparked media attention. The deaths occurring between 1995 and 1997 were originally attributed to use of ecstasy (MDMA). Forensic analysis revealed they all deaths followed use of PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine), a much stronger variant of ecstasy.
1996	Heroin overdose prevention strategy established
1995	Select Committee report recommended streamlining the Cannabis Expiation Notice scheme
1994	
1993	Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (ADAC) established (Feb).
1992	
1991	Select Committee established to report on drugs of dependence User group re-established as South Australia Voice for Intravenous Equity (SAVIVE)
1990	
1989	First SA Needle and Syringe Exchange Programs introduced - Clean Needle Program (NSP)

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1988	User group - IV League of South Australia formed
1987	
1986	Cannabis Expiation Notice (CEN) scheme introduced for minor cannabis offences. Enabled use of infringement notices for simple cannabis offences including cultivation of up to ten plants for personal use.
1985	