



People in contact with the criminal justice system

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

In 2020, **82%** of **police detainees** who provided a **urine sample tested positive** for at least one drug type. [1]

In 2020, **47%** of **police detainees** had used **cannabis** and **45%** had used **methamphetamine** in the past month. [1]

1 in 3 (33%) police detainees in 2019 indicated that **illicit drug use** contributed to their offending. [1]



In 2020, **over 1 in 4 (28%)** police detainees **reported consuming alcohol** in the 24 hours prior to their arrest. [1]



In 2020, among **police detainees** who consumed alcohol in the past **24 hours**, the median number of **standard drinks consumed** was **11**. [1]

Prison entrants in 2022 were as likely as the general population to be non-drinkers, however those who did drink were **more likely than the people in the general community to drink at high risk levels**. [2]

Prison entrants in 2022:

71% currently smoked tobacco

64% smoked tobacco daily. [2]



In 2021–22, **8% of alcohol and other drug treatment episodes** were for clients who were referred for treatment **via police or court diversion**. [4]

73% of prison entrants in 2022 **reported using illicit drugs** in the 12 months before incarceration, with the **most common being cannabis (53%)**. [2]



People in contact with the criminal justice system

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

Around 13% of **prison discharges** reported **using a needle and syringe** that had been **used by someone else** while in prison in 2022.^[2]

In 2022–23, **7.7% of defendants** in the Magistrates' Courts had a principal offence of **illicit drug offences**; 69% of these were possess or use offences. ^[3]

References

1. Voce A & Sullivan T 2021. Drug use monitoring in Australia: Drug use among police detainees, 2020. Statistical Report 35. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. Viewed 23 June 2021.
2. AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2023. The health of people in Australia's prisons 2022. AIHW. Australian Government. Accessed 15 November 2023.
3. ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2024. Criminal Courts, Australia, 2022–23. Canberra: ABS, accessed 15 March 2024.
4. AIHW 2023. Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia annual report 2021–22. Cat. No. HSE 250. AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 21 June 2023.

Source: Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia
(<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia>).

