

**Effects of the Western Australian
Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme
on regular cannabis users
regarding attitudes, use, and
drug market factors**

Baseline, Year 1

Effects of the Western Australian
Cannabis Infringement Notice
Scheme on regular cannabis users
regarding attitudes, use, and drug
market factors – Baseline, Year 1

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This is a report of Sub-study 2 of *An evaluation of the impact of changes to cannabis law in WA on cannabis use, the drug market, law enforcement, knowledge and attitudes, and cannabis-related harms* - Year 1

Like the 3 other sub-studies in this research, this sub-study comprises the pre-phase of a pre-post study of the impact of the changes to cannabis law in WA. It is envisaged that the post phase will be conducted 18 months after the commencement of the new laws which occurred on March 22, 2004.

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OTHER REPORTS ON THIS RESEARCH

Sub-study 1

Fetherston, J. & Lenton, S. (2005) *Effects of the Western Australian Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme on public attitudes, knowledge and use – Baseline, Year 1*. Perth, National Drug Research Institute.

Sub-study 2

Chanteloup, F., Lenton, S., Barratt, M. & Fetherston, J. (2005) *Effects of the Western Australian Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme on regular cannabis users regarding attitudes, use, and drug market factors – Baseline, Year 1*. Perth, National Drug Research Institute.

Sub-study 5

Sutton, A. (2005) *Review of policy makers, police and judicial perspectives on the Western Australian Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme– Baseline, Year 1*. Perth, National Drug Research Institute.

Sub-study 7

Farringdon, F. & Lenton, S. (2005) *Effects of the Western Australian Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme on the attitudes and drug use of school children – Baseline, Year 1*. Perth, National Drug Research Institute.

Summary report

Lenton, S., Chanteloup, F., Fetherston, J., Sutton, A., Hawks, D., Barratt, M. & Farringdon, F. (In press) *An evaluation of the impact of changes to cannabis law in WA - Summary of the Year 1 findings*. Canberra: National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report on one of the Sub-studies of a larger project funded by the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund (NDLERF) to *evaluate the impact of changes to cannabis law in Western Australia (WA) on cannabis use, the drug market, law enforcement, knowledge and attitudes, and cannabis-related harms.*

This project is a pre-post evaluation of changes to legislation and regulations for minor cannabis offences as a result of recommendations of the WA Community Drug Summit held by the WA Government in August 2001.

Regular (at least weekly) users of cannabis are one group who may be at a higher risk of developing the adverse acute and chronic effects of cannabis, and in particular may be more at risk of dependence. They are also likely to be best placed to comment on the effect of the proposed changes on the cannabis market. Finally they are most likely to come to the attention of police and are thus well positioned to comment on the proposed changes in laws and the associated educational and other interventions for those apprehended under the proposed scheme.

Thus the aims of this sub-study were to explore the impact of changes in the laws applying to cannabis in WA on a sample of regular cannabis users in terms of:

- rates of cannabis and other drug use and attitudes re cannabis and the law.
- drug market issues: price, availability, source (user-growers v large scale criminal suppliers etc.), cannabis supplying, income from cannabis supplying, perceived risk of apprehension for supplying.

It is envisaged that phase two, the post phase, will be conducted at least 18 months after the enactment of legislative and other changes for cannabis in WA, which came into effect on 22 March 2004.

RESULTS

The results of the study will provide a good baseline for evaluating the impacts of the proposed legislative and other changes for cannabis in WA.

One hundred regular (at least weekly) cannabis users were recruited through newspaper advertising, flyers and by snowballing and interviewed between October 2002 and February 2003. Interviews were completed prior to the Cannabis Control Bill entering the WA Parliament on March 20, 2003. They were conducted by three interviewers in a private rented office, cafes/bars and occasionally at the participant's home. On average, each interview was 2 hours 14 minutes. The sample comprised 67 males and 33 females with a mean age of 32.2 years. Over half (56%) of the sample were single, 46% had completed some post-secondary education, and 61% were in paid employment.

Seventy-three percent of the sample used cannabis at least daily, consuming on average 7.9 units of cannabis (joints, cones or bongs) per day. Some 63% had used an illicit drug other than cannabis in the last 12 months.

Some 39% of the sample was deemed cannabis dependent on a standardised measure of dependence.

Nearly half (46%) of the sample reported prior contact with West Australian police regarding a cannabis-related offence and 87% of these were apprehended.

The most common form of cannabis they typically used was hydroponic heads (69%) followed by non-hydroponic heads (15%) but 50% indicated that given the choice they would prefer to use non-hydroponic heads.

Some 67% said they typically scored a bag or less (bag, foil, stick, gram, a few grams) the next most frequent amount being 'an ounce' (approx. 28 grams) nominated by 15% of respondents. Overall, 99% of the sample said that they typically scored an ounce or less over the last 6 months. These figures suggest the limits eligible for a CIN (of not more than 15 (\$100) and more than 15 but not more than 30 grams (\$150)) are both practical for police and will allow that most regular users, scoring their typical use amount, should be able to avoid a criminal charge if apprehended by police.

Sixty-five of the sample said there were aspects of their cannabis use that bothered them, however, 75% of the sample believed cannabis to be 'moderately' or 'very' safe.

Although 44% said that the prospect of being caught by police for using cannabis worried them, 71% said that such worries did not affect their use of the drug.

Some 65% of the sample said that over the last 6 months they had driven a vehicle whilst under the influence of cannabis, and 32% had driven whilst smoking the drug.

The cannabis market

Most respondents took an hour or less to 'score' or obtain their cannabis on their most recent occasion. Some 60% said that their last score was from 'a friend' and 30% from the 'dealer's home'. Some 38% said the original source of the cannabis at their most recent score was a 'backyard user-grower', 30% said a 'large scale supplier' and 32% 'did not know'.

According to respondents, over the previous 6 months a gram of cannabis typically sold for \$25, an ounce for \$250 (non-hydro) to \$300 (hydro). Some 80% of the sample said that the price of cannabis had been stable, the potency was 'high' (59%), and that cannabis was 'very easy' (60%) or 'easy' (31%) to get.

A number of respondents emphasised the importance of the strain or variety of cannabis plant, over whether the cannabis was hydroponically or non-hydroponically grown, as being most important with regards to potency. Availability of cannabis appears to depend upon a number of factors: personal contacts, seasonal factors,

whether the cannabis is hydroponically grown or not, and at times, the impact of police operations.

Overall, the data reinforces the view that there is not a homogenous cannabis market. There are small-scale user-growers, networks of self-suppliers, and large-scale organised suppliers. Different suppliers of cannabis may have different access to other drugs. While some buyers experience is that the person they buy cannabis from only supplies that drug, this is not the case for all buyers of cannabis.

Some 71% of the sample had grown cannabis at some point in their lives and 56% of these had done so in the last 12 months, mostly (77%) using non-hydroponic methods only.

Some 71% of respondents said that they had ever distributed cannabis ‘not-for-profit’ or bought on behalf of others ‘not-for-profit’ and 52% had done so in the previous 6 months. Overall, 50% of the sample had ever sold cannabis for profit and 13% had done so in the last 6 months.

Cannabis Law: Knowledge and attitudes

The vast majority (83%) of respondents understood that *prohibition with civil penalties* means, ‘still illegal, a fine, but no criminal penalty applies’.

Some 96% of the sample thought it should be legal to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use, and 94% that it should be legal to grow a cannabis plant.

Sixty-five percent of respondents agreed, to some extent, that police should test drivers for cannabis.

The overwhelming majority of respondents thought it would be unlikely they would be caught by police if they were in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use (96%), growing a small number of cannabis plants (88%), or selling a small amount of cannabis (88%).

Knowledge and attitudes toward the new system

Respondents were given a standardised verbal description of the proposed legislative changes for cannabis in WA and were then asked questions about their understanding of the Cannabis Infringement Notice (CIN) scheme and their attitudes toward it.

Most respondents understood which of the possession and cultivation offences attracted civil and criminal penalties under the new scheme.

Whereas 79% of the sample agreed either ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ that possession of less than 30 grams should be a non-criminal offence, the fines for the possession offences under the CIN scheme were less likely to be rated as ‘fair’.

Whereas 87% of the sample agreed that it was fair that growing less than 2 non-hydroponic plants should be a non-criminal offence, only 11% agreed that it was fair that criminal penalties applied to the cultivation of 2 hydroponic plants.

Some 88% of the 57 respondents who commented suggested that there would be no impact on cannabis use generally as a result of the legal change. In many cases cannabis use, or lack thereof, was understood to occur for reasons separate from any legislative framework in place.

Seventy-nine (85%) of 93 who commented said that the proposed changes would have no impact on their use of the drug.

Overall, 72% said they intended to grow cannabis under the proposed scheme. Some 84% of these said that they would grow under the 2 plant limit and 81% said that they would only be growing non-hydroponic cannabis. Overall, 72% (50) of those (n=69) who intended to grow cannabis when the proposed scheme was introduced said they were only intending to grow 1-2 non-hydro plants, that is, they would grow within the limits eligible for an infringement notice.

Most respondents who commented believed that the proposed changes would have little impact on the cannabis market generally. Specifically, as most saw the cannabis and other drug markets as distinct and only saw low levels of violence and rip-offs associated with the market, little change was expected in these.

With regards to personal involvement in the market, 32% said it would have no impact, 19% said that under the proposal they were more likely to share cannabis with a small group of peers, 15% were likely to purchase less often.

Twenty (27%) of 73 who commented said they would consider selling cannabis for profit once the proposed scheme was introduced. This included 12 who were current sellers and would continue to so, 4 who had sold in the past said that they might consider selling again once the proposed system came into effect, and 4 who had never sold cannabis before, but would consider it.

Seventy-five (81%) of the 93 who commented said that either they, or cannabis users in general, would be more willing to seek treatment as a result of the proposed changes. Some 34 respondents specifically commented that there would be an increased willingness to seek treatment due to the removal of some of the criminality associated with cannabis use.

Twelve respondents discussed their views of the educational session option incorporated in the CIN scheme. In all cases they believed the session would result in an increased willingness for users to seek treatment.

BACKGROUND

THE LARGER STUDY

This is a report on the first phase of one of the seven sub-studies of a larger project funded by the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund (NDLERF) to *evaluate the impact of changes to cannabis law in Western Australia on cannabis use, the drug market, law enforcement, knowledge and attitudes, and cannabis-related harms*. NDLERF agreed to initially fund Year 1 of this 2 year study to be conducted over 3 years.

The cannabis law changes in WA

This larger project is a pre-post evaluation of changes to legislation and regulations for minor cannabis offences as a result of recommendations of the WA Community Drug Summit held by the WA Government in August 2001. The WA Government endorsed the Summit's recommendations on 27 November 2001 and, as a result, set up a *Ministerial Working Party on Drug Law Reform* to provide advice on how the recommended cannabis and other drug law reforms could be implemented. The Working Party presented its report (Prior, Swensen, Migro et al., 2002) to the Minister of Health in March 2002. As a consequence the *Cannabis Control Bill 2003* was introduced into the WA Parliament on 20 March 2003 and passed both houses of Parliament on 23 September 2003. The *Cannabis Control Act 2003* came into effect on 22 March 2004. The main features of the changes to cannabis law exemplified in the Act and the accompanying initiatives are summarised in the box below.

The Cannabis Infringement Notice (CIN) Scheme

Principles and Goals:

The scheme recognises that cannabis, like other drugs has the capacity to cause harm.

The scheme should:

- Not encourage use, nor patterns of use which may increase harm;
- Reduce the adverse social costs of being apprehended for a minor cannabis offence;
- Move cannabis supply away from large-scale, criminal, commercial suppliers;
- Free up the police and the courts to deal with more serious crimes.

Key Features^[1]:

- The possession of cannabis for personal use remains illegal.
- An adult possessing up to 15 grams of cannabis is eligible for an infringement notice with a penalty of \$100.
- An adult possessing more than 15 but not more than 30 grams of cannabis is eligible for an infringement notice with a penalty of \$150.
- Possession by an adult of a used smoking implement attracts a penalty of \$100.
- Cultivation by an adult of not more than 2 non-hydroponic cannabis plants is eligible for an infringement notice with a penalty of \$200. Adults in households where there are more than 2 plants are not eligible for an infringement notice. Persons cultivating cannabis hydroponically are not eligible for an infringement notice but are subject to criminal prosecution.
- Offenders are required to pay the penalty in full within 28 days or complete a specified cannabis education session.
- Those receiving more than two infringement notices across more than two separate days within a three-year period do not have the option of paying a fine. They must complete the education session or face a criminal charge.
- Juveniles are not eligible for an infringement notice under the CIN scheme but can be cautioned and directed to intervention programs.
- Police will lay criminal charges against persons who attempt to flout the intention of the scheme, for example by engaging in cannabis supply, even if they are only in possession of amounts otherwise eligible for an infringement notice.
- Where those otherwise eligible for an infringement notice face more serious charges for other concurrent offences police will issue criminal charges for the cannabis matters, rather than issue a CIN.
- Thresholds for dealing have been reduced from 100 grams or 25 plants to 100 grams or 10 plants.
- Persons possessing hash, or hash oil are not eligible for an infringement notice.
- Implementation of the scheme has been accompanied by a public education campaign on the harms of cannabis and the laws that apply.
- 'Head shops' (cannabis paraphernalia retailers) and hydroponic equipment suppliers now are subject to regulation.
- The scheme will be subject to ongoing monitoring and review.

[1] After the data collection for this sub-study was conducted in February 2003 the Government made two changes to the scheme proposed by the Working Party. Given the timing of these changes it was not possible to evaluate public attitudes to these as part of this sub-study. These changes involved: (1) Making possession of a used smoking implement an offence under the CIN scheme attracting a \$100 fine. (2) In response to an Upper House amendment moved by the Opposition, The Government decided to cap the number of notices so that those receiving more than 2 infringement notices across more than 2 separate days within a 3 year period will not have the option of paying a fine. They will have to complete the education session or face a criminal charge.

Aims and Objectives

The evaluation investigates: police implementation of the changes; drug market effects; impact on regular cannabis users, population prevalence, knowledge and attitudes regarding cannabis and the law; effect on school children; effect on apprehended cannabis users; and population impact on health problems associated with cannabis use.

The specific objectives of the project are to look at the impact of the changes to cannabis legislation and regulation introduced in WA as a consequence of the recommendations of the WA Community Drug Summit on:

- population based prevalence of cannabis use, attitudes, knowledge regarding cannabis and the law, and deterrent effect of cannabis law.
- rates of cannabis and other drug use and attitudes re cannabis and the law among regular cannabis users.
- drug market issues: price, availability, source (user-growers Vs large scale criminal suppliers etc.), cannabis supplying, income from supplying cannabis, perceived risk of apprehension for supplying.
- attitudes, and practices of members of the law enforcement and magistracy regarding expectations of the legislative changes and their effects on the drug market.
- school students: knowledge of law, attitudes to cannabis, cannabis use and experience of the drug market.
- perceptions of school teachers regarding the influence on students and drug education in schools and judicial sectors involved in enforcing the new legislation and regulations for minor cannabis offences.
- perceptions of law enforcement personnel on the influence of the new legislation and regulations for minor cannabis offences on the drug market and it's dynamics.
- police attitudes (re cannabis, law, goals of the scheme etc.) and practices (discretion, net widening etc.)
- individuals apprehended under the existing cannabis cautioning scheme and the new scheme in terms of cannabis use, attitudes to the law and social impacts
- trends in law enforcement activity in relation to minor cannabis offences including the number of apprehensions (arrests, cautions and infringement notices issued), and comparison with cautioning and arrest data prior to the legislative change in order to determine the extent of net widening, and the burden or savings on the criminal justice system.
- numbers of people seeking treatment for cannabis-related problems
- serious road and other injuries, and psychosis and violence and related hospital admissions among the population in general, and young males in particular.

Study design

The study consists of seven sub-studies, four of which entail data collection before, and 18 months after, the proposed changes are implemented. This time frame should allow for lags in implementing components of the proposed changes and the bedding down of these. The sub-studies with no year one component will largely be retrospective studies of existing data or retrospective reports from subjects. A summary of the sub-studies follows.

Sub-studies with a year one component

- *A study of the effects of changes in cannabis law in WA on general population prevalence of cannabis use, attitudes, knowledge regarding cannabis and the law* – A primarily quantitative study involving a pre-post telephone survey (n = approx. 800 per wave) and additional analysis of existing pop survey data during the post change phase.
- *A study of regular (weekly) cannabis users regarding rates of cannabis and other drug use, drug market factors, and attitudes re cannabis and the law* – Comprising an in-depth qualitative and quantitative interview with (n = approx. 100 per wave) investigating both impacts on patterns of use and drug market factors (especially original source of cannabis)
- *A study of impact of legislative change on attitudes and drug use behaviour of school children* – A qualitative and quantitative survey of Year 9 and Year 12 students (n = approx 2600 per wave)
- *A study of police, policy makers and judicial attitudes (re cannabis, law, goals of the scheme etc.) and practices (discretion, net widening etc.)*. Involving primarily qualitative interviews (n= approx 30) and possibly some focus groups (n=3).

Sub-studies with no year one component

- *A study of individuals apprehended under the new scheme in terms of cannabis use, attitudes to the law and police, and social impacts* – This is a descriptive interview study with approx. 80 ex-piators and 80 non-ex-piators.
- *An analysis of law enforcement data for individuals apprehended under new scheme and comparison of that with those apprehended under the existing cannabis cautioning scheme* - Involving retrospective analysis of existing data.
- *A study of existing treatment seeking and cannabis-related morbidity and mortality indicator data* – Involving retrospective analysis of using time series data on treatment utilisation and health indicators.

WHY STUDY REGULAR CANNABIS USERS?

Regular cannabis users are a particularly important group to study for three main reasons. Firstly, previous research on the evaluation of the social impacts of the cannabis expiation notice scheme in South Australia has tended to focus on the impact on population rates of use and rates of use by school children (Donnelly, Hall & Christie, 1999, 2000). However, it is likely that those who are already regular users of

the drug may be a sentinel group for detecting changes such as in rates of cannabis use or engaging in cannabis cultivation under the proposed law reforms for cannabis in WA. Secondly, because of their familiarity and experience with operating in the cannabis market, regular users are perhaps most able to comment on the possible and consequent impacts of the proposed changes in the cannabis market. Finally, regular users are probably most likely to find themselves having contact with the law regarding cannabis use and are thus best positioned to comment on the proposed changes in laws and the associated educational and other interventions for those apprehended under the proposed scheme.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What follows is a review of the literature germane to this sub-study.

Prevalence of cannabis use

Cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug in Australia as it is in most other industrialised nations (Hall, Johnston, & Donnelly, 1999; Miller & Draper, 2001; United Nations International Drug Control Programme, 1997). Since 1985 self report data concerning drug and alcohol use has been collected nationally in Australia in household surveys conducted as part of the National Drug Strategy (formerly the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse). Surveys were conducted in 1985, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004. In the most recent of these surveys, 33% of all respondents aged 14 or over reported ever having used cannabis (lifetime use), with about 11% having used the drug in the past year (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005). Forty-six percent of Australians who had ever used cannabis continued to do so, having used in the past 12 months (Maxwell, 2001). In 1998, 17% of those Australians who used cannabis in the past 12 months used the drug every day, 25% smoked it at least once a week, but not daily, 16% smoked it once a month, 12% every few months, 16% once or twice a year, and 9% less often (Adhikari & Summerill, 2000).

The National Drug Strategy Household Survey indicated that use of cannabis in the last year by 14-19 year olds increased from 29% to 35% between 1995 and 1998 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1999). Young women evidenced a particularly marked increase in use over this period. The most recent survey of drug use by Australian students confirmed that cannabis is the illicit drug, most commonly used by secondary students, with 29% of this group reporting use at some time in their life (White, 2001). Some 28% of 14 year olds (year 9) had ever used cannabis, while 15% had used it in the last month and 10% used the drug in the last week. By age 17 (year 12) 50% had ever used the drug, 20% had used it in the last month and 11% had used in the last week (White, 2001).

The public health effects of cannabis

Like any legal or illegal drug, cannabis has the capacity to cause harm. The public health significance of cannabis use is affected by the severity of the health effects experienced by individual users as well as the prevalence of cannabis use in the population. While most cannabis use is experimental and intermittent, the major

health risks are more likely to be experienced among those using the drug regularly (daily or near daily) over several years or more (Martin & Hall, 1997, 1998). The current public health burden of cannabis at current population use rates is probably low, and far less than that associated with alcohol and tobacco (Hall, 1995; Hall & Babor, 2000). However, as the prevalence of heavy cannabis use increases and the age of initiation declines, the public health burden is likely to increase (Hall, 1995) and, as such, it has been argued that more attention should be paid to the public health impact of the drug, especially on Western societies where use among young people is gradually increasing (Hall & Babor, 2000). The major public health burden associated with cannabis is likely to be associated morbidity rather than mortality (Hall, 1995).

The health effects of cannabis on users

Although the public health burden of cannabis use is currently small, people who use cannabis, particularly long-term heavy users, can experience significant adverse health effects. The most probable health effects have been identified in recent authoritative systematic reviews of the literature (eg. Hall & Solowij, 1998; Hall, Solowij, & Lemon, 1994; Kalant, Corrigan, Hall, & Smart, 1999; Martin & Hall, 1997,1998). These are summarised below.

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Probable acute harms

The acute toxicity of cannabis is low and there have been no recorded deaths due to cannabis overdose. The available evidence indicates that it would be very difficult to consume a lethal dose of cannabis via conventional routes of administration, such as inhalation and ingestion (Hall et al., 1994). Swift et al noted that the most probable acute harms associated with cannabis use are generally self limiting and do not persist beyond intoxication (Swift, Copeland, & Lenton, 2000). They are:

Negative psychological effects, including anxiety, dysphoria, panic and paranoia, which are most common in naive users and can lead to panic attacks (Hall, 1995). More experienced users may experience these effects after larger doses of THC (Hall & Solowij, 1998; Hall et al., 1994).

Disruption of cognitive function, including memory learning and processing of time, which could be disruptive to every day tasks reliant on complex cognitive processing (Beardsley & Kelly, 1999; Smiley, 1999). Clearly this includes many tasks associated with learning in the school environment.

Psychomotor impairment. Some of the most potentially hazardous acute problems with cannabis intoxication occur because it can produce dose response impairments in a wide range of functions that are relevant to complex psychomotor tasks such as driving a motor vehicle. These include: slowed reaction time, and information processing, impaired perceptual-motor coordination and motor performance, impaired short term memory, attention and signal detection and tracking behaviour and slowed time perception (Martin & Hall, 1997,1998). There is general agreement that cannabis use has the capacity to impair driving performance (Robbe, 1994; Smiley, 1999), but

this impairment seems ‘moderate’ at most (Chesher, 1995; Hall & Babor, 2000; Robbe, 1994). However, there is no clear evidence that cannabis-related impairments increase the risk of involvement in road crashes (Chesher, 1995; Hunter, Lokan, Longo, White, & White, 1998). The extent to which cannabis use contributes to road crashes is controversial (Hall & Solowij, 1998). Nevertheless there has been a large body of evidence linking cannabis with such accidents and some observers have suggested that the effects may be underestimated (Ashton, 1999; Tutt, Bauer, Arms, & Perera, 2001). Controlled epidemiological studies have not established that cannabis-only users are at increased risk of being involved in road injury (Hall & Babor, 2000). A complicating factor in the interpretation of epidemiological data is that when cannabis is present in the body fluids of persons involved in traffic accidents, alcohol is also present in about 80% of cases (Smiley, 1999). Studies of the effects of cannabis on road tests have typically shown only modest impairments, probably because cannabis users are more aware of their level of impairment and are less inclined to take risks than alcohol users (Hall & Solowij, 1998) and may compensate for their impairment although this is not possible where events are unexpected or where continuous attention is required (Smiley, 1999).

Increased risk of psychotic symptoms amongst vulnerable individuals. There is some evidence to suggest that heavy cannabis use may be associated with acute psychosis. If cannabis-induced psychoses exist, they would require very high doses of THC, the prolonged use of highly potent forms of cannabis, or a pre-existing vulnerability (Hall & Degenhardt, 1999).

Probable chronic harms

The most probable effects of daily or near daily, use of cannabis over several years are:

Cannabis dependence, characterised by an inability to control use, continued use despite problems, withdrawal and tolerance to the effects of the drug (Hall & Solowij, 1998; Hall et al., 1994; Johns, 2001). It may be very difficult for the cannabis dependent person to change their pattern of use, which can increase the likelihood of experiencing other health and social problems including reduced work or educational performance (Swift et al, 2000).

Subtle cognitive impairment, which can affect attention, memory, and the organisation and integration of complex information. According to evidence available to date, these impairments do not appear to be grossly debilitating, but their reversibility is unknown (Solowij, 1998).

Adverse respiratory effects, such as chronic bronchitis (Hall, 1995; Hall & Solowij, 1998; Martin & Hall, 1997, 1998), and pre-cancerous changes arise from cannabis (Hall, 1995) which is smoked. Waterpipes or “bongs”, which are frequently used by young Australian users may deliver greater concentrations of tar (Gieringer, 1996).

High risk groups

Certain groups may be at a higher risk of developing the adverse acute and chronic effects of cannabis. These include the following.

Adolescents. Young people are one group, who may be at a higher risk of developing the adverse acute and chronic effects of cannabis, and in particular may be more at risk of dependence (Chen, Kandel, & Davies, 1997). Although the majority of

adolescent cannabis use is experimental, early onset has been related to poor mental health, significantly higher rates of subsequent substance use, juvenile offending, and unemployment (Fergusson & Horwood, 1997). A recent longitudinal study failed to find any evidence that cannabis use in adolescence was associated with an increased risk of later mental health problems, but adolescent use of tobacco and alcohol independently increased the risk of a later mental health disorder (McGee, Williams, Poulton, & Moffitt, 2000). Another recent longitudinal study concluded that, by itself, early onset of cannabis use did not lead to problematic use or progression into other drug use, but the extent of use (especially daily use) was a significant factor (Kandel & Chen, 2000). A number of prospective longitudinal studies have found that early cannabis use has been associated with poor educational achievement, and in particular early school leaving (Lynskey & Hall, 2000). Reviews suggest that these associations are due to common or overlapping risk factors and life pathways between young people, who may be predisposed to cannabis use and those at increased risks of these other outcomes, rather to causal connections between cannabis use and these other problems (eg. Fergusson & Horwood, 1997; Hall et al., 1999).

Pregnant women. Continued smoking throughout pregnancy probably impedes fetal development and increases the risk of having a low birth weight baby and possibly increases the risk of a premature delivery (Hall, 1995; Hall et al., 1994; Martin & Hall, 1997,1998). Where cannabis has been found to have an effect on birth weight this has been smaller than that for tobacco smoking (Hall & Solowij, 1998).

Pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease. Individuals with respiratory (eg. asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema) or cardiovascular disease (eg. cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease and hypertension), are at risk of having their conditions aggravated by cannabis use (Hall & Solowij, 1998; Hall et al., 1994).

Those with a comorbid mental or substance use disorder. Individuals with schizophrenia who use cannabis are probably at increased risk of precipitating a psychotic episode (Hall & Solowij, 1998; Hall et al., 1994). People who are, or have been dependent upon other substances are probably at increased risk of developing dependence on cannabis (Hall & Solowij, 1998; Hall et al., 1994).

Drug law enforcement

Despite the substantial costs associated with drug law enforcement, estimated to be \$450.6 million (Collins & Lapsley, 1996) in Australia during 1992, there is little evidence that these strategies reduce the overall level of illegal drug use and drug-related harm (Sutton & James, 1996). Although the stated aims of most law enforcement bodies in Australia is to target the high level organisers involved in the

Table 1: WA drug arrests 1999/2000 by consumer/provider

Drug Type	Consumer		Provider		Total*	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cannabis	5409	79.8	1373	20.2	6782	76.8
Heroin & other opioids	360	74.5	123	25.5	483	5.5
Amphetamine type stimulants	810	73.5	292	26.5	1102	12.5
Cocaine	3	50.0	3	50.0	6	0.1
Hallucinogens	51	70.8	21	29.2	72	0.8
Steroids	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unknown / other	281	73.4	102	26.6	383	4.3
All Drugs	6914	78.3	1914	21.7	8828	100.0

Adapted from (Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence, 2001)

** Totals may differ from ABCI report as they exclude missing data*

Table 2: Annual seizures by type of drug, WA, 1998-2000

Drug Type	1998		1999		2000	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cannabis	16798	84.1	17467	82.7	16746	72.6
Amphetamine	1019	5.1	1360	6.4	2016	8.7
Ecstasy	190	1.0	214	1.0	337	1.5
Methamphetamine	41	0.2	88	0.4	156	0.7
Dexamphetamine	52	0.3	88	0.4	111	0.5
Cocaine	79	0.4	12	0.1	31	0.1
Heroin	852	4.3	808	3.8	661	2.9
Morphine	27	0.1	40	0.2	25	0.1
Opium	11	0.1	43	0.2	14	0.1
LSD	91	0.5	77	0.4	104	0.5
Other Specified	251	1.3	255	1.2	379	1.6
Unknown Powder	551	2.8	660	3.1	2474	10.7
Total	19962	100.0	21112	100.0	23054	100.0

Adapted from (WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office and WA Police Service, 2001)

importation, production, financing, and/or distribution of illicit drugs, the most tangible outcome of supply reduction strategies is that large numbers of drug users, as opposed to drug suppliers, get arrested (Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence, 2001; Sutton & James, 1996). In 1999 there were 9,657 drug charges made in WA, which comprised 12% of all charges (Hargreaves & Lenton, 2001). Tables 1 and 2 show that in WA, as elsewhere, the vast majority of drug offenders are charged with simple possession, and the greater proportion of these for the possession of cannabis. The largest numbers of drug seizures are also for cannabis.

While some members of the community may be deterred from crime by the threat of being caught, the effect is substantially less than many believe (MacCoun, 1993). Unintended harm can occur from drug supply reduction strategies if some people shift from a lower risk pattern of drug use (eg. cannabis use) to a higher risk pattern of use (eg. injecting heroin). Being caught moves certain users into treatment, but may lead to higher risk patterns of drug use (Weatherburn, Lind, & Forsythe, 1999) such as a reluctance to seek medical assistance when it is clearly required (Allsop, in press).

New approaches to drug law enforcement aim to re-shape, rather than totally suppress, illicit drug distribution and consumption, with the overarching objective to ensure that laws are enforced in ways that keep health, welfare and other harms, as well as drug-related crime, to a minimum (Hellowell, 1995; Sutton & James, 1996). However, for the most part, law enforcers have been asked to exercise *discretion* in the name of harm reduction which poses difficulties for many police who have been trained in a 'black and white' approach to law enforcement (Lough, 1998), and also leaves them vulnerable to allegations of corruption, as diversionary programs are less accountable forms of legal actions for police. Organisational constraints on police, public expectations of police, and the culture of the police service can impede the adoption of a more community focussed approach to drug law enforcement (Lough, 1998).

The cannabis market

It has been estimated that in WA during 1995 up to 217,000 mature cannabis plants were grown, and the 218,600 persons used the drug, consumed cannabis with a market value of up to \$440 million (Select Committee into the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981, 1997). There is considerable evidence of organised crime involvement in large scale cannabis production and distribution in Australia (Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence, 1997; Select Committee into the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981, 1997) which brings considerable additional risks to the wider community. This includes the use of 'booby traps', armed guards and large animal traps to protect sizeable outdoor crops, and setting up vacant houses with elaborate indoor hydroponic systems where electrical wiring is diverted around the meter to avoid detection (Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence, 1997).

It has been reported that law enforcement operations targeted at organised crime groups have not had any noticeable impact on the operation on the cannabis market as a whole, with little evidence of any reduced availability of cannabis (Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence, 1998). Australian studies of first-time offenders suggest that less than 30% grow cannabis as their main source of supply, and most buy from the illicit market (Christie, 1999; Lenton, Bennett, & Heale, 1999). There is some evidence that when cannabis users go to the illicit market to buy their cannabis, they are exposed to a range of other illicit drugs (Lenton et al., 1999; Maddox & Williams, 1998). Although 85% of cannabis users surveyed in the 1998 Australian NDS household survey said that they usually bought the drug from 'friends or acquaintances' (Adhikari & Summerill, 2000) there are good reasons to believe that in many cases the original source of the cannabis may be larger scale commercial suppliers. WA data from the 2000 Illicit Drug Reporting System suggested that the price of cannabis in this state was about \$25 per gram, and \$300-\$350 per ounce of hydroponic cannabis. Non-hydroponic cannabis 'bushweed' sold for \$200-\$250 per ounce. Cannabis was described as 'easy to get' by drug injecting respondents in this

survey (Hargreaves & Lenton, 2001). While this sample cannot be said to be representative of cannabis users more generally, injecting drugs users, as typically also frequent users of cannabis, are well placed to comment on the availability and price of the drug.

In a 1997 study of first time apprehended cannabis users in WA, Lenton, Bennett, and Heale (1999) asked those who had used the drug in the previous 12 months about their experience of the cannabis market. The most common source of supply was purchase from family or friends (45%), followed by growing one's own (29%) and gifts from family or friends (17%). Only 9% said their main source was a 'dealer or supplier'. Some 52% stated that they had not grown any of the cannabis that they smoked in the previous 12 months, and only 17% had grown more than half of what they had smoked in that year. Some 39% of respondents who had bought cannabis in the previous 12 months said they had been offered other drugs when they went to buy cannabis. Just over one third (35%) of all respondents said that they had sold cannabis in the previous 12 months. Some 78% believed that it was 'unlikely' or 'very unlikely' that they would get arrested if they were growing one to five cannabis plants.

Cannabis offending in Western Australia

Unpublished data compiled from data collected from the Western Australia Police Service, and the WA Department of Justice by The Crime Research Centre at UWA (Ferrante, Personal Communication, 31 May 2001) indicates that:

In 1999 39% of all cannabis charges laid in WA were for possession/use, 45% were for implement offences, 11% were for make/grow offences, and 5% were for trafficking. There was one import/export charge.

During 1999 in 13.2% of the apprehensions or arrests for possession/use of cannabis the person was held in custody, prior to their court hearing.

The majority of cannabis possession/use offences in 1999 were committed by males (82%), non-Aboriginals (90%), and adults (92%). Juveniles comprised a slightly larger proportion (8.9%) of those arrested for a possessing a smoking implement than they were for possession of cannabis itself (8.2%). Young adults (18 to 21 years of age) comprise 24.1% of all possession/use cannabis charges.

An analysis of re-arrest statistics for the period 1984 to 1994 found that 48% of first offenders charged with cannabis possession/use as their most serious offence had not been re-arrested up to ten years later and when they were re-arrested this was mostly for other minor offences, 25% being driving a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs, 19% for another possess/use cannabis offence, 5% for other minor drug offences and 4% for make/grow cannabis. (Lenton, 1999)

Most drug charges which reach court are heard in the Court of Petty Sessions. In 1999, the last year for which data are available there were 6671 cannabis charges and 1826 charges for drugs other than cannabis heard in the WA Court of Petty Sessions. In 1999 58% of the cannabis charges heard on the Court of Petty Sessions were for possession/use, .05% were for make/grow offences, 6% were for trafficking and a further 36% were for implement offences. For drugs other than cannabis, 81% were

for possession use, 5% were for manufacture, 9% were for trafficking and 4% were for other charges.

Cannabis law and deterrence

Studies of the 11 American states which decriminalised cannabis use and of South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory which have also removed criminal penalties for the possession and use of cannabis, found that the prevalence of current use had not disproportionately increased in these jurisdictions as a result of the change in the legal status of the drug (Single, Christie, & Ali, 2000). Conversely, jurisdictions which have retained total prohibition have not been able to deter a substantial proportion of residents from using cannabis (eg. Lenton, 2000; Lenton, Ferrante, & Loh, 1996). Recent research on convicted cannabis users in Western Australia and those receiving an expiation notice under the South Australian system found that the majority did not change their rate of cannabis use as a consequence of their legal involvement. For example, 91% of the South Australian expiator group and 71% of the West Australian group said that their cannabis use was not at all affected by their apprehension one month after this, and this difference was a function of their level of cannabis use prior to their apprehension. The vast majority of each group said that if they were caught again they would not stop using the drug (Lenton, Hummeniuk, Heale, & Christie, 2000). However, a criminal conviction had a real and detrimental effect on people's lives in areas such as employment and further involvement with the police. Most of the convicted cannabis users studied had a respect for the law in general, but disagreed with the laws pertaining to cannabis use (Lenton, Hummeniuk et al., 2000).

Donnelly et al. (2000) showed that over the 10 year period from 1985 there has been an increase nationally in self-reported lifetime (i.e. ever), cannabis use with a greater degree of increase in South Australia than in the average of the other Australian states and territories. However, because jurisdictions which had maintained strict cannabis prohibition recorded similar rates of increase to South Australia the South Australian increase in lifetime use was unlikely to be due to the civil penalties system which operates in that state (Donnelly et al., 2000). Even if South Australians were slightly more likely to have ever tried cannabis than those in other states, this did not result in higher rates of weekly use in that state (Donnelly et al., 2000).

Analysis of data from national household surveys suggested that there had been an Australia-wide increase in the rates of lifetime cannabis use among those aged 14 to 29 years, however, the introduction of a civil penalties scheme in South Australia did not in itself appear to have increased cannabis use by secondary school students in that state (Donnelly, Hall, & Christie, 1999).

Cannabis law and social impacts

The South Australian Cannabis Expiation Notice System is the longest running example of alternative models of cannabis regulation in Australia and the most extensively evaluated in the country (Ali et al., 1999; Christie, 1991, 1999; Sarre, Sutton, & Pulsford, 1989; Sutton & Sarre, 1992) and probably world-wide (Lenton, Heale et al., 2000). The number of Cannabis Expiation Notices (CENs) issued in South Australia increased by some 2.5 times from 6,200 in 1987/88 to 16,321 in 1995/96 (Christie & Ali, 2000). This 'net widening' appears to be the result of

changes in police practices and the administrative ease with which the notices can be issued, rather than an escalation in the prevalence of cannabis use (Christie, 1999; P. Christie & Ali, 1995). Most CENs are issued for possession of less than 25 grams of cannabis and half of all CENs issued were received by people in the 18 to 24 year old age group (Christie, 1999). According to Christie (1999), those of lower socio-economic status were more likely to be represented among those issued with infringement notices and those who were prosecuted for failing to pay their fine. The average value of CENs issued was about \$70 and up until recently only 45% of fines issued are paid, probably due to financial hardship, particularly for younger offenders and those who may have received multiple CENs over time. About 92% of the unpaid CENs forwarded for prosecution resulted in a conviction (Christie, 1999; Christie & Ali, 2000). Research on South Australian cannabis users who had expiated found that most did so to avoid court and a criminal record (Humenuik, Brooks, Christie, Ali, & Lenton, 1999). Most who failed to expiate reported that it was because of financial difficulties and many underestimated the amount they would ultimately have to pay. Three quarters of the non-expiators were not aware that they would get a criminal record if they did not expiate (Humenuik et al., 1999). Recent changes to the CEN system, such as more options to dispense with CENs, and providing more information on the CEN about the consequences of failing to pay, have attempted to improve this (Christie, 1999).

Research comparing the social impacts of receiving a CEN under the South Australian system, to those for receiving a criminal conviction under the system of strict prohibition which operated up until recently in Western Australia, found similarities between both groups of offenders (Lenton, Humenuik et al., 2000). However, large differences were evident in terms of the adverse impacts of the respective legal sanctions. The majority of both, the South Australian CEN group and the Western Australian convicted groups saw themselves as largely law abiding and had respect for the role of police as law enforcers and the rule of law in general. However, the adverse social consequences of a cannabis conviction far outweighed those of receiving an expiation notice. A significantly higher proportion of the Western Australian sample, compared to the South Australian sample, reported adverse social consequences of being apprehended for a cannabis offence. These included problems with employment, further involvement with the criminal justice system, as well as accommodation and relationship problems. Although the study failed to find differences in the impacts on capacity to travel overseas, this was likely due to methodological limitations (Lenton et al., 1999; Lenton & Heale, 2000; Lenton, Humenuik et al., 2000).

A survey of the South Australian public found there was some confusion about the legal status of expiable offences. For example, 53% of the sample believed that possession of 3 cannabis plants was legal. On the question of the future of the CEN scheme 43% were in favour of the status quo, 14% were in favour of making it more lenient and 38% favoured making it stricter (Heale, Hawks, & Lenton, 2000). In WA, 72% supported civil penalties for cannabis use, but only 37% said cannabis should be 'as legal as alcohol' (Lenton & Ovenden, 1996).

A cost analysis of the CEN scheme conducted by Brooks, Stathard, Moss, Christie and Ali (1999) concluded that even with a relatively low rate of expiation, the scheme was estimated to save \$1.4 million a year over a criminal penalties system for minor cannabis offenders. An intensive interview study of law enforcement and criminal justice personnel working in South Australia found that senior officials in the South

Australian Police and other departments generally agreed that the CEN scheme should remain in place, as it provided an efficient way of dealing with minor cannabis offences and had advantages for offenders by avoiding a criminal conviction. However, some senior police believed that the 10 plant limit was being exploited by commercial cannabis cultivation enterprises spreading their operations across smaller plantations (Sutton & McMillan, 2000). As a result the expiable plant limit was reduced from 10 to 3 plants in June 1999 (Christie & Ali, 2000).

No differences were found in the self-reported attitudes of employers in both SA and WA towards employing people with prior cannabis offences, with both groups reporting that they did not discriminate against such offenders (Allsop, Ask, Christie, Phillips, & Davies, 1999). This finding was somewhat at odds with the reported experiences of cannabis offenders in the two states (Lenton, Hummeniuk et al., 2000).

SUB-STUDY AIMS

The aims of this sub-study are to explore the impact of changes in the laws applying to cannabis in WA on a sample of regular cannabis users in terms of:

- (1) Their use of cannabis (frequency, situational factors, functionality, mode of administration, etc.) and other drugs; cannabis-related attitudes and knowledge; drug use history; cannabis use and driving, prior involvement with the law; and their knowledge and attitudes towards the existing and proposed cannabis law and accompanying interventions;
- (2) Their perceptions of the drug market for cannabis in WA including: market indicators such as price, perceived potency and availability; sources of cannabis supply (i.e. small time user/grower Vs larger scale commercial supplier); offers of other drugs when buying cannabis; and experience of cannabis supply.

METHOD

RECRUITMENT

The main way participants found out about the study was through newspaper (Appendix 1) and flyer (Appendix 2) advertising (n=70), followed by word-of-mouth from a non-participant (n=17), and word-of-mouth from a prior participant or snowballing (n=12) (missing=1). These results are presented in Table 3. The first advertisement was placed in the West Australian on Saturday 12 October 2002, generating half of the sample (n=50); the second in the free entertainment magazine *Xpress* on the following Thursday, generating 10 participants. In December, flyers were placed at both a smoking paraphernalia store and a record store, generating 4 participants; and an advertisement was placed in a community newspaper, generating 6 participants.

Table 3: Recruitment Source

Source	Frequency	Valid Percent
The West Australian	50	50.0
Xpress magazine	10	10.0
Community Newspapers	6	6.0
Flyer	4	4.0
Non-participant	17	17.0
Snowballing from prior participant	12	12.0
Not Sure/Don't Know	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Missing = 0

SCREENING

The screening process consisted of potential respondents being asked four questions when they called to register their interest in participating. Respondents were asked their age, the frequency with which they used cannabis, the length of time they had been using, and the way in which they became aware of the study. The questions were asked in such a way that they did not lead potential participants to provide particular responses. To be eligible for the study respondents had to be using cannabis on a weekly or more frequent basis for at least the last three months. Those who did not meet the screening criteria were informed of this without providing detailed information so as to avoid the possibility of the prerequisites being made public via word of mouth. The screening form is presented in Appendix 3.

A second screen was implemented at the time of interview where respondents were again asked the same series of questions. In cases where the participant was ineligible, the interview was terminated in such a way that they were not made aware of it ceasing prematurely. This was again intended to avoid having the prerequisites made known. Since respondents were financially reimbursed for their time at the beginning of the interview, a participant who failed the second screen would have been reimbursed. It should be noted that this was not a common occurrence.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews were conducted by three interviewers in a private rented office, cafes/bars and occasionally at the participant's home. Four pilot interviews were conducted in October 2002 (between 11th and 21st). Slight modifications were then made to the questionnaire and the decision was made to retain data from the pilot interviews (which were recoded where necessary) in the main sample. The entire sample was interviewed over 126 days, through October 2002 to February 2003. On average, each interview was 2 hours 14 minutes (sd=0:29, range=1:15 to 3:30) including written responses and tape-recorded verbal responses. The approximate length of audio taped responses ranged from less than 15 minutes to over one hour. The interview questionnaire and show cards used in the interviews are presented in Appendix 4 and 5 respectively.

ETHICAL ISSUES

The study was approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HR 36/2002). All subjects were fully informed, both verbally and in writing, of the aims of the study and the methods employed before consent to participate is requested. Subjects were advised that they were free to withdraw from the study should they wish to do so. There was no evidence that the collection of either the questionnaire or interview data gave rise to any distress in the participants. Subjects were asked on tape whether they understood the conditions of the research and whether they gave their consent to participate. Subject contact details (home or mobile phone number) were kept separately and securely in locked filing cabinets, and were destroyed immediately once they were no longer required. Subject contact details will not be able to be linked with the subject's data. No identifying data were recorded on questionnaires or transcripts of interviews. All data were identified with a numerical code.

The interviews were conducted by the Research Associate and suitably trained research officers with experience with illicit drug users. All interview materials, transcripts and completed questionnaires will be kept in locked cabinets at The National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University where they will be stored for not less than 5 years.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Age, gender and nationality

The resulting sample comprised 100 regular cannabis users. As such frequencies are reported here but equate to percentage values. The sample was two-thirds (n=67) male and one-third (n=33) female. The average age was 32.2 years (sd=10.7, range=16 to 58). There was no significant difference between the age distribution of male and female participants ($t(80.104) = .718, p > .05$). Two-thirds (n=68) of the sample described themselves as Australian-born non-Aboriginal, one participant identified as Aboriginal, and 30 were born outside of Australia (missing=1). All but two participants stated that English was the main language spoken in their home.

Family and living

Over half (n=56) of the sample were single, 23 were divorced or separated and the remaining 20 were married or in de facto relationships (missing=1). Forty-one participants had children: 19 had one, 10 had two and 12 had three or more children. Twenty-one participants indicated that their child(ren) lived with them. Three-quarters (n=75) of the sample were living in their own (rented or bought) house or flat and 21 were living in their parents' or family's home (other=4). The sample contained people who lived in each main area of suburban Perth; including central (n=11), western (n=9), northern (n=20), north-eastern (n=19), south-eastern (n=12) and southern (n=26) areas (refused=2, missing=1).

Education

Participants were asked 'What is the highest level of formal education you have obtained/completed?'. Forty-six participants had completed some post-secondary education: either a trade or certificate/diploma (n=19) or a degree (n=27), including five with post-graduation qualifications. All remaining 54 participants had completed Year 8, all but two had completed Year 9, all but four had completed Year 10, 31 had completed Year 11 and 24 had completed Year 12.

Employment

Sixty-one participants stated that they were currently engaged in paid employment, including full-time work (n=23), part-time or casual work (n=28) and self-employment (n=10). Fourteen participants were studying, nine were engaged in home duties and one had retired. Twenty participants stated they were unemployed and 11 were receiving a sickness benefit/pension.¹

¹ Participants could choose more than one response.

Income

Participants were asked ‘Which income bracket best describes how much money you earned or were paid before taxes last year?’. About one-third (n=35) of the sample earned not more than \$12 000, one-third (n=34) earned between \$12 001 and \$30 000, and the remainder (n=30) earned over \$30 001 (missing=1). For most participants, their main source of income last month was either paid work (n=51) or benefits/allowances (n=40). Only one participant chose sale of drugs as her main source of income last month.

PATTERNS OF CANNABIS USE

Cannabis use and intoxication on the day of interview

Respondents were asked at their interview whether they had already used cannabis that day. Some 49.0% said they had and 51.0% had not. Those who had were then asked to rate their level of intoxication on a ten point scale where 0 was ‘not at all affected’ and 10 was ‘the most affected [they] had ever been’. The mean rating on this scale was 2.15 (sd.= 1.70) with a range from 0 to 6. These results are presented in Figure 1.

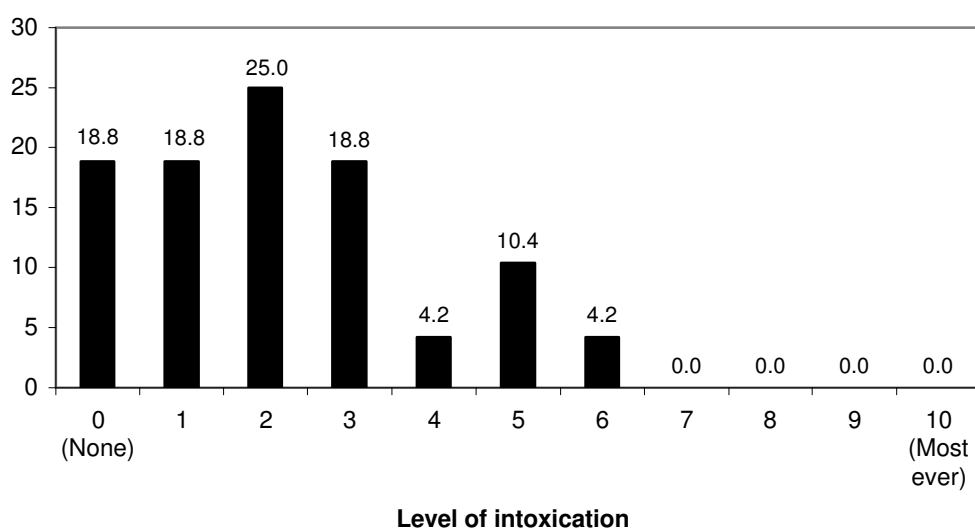


Figure 1: Rating of intoxication at time of interview from 0 (not at all affected) to 10 (the most affected ever been)

Age of first use

Respondents reported that their age at their initiation to cannabis use ranged between seven and 30. However, the mean age was found to be 15.9 years (sd=6.12). The age of initiation for male respondents was found to be slightly lower than that for females (15.8 vs 16.3 years), however, this difference was not found to be significant ($t=-.629$, $df=98$, $p=.531$).

By comparing the average age of initiation to cannabis of those respondents less than or equal to the median sample age of 31 years with those who were older, significant differences were observed with younger respondents displaying a mean age of initiation of 14.6 years and older respondents a mean age of 17.5 ($t=-7.359$, $df=51$, $p=.000$). This difference is likely to be reflective of a declining age of initiation to cannabis use in contemporary West Australian society. However, it should also be noted that such an analysis will be subject to a censoring effect as younger respondents will, by definition, have fewer years when they could commence cannabis use.

Age of regular use

The age at which respondents indicated that they had begun using cannabis 'on a regular basis' ranged between 12 and 46 years with a mean age of 19.5 ($sd=6.118$). Although the delay between initiation to cannabis use and the onset of regular use was occasionally seen to be very long with a maximum period of 31 years in one case, in the majority of cases the duration of this delay was relatively short. The average period was 3.6 years with 50.0% of respondents taking two years or less to commence regular use, and 19.0% commencing regular use within a year of first trying the drug.

Asked about how often they were consuming cannabis when they first began using the drug on a regular basis, 25.0% indicated that they were using it more than weekly, but not on a daily basis and 24.0% stated that they were using the drug around once a week. A further 38.0% reported daily or more frequent cannabis use at that time. Frequencies of use greater or less than this were seen to be relatively uncommon and are included in Figure 2.

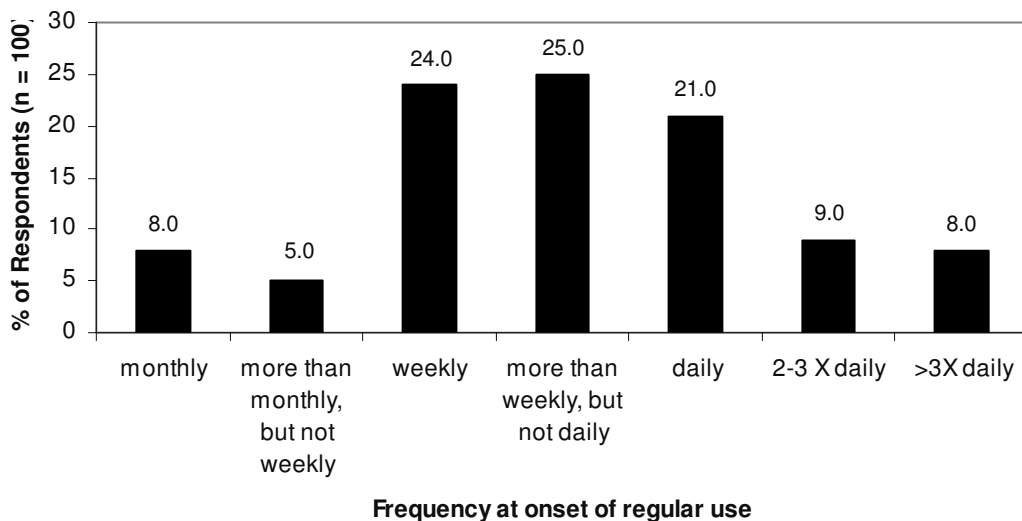


Figure 2: Frequency of cannabis consumption at onset of regular use

Most recent use of cannabis

Recency

When asked about the most recent instance in which they had used cannabis prior to the day of the interview, 83.0% of the sample indicated that they had last consumed the drug the previous day. A further 8% stated that they had last used cannabis two days earlier. Longer periods since the last instance of consumption were observed to be relatively uncommon and there were no members of the sample who had been without cannabis for longer than a week.

Location of use

By far the most common location of this most recent use of cannabis was in private homes with 70.0% of the sample having used the drug in their own home and a further 19.0% stating that consumption of the drug had occurred at a friend's home. Other locations were much less common and included use in the street/park or beach (4.0%) other public places (4.0%), at work (1.0%) and other undescribed locations (2.0%).

People used with

Table 4 shows that half of the sample indicated that the last time they had consumed cannabis they had done so in the company of friends. The second most common scenario (n=30, 22.2% of 135 responses) was that the respondent had consumed cannabis while alone. Another common situation was to use cannabis in the company of their partner (n=24, 17.8% of responses). Other individuals present at that last occasion when the respondent had used cannabis included other family members (n=10, 7.4%), children (n=9, 6.7%), acquaintances (n=5, 3.7%), workmates (n=5, 3.7%), and people not well known to the respondent (n=2, 1.5%).

Table 4: People used cannabis with – most recent occasion

Person	Frequency	%Responses	% Respondents
Friends	50	37.0	50.0
No-one (alone)	30	22.2	30.0
Partner	24	17.8	24.0
Other family members	10	7.4	10.0
Own child	9	6.7	9.0
Acquaintances	5	3.7	5.0
Work mates	5	3.7	5.0
People I don't really know	2	1.5	2.0
Total	135	100.0	135.0

Respondents could give more than one response

Form of cannabis used

The form of cannabis most commonly used at this most recent occasion was overwhelmingly heads reported by 80.0% of the sample. Use of hydroponically cultivated heads was described by 65.0% of the entire sample and non-hydroponic head by 15.0%. A mixture of hydroponic head and leaf was used by 7.0% of the sample at their most recent using occasion. Consumption of other types of cannabis was relatively uncommon. These results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Form of cannabis used on most recent occasion

Form	Frequency	Valid Percent
Hydroponic heads	65	65.0
Non-hydroponic heads	15	15.0
Mixture of hydro head and leaf	7	7.0
Mixture of non-hydro head and leaf	3	3.0
Non-hydroponic leaf	3	3.0
Mixture of non-hydro and hydro head	3	3.0
Don't know	3	3.0
Mixture of non-hydro head and hash oil	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Method of use

The methods by which cannabis had been consumed on this most recent occasion were seen to show considerable variation. By far the most common method, used by approximately one third (33.0%) of the sample was to smoke the drug via a wet bong. Smoking of cannabis in joints or pipes were the next most popular means of administration, each having been employed by 24.0% of the sample, and these were followed by 16.0% who indicated that they had used a bucket bong. These results are presented in Table 6. Interestingly, there were no respondents who reported having eaten cannabis at the most recent occasion of use. This may suggest that despite being understood to be a well known method of consumption, relative to the frequency of smoking cannabis, oral ingestion of the drug is uncommon among regular users of cannabis in the Perth metropolitan area.

Table 6: Method cannabis used on last occasion

Form	Frequency	Valid Percent
Wet bong	33	33.0
Joint	24	24.0
Pipe	24	24.0
Bucket bong	16	16.0
Both wet and bucket bong	2	2.0
Cone	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Missing = 1

It was noted that the age of respondents appeared to have some bearing on the method by which they had chosen to use the drug on this most recent occasion. While joints were used by one third (33.3%, n=16) of the sample above the median age of 31, this method had only been employed by 15.4% (n=8) of those who were younger than the median age. Conversely, bucket bongs were used by 23.1% (n=12) of the younger respondents, but only by 8.3% (n=4) of older ones. The differences between wet bongs and pipes were less marked with 34.6% (n=18) of younger respondents having used a wet bong as opposed to 31.3% (n=15) of older ones and 21.2% (n=11) of

younger respondents opting to use a pipe vs 27.1% (n=13) of older respondents. Unfortunately the spread of data here does not readily lend itself to chi square analysis as a means of testing for statistical significance. However, by dichotomising this most recent method of use into bong vs pipes and joints, significant differences in smoking implements utilised by different age groups are revealed. Bong was used by 61.2% (n=30) of respondents under 31 years as opposed to 36.6% (n=19) of older respondents and joints or pipes had been employed by only 38.8% (n=19) of these younger respondents, but by 60.4% (n=29) of the older portion of the sample ($\chi^2=4.543$, $df=1$, $p=.033$).

Quantity of cannabis used

There was a great amount of variation between the reported quantities of cannabis respondents had smoked on the last occasion they had used the drug. When asked to quantify the amount of cannabis units (i.e. joints/cones or bong) they had consumed, responses ranged from one quarter of a unit up to eighty units with a standard deviation of 10.10. The mean and modal amounts however were seen to be relatively conservative with a mean of 6.16 and a mode of 1. Although male respondents were found to smoke a slightly larger number of joints or cones on average than females (6.64 vs 5.22), this difference was not found to be significant ($t=.649$, $df=96$, $p=.518$).

Original source of cannabis

Respondents were asked if they were aware of where the cannabis they had smoked on the most recent occasion had originated from. Table 7 shows that perhaps unsurprisingly, nearly a quarter (23.0%) did not know the answer to this question. The most common response (36.0%) was that the cannabis had come from a “backyard” user/grower. This was followed by 28.0% who indicated that their source had been a large scale supplier. Interestingly for a sample of regular cannabis smokers, only 9.0% indicated that the cannabis had come from a supply that they had cultivated themselves. In addition to this, there were three individuals (i.e. 3.0%) who stated that their cannabis came from another, source. In one case ‘other’ referred to both large and small scale suppliers, in one it was ‘medium scale’ supplier, and another said their cannabis had ‘come from Amsterdam’.

Table 7: Original source of cannabis at most recent use

Source	Frequency	Valid Percent	Adjusted percent ^[1]
Backyard user - grower	36	36.4	47.4
Large scale supplier	28	28.3	36.8
Grew my own	9	9.1	11.8
Other	3	3.0	3.95
Don't know	23	23.2	-
Total	99	100.0	100.0

[1] Excludes don't know responses
There was 1 missing case

Typical Pattern of Use

Hours per day affected by cannabis

The amount of hours per day that respondents estimated that they were affected by cannabis ranged from just one hour (5%) up to 24 hours per day (6%). The average amount of time, however, was 7.3 hours with a mode of 4 hours per day (16.0%) (sd=6.07).

Frequency of cannabis use

Cannabis use on at least a daily basis was found to be typical of 73.0% of the sample, with the most common response by one quarter of respondents being that they would generally use cannabis 2 to 3 times a day. Only one respondent indicated that their cannabis use was typically limited to once per week and 12.0% stated that they would use more than 6 times a day. There was one individual who did not provide information in response to this question. This data is displayed in Figure 3.

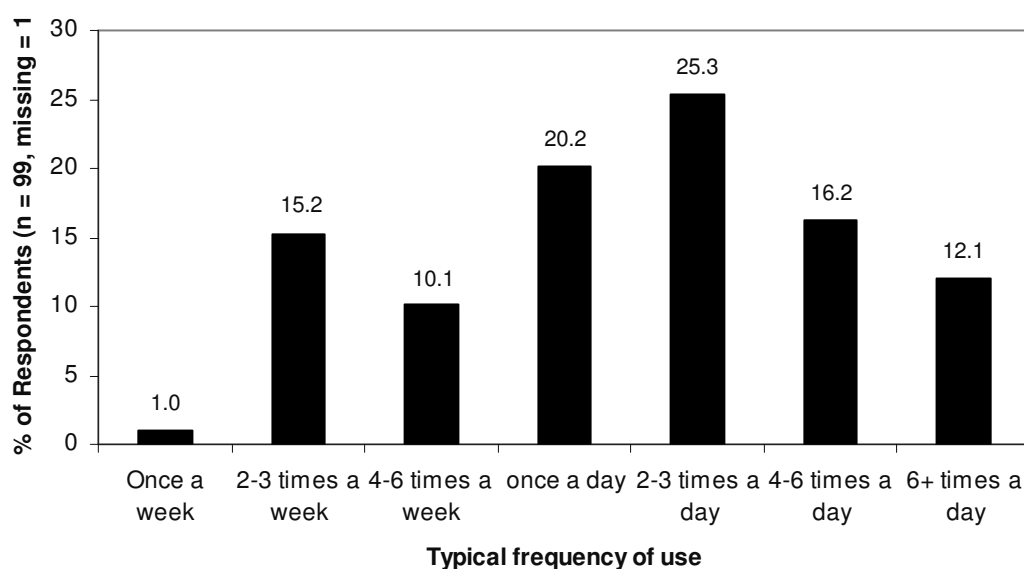
**Figure 3: Typical frequency of current cannabis use**

Table 8 shows that the typical patterns of use were longstanding. In over two thirds of cases (71.7%), the length of time respondents indicated that this frequency of consumption had been a typical pattern for them exceeded a year. The most common response was that the respondents had been consuming cannabis at approximately their stated rate for in excess of five years (37.4%).

Table 8: Duration of typical pattern of use

Duration of typical pattern	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
More than 5 years	37	37.4	37.4
Over 12 months to 5 years	34	34.3	71.7
7 to 12 months	8	8.1	79.8
1 to 6 months	18	18.2	98.0
Less than a month	2	2.0	100.0
Total	99	100.0	

Missing = 1

Form typically used

As seen with the most recent incidence of use, the most commonly used types of cannabis in general were again hydroponically cultivated heads (69.0%) and non-hydro heads (15.0%), as shown in Table 9. Other much less common types and blends were also observed including mixtures of hydro head and leaf (7.0%), mixtures of non-hydro head and leaf (3.0%), mixtures of hydro and non-hydro heads (2.0%) and one individual (i.e. one percent) who had typically had recourse to hash.

Table 9: Form of cannabis typically used

Form	Frequency	Valid Percent
Hydroponic heads	69	69.0
Non-hydroponic heads	15	15.0
Mixture of hydro head and leaf	7	7.0
Mixture of non-hydro head and leaf	3	3.0
Mixture of non-hydro and hydro head	2	2.0
Hash	1	1.0
Don't know	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0

Preferred form

Curiously a full half (50.0%) of the sample indicated that given the choice they would prefer to use non-hydroponic heads and only 38.0% stated that they preferred the hydroponically cultivated variety. There was also 12.0% who indicated that they had no preference with regards to this. This result may be viewed as suggesting that the predominance of hydroponic cannabis in the Perth market may not be a function so much of demand as one of supply economics and logistics. The age of respondents

appeared to play a role in this preference with respondents beneath the median sample age of 31 being significantly more likely to express a preference for hydroponically cultivated cannabis. Removal of those respondents with no preference from the analysis revealed over half (53.3%, n=24) of younger respondents preferred hydroponic cannabis as opposed to just 32.6% (n=14) of older respondents who felt this way ($\chi^2=3.868$, df=1, p=.049).

Method typically used

As seen with the most recent occasion of cannabis use, respondents indicated that for the most part the most common method by which they would consume cannabis was via a wet bong (34.0%). This was followed by one quarter (25.0%) of the sample who stated that their method they usually preferred was to smoke the drug in a joint and 21.0% who preferred to use a pipe. Use of a bucket bong was also not uncommon and was the favoured method of 17.0% of the sample. One individual (1.0%) said they usually smoked “cones” although once again, it was not clear if this referred to the use of a bong or a pipe. Another individual failed to answer this question. Also similar to the most recent occasion of use, it was noted that no individuals selected the oral ingestion of cannabis as being their most typical means of consuming the drug. These results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Method typically used

Form	Frequency	Valid Percent
Wet bong	34	34.3
Joint	25	25.3
Pipe	21	21.2
Bucket bong	17	17.2
Cone	1	1.0
Don't know/Not sure	1	1.0
Total	99	100.0

Missing = 1

It was again observed that those respondents favouring the use of bucket bongs tended to be members of the sample below the median age of 31 of whom 26.9% (n=14) preferred this method as opposed to just 6.4% (n=3) of older respondents. These older respondents appeared to be more partial to employing joints and pipes than younger respondents however these differences were not so pronounced. It was observed that 29.8% (n=14) of older respondents preferred joints vs 21.2% (n=11) of younger respondents and 27.7% (n=13) of older respondents tended to use a pipe as opposed to 15.4% (n=8) of younger respondents. There was little difference between age groups with regards to the use of wet bongs, this method being preferred by 34.0% (n=16) of older respondents and 34.6% (n=18) of younger respondents. Unfortunately, the frequency distributions here do not readily lend themselves to chi square analysis. However, by dichotomising the method of consumption into bongs versus joints and pipes, significant differences in preferences between age groups becomes readily apparent with bongs being preferred by 63.5% (n=33) of younger respondents as opposed to 41.3% (n=19) of older respondents, and a preference for joints or pipes by

36.5% (n=19) of younger respondents as opposed to 58.7% (n=27) of older respondents ($\chi^2=4.811$, df=1, p=.028).

People typically use with

Asked with whom they tended to use cannabis, respondents provided a similar array of persons to those described at their most recent use. However, being asked with which of these people would they use most often revealed that by far the most common answer was with friends (49.0%), and then by themselves (27.0%) and with their partner (21.0%). Other types of people with whom they would use cannabis with were seldom reported as the types of people they would use the drug with most frequently. This data is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: People in whose company cannabis is consumed

	Persons typically used with (% of responses, n=300)	Persons typically used with (% of respondents, n=100)*	Persons most used with (% of respondents, n=100)
Friends	30.0	90.0	49.0
Alone	19.3	58.0	27.0
Acquaintances	11.7	35.0	1.0
Partner	11.3	34.0	21.0
Other family members	11.3	34.0	1.0
Workmates	9.0	27.0	0.0
People I don't really know	7.0	21.0	0.0
Child	0.3	1.0	0.0
Missing/didn't answer	0.0	0.0	1.0
Total	100.0	300.0	100.0

* Totals exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted for this item

Quantity used on a typical day

When asked how much cannabis (cones, bongos, joints etc.) they would smoke in a typical day, responses ranged from 0.5 to 40 with a mean of 7.9 and a modal score of 3 (sd=8.03). Although males claimed to consume slightly more cannabis than females (mean of 8.15 vs 7.47) on a typical day, this difference was not found to be significant (t=.380, df=97, p=.705). It should be considered, however, that when attempting to quantify these typical levels of consumption that some level of caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of these results since there does not exist a standardised volume of cannabis or THC concentration that makes up units such as cones or joints. Furthermore, the assumption that these various units are essentially equivalent to each other is questionable.

Projected use in the next 12 months

When asked how likely it was that they would continue to use cannabis over the next 12 months, 70.0% of the sample indicated that they believed this to be 'very likely' followed by 20.0% who believed it to be 'quite likely'. Of the remaining 10

individuals, 5 indicated that it was ‘very unlikely’ that they would continue to use cannabis, 4 said it was ‘unlikely’ and 1 respondent stated that they didn’t know.

The majority of the sample (59.0%) said that the quantity of cannabis they would use in the coming 12 months would be likely to remain unchanged, and just over one third (34.0%) indicated that they thought they would use less. Just 4% of the sample believed that their use was likely to increase and 3 individuals didn’t know.

ESTIMATES OF POPULATION PREVALENCE OF CANNABIS USE

Respondents were asked to estimate what percentage of Australians aged 14 and over had ever used cannabis and what percentage had used in the last 12 months. The mean estimate of the proportion of Australians over the age of 14 who had ever used was 64.59% (sd.= 19.72, mode=80.00%), significantly higher than the figure from the 2001 National Drug Household Survey (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2002) of 33.1% ($t_{\text{one sample}} = 15.937, df=98, p=.000$). Similarly the mean estimate of the proportion of Australians over the age of 14 who had used cannabis in the last 12 months was 51.75% (sd.= 20.67, mode=60.00%), significantly higher than the figure from the 2001 National Drug Household Survey (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2002) of 12.9% ($t_{\text{one sample}} = 18.564, df=97, p=.000$).

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CANNABIS USE

It was found that despite being regular smokers of the drug, almost two thirds (64.6%, missing = 1) of the sample indicated that there were aspects of their cannabis use that bothered them, 96.0% agreed that there were health problems associated with use of the drug and 73.0% acknowledged that cannabis use could be associated with social problems. However, despite this acknowledgement that cannabis may have the potential to cause harm, 85.0% believed that cannabis could deliver health benefits and when asked to rate how dangerous or safe they believed cannabis to be, 53.0% of the sample believed cannabis to be ‘moderately’ safe and a 22.0% believed it to be ‘very’ safe. Only 14.0% considered it to be either ‘moderately’ or ‘very’ dangerous. The spread of opinions on this question are displayed below in Figure 4.

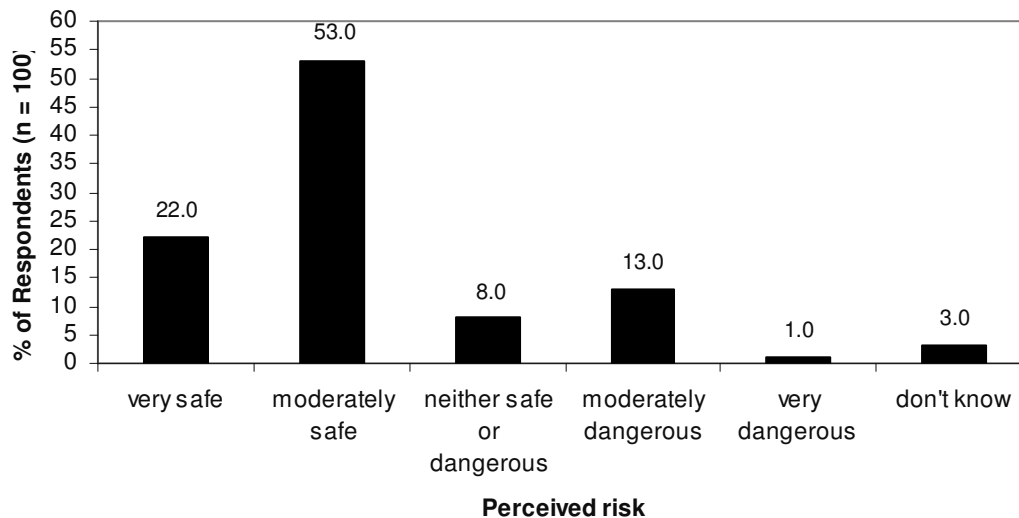


Figure 4: Respondents' perceptions of the safety/danger of cannabis

Health related problems

The 96.0% of the sample who believed that cannabis carried some health related problems were asked to indicate what they believed these health problems to be. The most commonly mentioned by 61.0% of respondents was lung cancer, followed by other respiratory diseases such as asthma 50.0%. Also common were concerns over psychological problems, primarily memory impairment (27.0%) and paranoia, anxiety and panic (27.0%). Bronchitis was specifically mentioned by 22.0% of respondents and the increased risk of schizophrenia by 17.0% (n=17). Other health problems mentioned specifically were relatively uncommon, and this data is presented in Table 10. There were also 64.0% of the sample who mentioned a wide range of miscellaneous conditions.

Table 12: Cannabis related health problems identified and/or experienced by respondents

Condition	Percent of responses identifying symptom (n=323)	Percent of respondents identifying symptom (n=100)*	Percent of respondents experiencing symptom (n=100)*
Lung cancer	18.9	61.0	9.0
Other respiratory conditions eg: asthma	15.5	50.0	15.0
Memory impairment	8.4	27.0	19.0
Paranoia, anxiety & panic	8.4	27.0	11.0
Bronchitis	6.8	22.0	12.0
Increased risk of schizophrenia or other psychosis	5.3	17.0	4.0
Adverse effect on brain function	3.4	11.0	5.0
Decreased concentration	2.8	9.0	7.0
Under achievement of a person's potential	2.5	8.0	2.0
Confusion or cognitive impairment	2.2	7.0	3.0
Behaviour problems	1.9	6.0	3.0
Addiction/dependence	1.5	5.0	2.0
Increased risk of motor vehicle accident	0.9	3.0	1.0
Impairment of physical coordination	0.9	3.0	1.0
Decreases sperm count/damages sperm	0.6	2.0	-
Failure at school or other educational institution	0.3	1.0	-
Other health problems	19.8	64.0	36.5
No symptoms	-	4.0	38.0
Total	100.0	-	-

*Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses allowed on this item

Although 38.0% of the sample had not experienced any health related symptoms, 31.0% had experienced one of these symptoms, and 11.0% had experienced two. There were also eight individuals who reported three symptoms, nine who had experienced four, two with five symptoms and one individual who claimed to have experience six cannabis-related health symptoms. On average respondents had each experienced 1.3 symptoms. It was noted that the number of symptoms manifesting had a mild positive correlation with the quantity of cannabis respondents consumed on a typical day. ($r=0.202$, $p=.045$). Table 12 shows that the four most commonly experienced cannabis-related health problems were memory impairment (19.0%), respiratory conditions such as asthma (15.0%), bronchitis (12.0%) and paranoia, anxiety and panic (11.0%).

Social problems

The 73.0% of the sample who indicated that they believed that cannabis had an association with social problems were asked to describe some examples of these. The most commonly expressed concern (24.0%) was that cannabis causes antisocial behaviour. This was followed by 16.0% of responses citing social problems arising from the illicit nature of cannabis use and by 11.0% who stated that cannabis could lead to under achievement of a person's potential. Other responses were observed to be relatively uncommon and this data is presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Cannabis related social problems identified and/or experienced by respondents

Social Problems	Percent of responses identifying problem (n=137)	Percent of respondents identifying problem (n=100)*	Percent of respondents experiencing problem (n=100)*
Causes anti-social behaviour	17.5	24.0	9.0
Use is illegal	11.7	16.0	9.0
Underachievement of potential	8.0	11.0	5.0
Family domestic problems	4.4	6.0	4.0
Loss of friends	4.4	6.0	2.0
Dangerous behaviour	3.6	5.0	0.0
Mix with an undesirable crowd	3.6	5.0	4.0
Emotional problems	2.9	4.0	1.0
Addiction/dependence	2.9	4.0	1.0
Failure at school or other education	2.9	4.0	2.0
Dangerous driving	2.2	3.0	0.0
Financial difficulties	2.2	3.0	2.0
Committing crime to support use	1.5	2.0	1.0
Domestic violence	0.7	1.0	0.0
Impaired perception	0.7	1.0	0.0
Other	30.7	42.0	22.0
No social problems	0.0	27.0	57.0
Total	100.0	164.0	119.0

* Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses allowed on this item

The patterns of frequency with which respondents had experienced such social problems tended to resemble that of their awareness of these problems. Thus, once again the most commonly experienced cannabis-related social problem was antisocial behaviour (9.0%) and that use of the drug was illegal (9.0%). This was followed by five respondents who believed their cannabis use had prevented them from realising their full potential and by four individuals reporting family domestic problems. Another four individuals indicated that their cannabis use had resulted in their mixing with 'an undesirable crowd'. The majority 57.0% of respondents had not experienced

any social problems as a result of their cannabis use, but 29.0% indicated that they had experienced one problem and a further 10.0% had experienced two. There were also three individuals (3.0%) who had personally experienced three such problems and one who had experienced four. On average respondents had experienced 0.62 social problems each. The correlation between social problems experienced and typical daily quantity of cannabis consumed was not found to be significant ($r=0.050$, $p=.620$).

Perceived benefits

Conversely, when asked how useful or beneficial cannabis is, only 10.0% of the sample believed the drug to be of ‘no benefit at all’ and the prevailing opinion held by 40.0% was that cannabis was ‘highly’ beneficial. A further 48.0% indicated that they believed cannabis to be either ‘slightly’ or ‘moderately’ beneficial. These results are displayed in Figure 5.

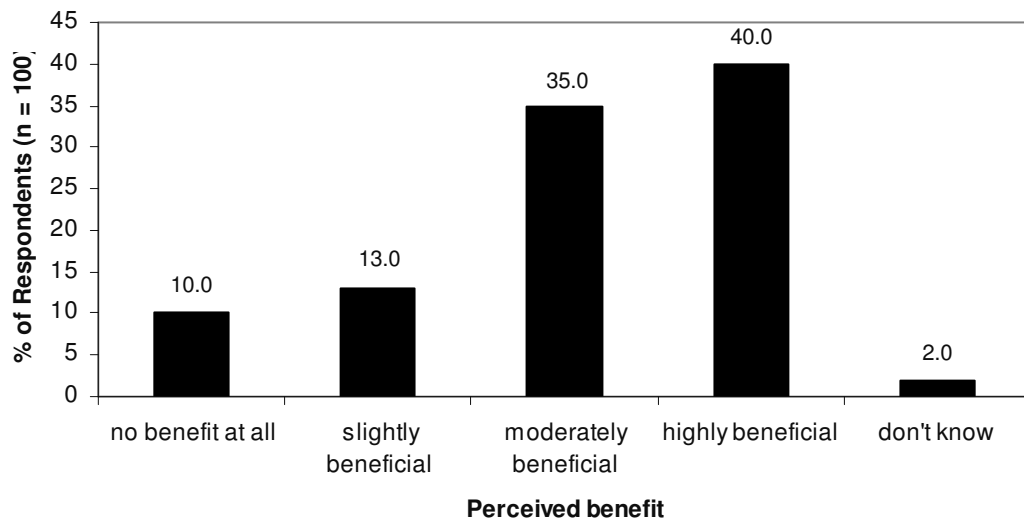


Figure 5: Respondents’ perceptions of the usefulness/beneficial nature of cannabis

The 85.0% of the sample who indicated that they thought cannabis use could result in health related benefits were asked to describe what they believed some of these benefits could be. The most commonly benefit of cannabis use nominated by 57.0% of respondents was its ability to reduce stress followed by its application in pain relief mentioned by 50.0%. The third most commonly mentioned (21.0%) was stimulation of appetite. These three benefits were also the three most commonly reported by respondents to have been personally experienced by 48, 30 and 11 individuals respectively.

The concept of using cannabis in the role of “medical marijuana” for the treatment of serious or uncomfortable conditions was also commonly mentioned with conditions cited including relief side effects of chemotherapy, pre-menstrual tension, AIDS, glaucoma, asthma and stomach cramps. This data is presented in Table 14 below.

Some 66.0% of the sample claimed to have experienced some form of cannabis-related health benefit.

On average, respondents had experienced 1.37 benefits each from their cannabis use with 30 individuals mentioning one benefit, 19 mentioning two, 11 mentioning three and much smaller numbers describing four (two individuals), five (three individuals), and six or seven benefits each mentioned by one individual. The number of benefits experienced was found not to be significantly correlated to the amount of cannabis consumed in a typical day ($r=0.024$, $p=.816$).

Table 14: Cannabis-related health benefits identified and/or experienced by respondents

Health benefit	Percent of responses (n=251)	Percent of respondents identifying benefit (n=100)*	Percent of respondents experiencing benefit (n=100)*
Relieves stress	22.7	57.0	48.0
Pain relief	19.9	50.0	30.0
Appetite stimulation	8.4	21.0	11.0
Helps with chemotherapy	7.2	18.0	0.0
Stops glaucoma	5.6	14.0	2.0
Helps with PMT	4.4	11.0	5.0
You feel good/have fun	4.4	11.0	7.0
Helps people with AIDS	2.8	7.0	0.0
Aesthetic enhancement	2.8	7.0	5.0
Improves concentration	1.6	4.0	3.0
Helps asthma	1.2	3.0	1.0
Relieves stomach cramps	1.2	3.0	2.0
Reduces aggression	0.8	2.0	0.0
Increases sex drive	0.8	2.0	2.0
Don't know/not sure	0.4	1.0	0.0
Other	15.9	40.0	21.0
No benefits	-	15.0	33.0
Total	100.0	266	170

*Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted for this item

Perceived risk of cannabis by frequency of use

With a view to understanding how great a risk of harm was thought to be posed by the consumption of cannabis to its users, respondents were asked to rate the extent of harm caused by the drug according to how frequently the drug was consumed. Although it appeared to be widely understood across the sample that increased frequency of use was likely to be associated with increased extent of harm (i.e. use of cannabis on a daily basis was thought to be more damaging than use on a monthly or

fortnightly basis), nevertheless the prevailing opinion (42.0%) amongst this sample of regular cannabis users was that daily cannabis use posed only a 'slight risk' or a 'moderate risk' (33.0%). Just 13.0% believed that use of the drug on a daily basis could pose a 'great risk'. Conversely, it was widely believed by almost two thirds of the sample (64.0%) that cannabis use on a monthly basis carried 'no risk at all'. These results are displayed in Figure 6.

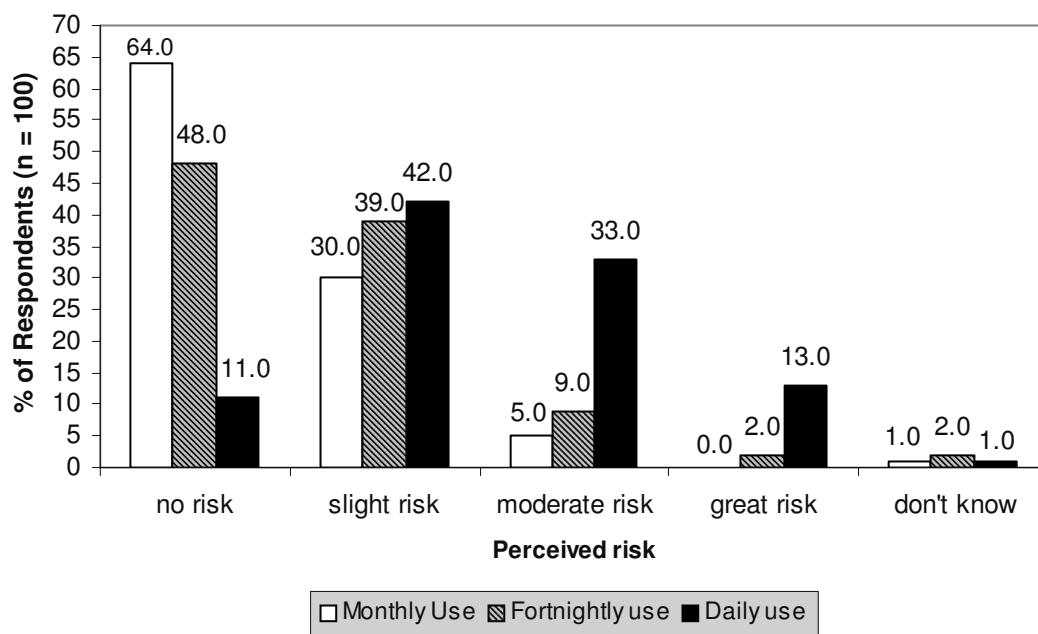


Figure 6: Perceived risk of harm arising from cannabis use by frequency of consumption

This finding was also reflected in the fact that only 18.0% of the sample indicated that they believed the 'harms associated with cannabis use outweighed the benefits', with 31.0% indicating that 'the risks and benefits were roughly equal' and a full half (50.0%) stating that they thought 'the benefits of cannabis outweighed the associated harms'.

Perceived addictiveness of cannabis

It was also noted that only 14.0% of the sample believed cannabis to be 'very addictive', and while just over two thirds of the sample believed that cannabis was either 'moderately' addictive (37.0%) or 'not very' addictive (32.0%), there remained 14.0% who did not think cannabis to be at all addictive. There were also three individuals who indicated that they didn't know.

Respondent's degree of cannabis dependence

In order to examine respondents' own degree of dependence upon cannabis, all subjects were asked a series of items from the Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS - Gossop, Griffiths, Powis & Strang, 1992). When asked "Did you ever think that your cannabis use was out of control?", 46.0% of the sample indicated that they had with

10.0% stating that they ‘always or nearly always’ had. Responses to this question were found to be positively correlated with the quantity of cannabis respondents reported consuming on a typical day. ($r=0.324$, $p=.001$). The responses to this item are displayed in Figure 7.

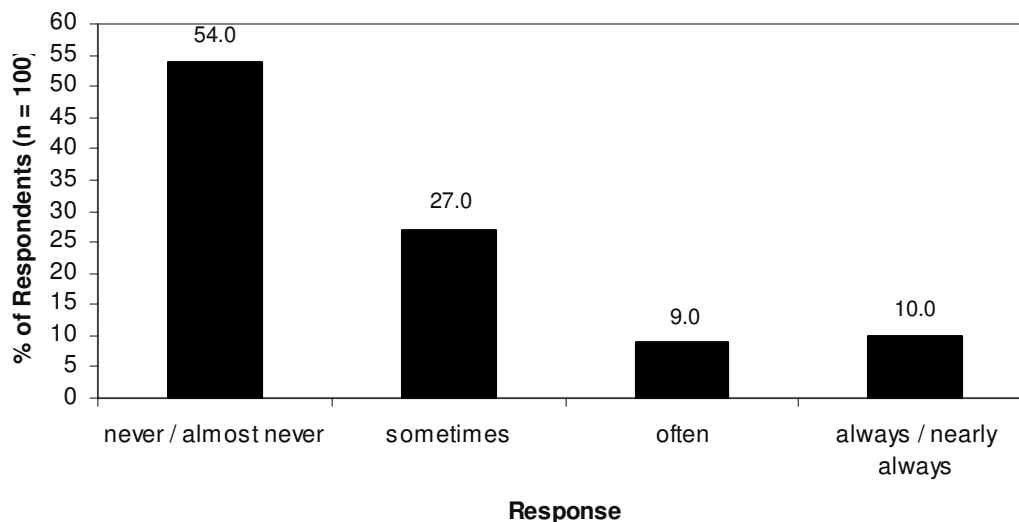


Figure 7: Frequency of responses to “Did you ever think your cannabis use was out of control?”

Similar data frequencies were seen in response to the item “Did the prospect of missing a smoke make you anxious or worried?” with 49.0% of the sample answering in the affirmative, including 10.0% who said ‘always or nearly always’. Results from this question was also found to be positively correlated with the amount of cannabis respondents reported consuming on a typical day ($r=0.397$, $p=.000$). The frequency of result is displayed in Figure 8 below.

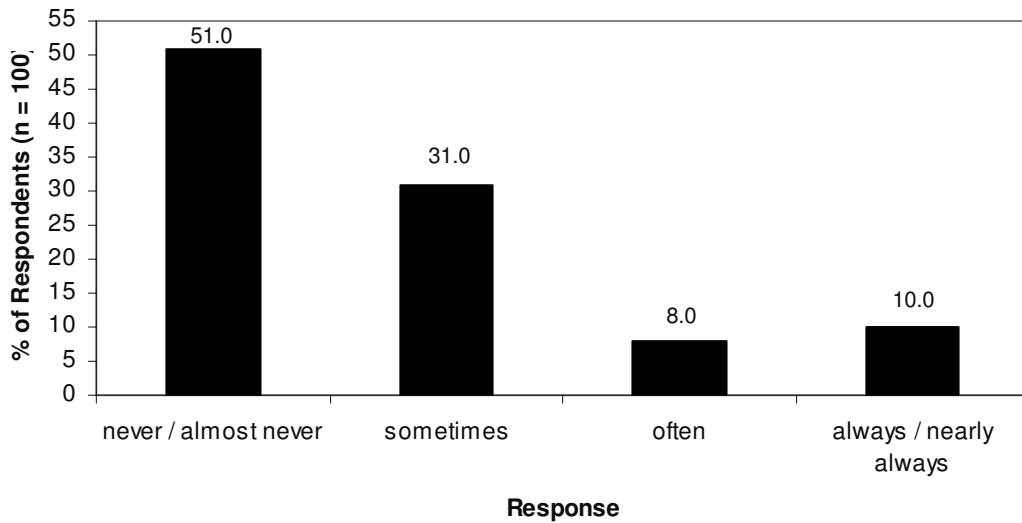


Figure 8: Frequency of responses to “Did the prospect of missing a smoke make you anxious or worried?”

Respondents were also asked “Did you ever worry about your use of cannabis?”. While this question saw a larger percentage of respondents (60.0%) indicate that they did worry to some extent, only 6% indicated that they were worried always and this item did not appear to have a significant correlation to quantities of cannabis consumed ($r=0.162$, $p=.109$). The frequency of responses is shown in Figure 9.

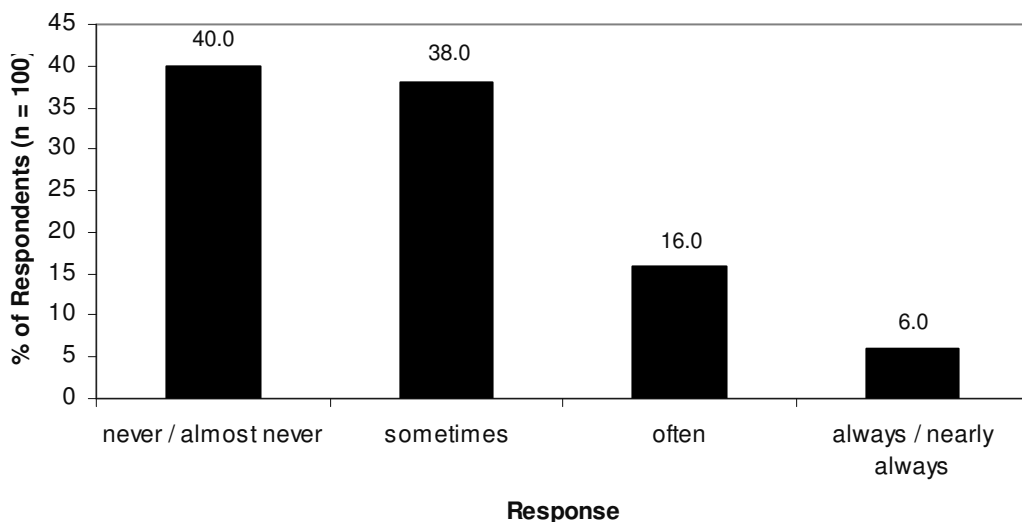


Figure 9: Frequency of responses to “Did you ever worry about your use of cannabis?”

The fourth SDS item “Did you wish you could stop?” by comparison was rarely agreed to with 66.0% stating that they had never or almost never felt this way. The 34.0% who concurred with the statement to some extent included just 10.0% who ‘always’ wanted to stop. No significant correlation with the amount of cannabis typically smoked was noted ($r=0.080$, $p=.431$). The data frequencies are displayed in Figure 10.

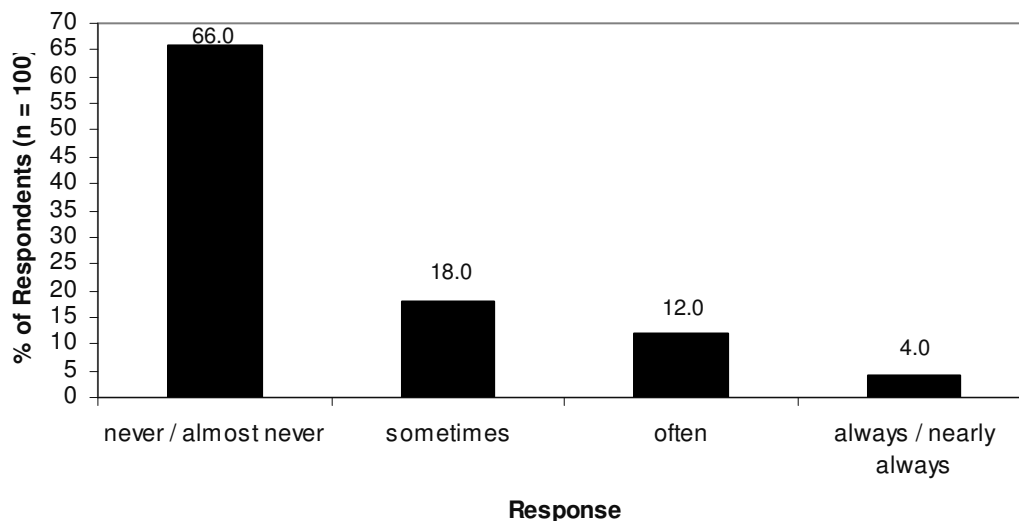


Figure 10: Frequency of responses to “Did you wish you could stop?”

While 60.0% of the sample reported in response to the question “How difficult did you find it to stop, or go without cannabis?” that they had no difficulty, 40.0% stated that they had experienced at least some degree of difficulty including 21.0% of the sample who found it ‘quite difficult’, 11.0% of the sample who found it ‘very difficult’ and eight percent of the sample who found the process ‘impossible’. This result was found to be positively correlated with respondents reported daily consumption of cannabis ($r=0.450$, $p=.000$). These results are shown in Figure 11.

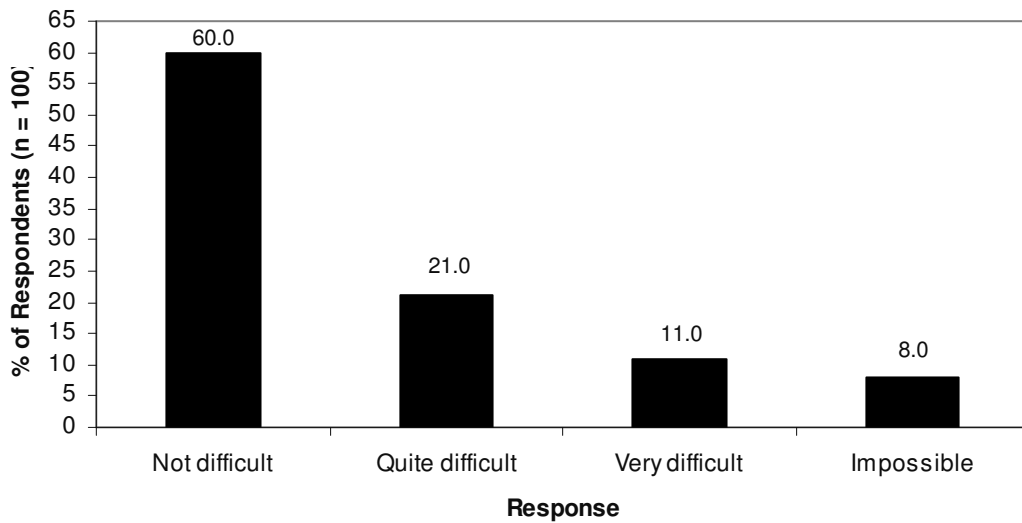


Figure 11: Frequency of responses to “How difficult did you find it to stop, or go without cannabis?”

Totalling the data from these five items generated a total SDS score, revealing a range from zero to 15 with a mean of 3.61 (sd=3.73). These results were found to have a positive correlation with the respondents’ self-reported quantity of cannabis consumed in a typical day. ($r=0.362$, $p=.000$), but interestingly, neither this total or any of the items used to generate it were found to have any significant correlation to the number of years respondents had spent as regular users of the drug.

The Short Dependence Scale has a cut off score of four or greater being defined as being indicative of some level of substance dependency. Using this measure revealed that 39.0% of the survey sample were to some degree dependent upon cannabis.

It was noted that the average cannabis consumption on a typical day for non-dependent responses averaged 5.7 units (eg. cones, joints, bongs) of cannabis while dependent subjects averaged 11.26 units. This difference was found to be significant ($t=-3.529$, $df=97$, $p=.001$).

INFLUENCES ON USE

Limiting cannabis use

Rules for self control of use

When asked if they had any rules or guidelines about when they would or would not use cannabis, an overwhelming majority of 83.0% indicated that they did indeed have such rules.

Refusing offers of cannabis

Participants were asked to describe the reasons why they may have refused an offer to consume cannabis in the last 6 months. It was found that 22.0% of the sample had not

refused any offers of cannabis. The most commonly cited reasons for refusing the drug were found to be relatively mundane ones: That 'it was the wrong time or situation' (22.0%), 'didn't feel like it' (17.0%), 'too stoned to have any more' (12.0%) and 'didn't like the offer (i.e. poor quality of cannabis etc.)' (10.0%). There were also a large proportion of responses that dealt with a wide range of miscellaneous reasons. Other reasons given were less common and these responses are included in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Reasons given for recently refusing offers of cannabis

Reason given	Percent of responses (n=135)	Percent of respondents (n=100)*
Did not refuse any offers	16.3	22.0
Wrong time/situation	16.3	22.0
Didn't feel like it	12.6	17.0
Too stoned to have any more	8.9	12.0
Didn't like offer (quality)	7.4	10.0
Suspicious of person offering it	5.9	8.0
Was working at the time	4.4	6.0
Was not using at the time	4.4	6.0
Couldn't afford it	2.2	3.0
Wanted to limit use	1.5	2.0
Was driving at the time	1.5	2.0
Other	18.5	25.0
Total	100.0	135.0

**Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted on this item*

Ceasing cannabis use

It was found that 59.0% of the sample had at some stage attempted to stop using cannabis altogether. The number of times this had been attempted ranged from once (by 23 respondents) up to the one individual who asserted that they had attempted to quit 100 times. On average however, members of the sample had attempted to cease cannabis use on five occasions. The length of time for which respondents had successfully abstained from use of the drug was seen to be highly variable ranging from two and a half days to 3650 days (i.e. approximately ten years) with a mean period of 446.5 days (i.e. slightly under 15 months) (sd=853.09). It was, however, noted that over half (55.9%) of the sample had returned to use within 120 days (i.e. four months).

Cutting down cannabis use

Respondents were also asked if they had ever tried to cut down on their cannabis consumption and 71.0% indicated that they had.

Significant Others

Proportion of friends using

Asked what proportion of their friends used cannabis, it was noted that the majority of respondents indicated that their acquaintances also consumed the drug. Only 2.0% said that none of their friends used cannabis and 19.0% said that “a few” of their friends used it. Far more common was the 26.0% of the sample who said that “about half” of their friends used cannabis and 43.0% who indicated that most of their friends did so. There were also 10.0% who said all their friends were users of cannabis.

Friends disapproval of use

This fact was reflected in the percentage of responses disagreeing to the statement “My friends disapprove of me using cannabis” with 44.0% of the sample disagreeing, 40.0% strongly disagreeing, and a further 3.0% who somewhat disagreed. There were just 2.0% who strongly agreed, 2% who agreed and 8.0% who somewhat agreed. There was also one individual (i.e. 1.0%) who didn’t know.

Family disapproval of use

A quite different pattern of responses was seen however in response to the statement “My family disapproves of me using cannabis”. This saw 21.0% of the sample in strong agreement, 29.0% who agreed and a further 13.0% who agreed somewhat. Disagreement was considerably less common with 9.0% somewhat disagreeing, 15.0% disagreeing, and 11.0% strongly disagreeing. There was also 2.0% of the sample who stated that they didn’t know.

Legal influences on use

Illegality of cannabis

Considerable polarisation of opinion was seen to exist with regards to questions surrounding whether the illicit nature of cannabis affected use. Some 51.0% of the sample indicated that cannabis’ illegality did not affect their use, and 48.0% of the sample stated that it did have an effect. There was one respondent who did not answer this question

Possibility of apprehension

Opinion was similarly split with regards to whether respondents worried about the possibility of being caught. While 55.6% indicated that this prospect did not worry them, 44.4% said that they were concerned about this. There was one respondent who did not answer this question.

However, 71.0% of the sample indicated that such worries about being caught did not affect their cannabis use at all, while 21.0% said it had a ‘slight’ effect and just 8.0% said it had a ‘moderate’ effect. There were no respondents at all who said this concern had ‘a lot of effect’. The 29 respondents who indicated that they did have concerns surrounding being caught and convicted were asked how these concerns affected their cannabis-related behaviours. While most aspects of these behaviours were uncommonly affected, 100.0% of these 29 indicated that the locations where they used cannabis were affected and just over half (51.7%) said it affected who they would use cannabis with. These effects on behaviour are dealt with in detail in Table 16.

Table 16: Areas of cannabis related behaviour affected by concerns over being caught

Behaviour Affected	Persons agreeing that behaviour is affected	Percentage of respondents affected (n=29)	Typical effect
Location of use	29	100.0	Avoid consuming in public
Persons used with	15	51.7	Avoid consuming with strangers
Method of consumption	10	34.5	More discreet methods of consumption (i.e. no bongs) in public
Frequency of use	7	24.1	Less frequently
Quantity used	5	17.2	Less quantity
Type of cannabis used	2	6.9	Little control over type or source
Other	1	3.4	Don't sell

If cannabis were as legal as alcohol

Asking respondents the question "If cannabis were as legal as alcohol, how much would it affect your cannabis use?" revealed that it was in fact very uncommon for this to be seen as having much effect. Just 5.1% of the sample indicated that it would have 'a lot' of effect and a further three percent believed it would have a 'moderate' effect on their use. Some 65.7% said that it would have 'no effect at all' and a further 26.3% said it would affect their use 'slightly'. There was one respondent who did not answer this question.

With regards to the nature of this effect, the most commonly influenced area was again seen to be the location where respondents would choose to use cannabis with 82.9% (n=29) stating that this would be affected. Also common was the effect reported on quantity used (40.0%), frequency used (40.0%) and the type of cannabis used (40.0%). This data is displayed in Table 17.

Table 17: Areas of cannabis related behaviour affected if cannabis were as legal as alcohol

Behaviour	Persons agreeing that behaviour is affected	Percentage of respondents affected (n=34)	Typical effect
Location of use	29	82.9	Would use in public
Quantity used	14	40.0	Generally use more
Frequency of use	14	40.0	Generally use more often
Type of cannabis used	14	40.0	Trend towards non-hydro use.
Persons used with	10	28.6	Less caution involved in choosing smoking partners
Method of consumption	8	22.9	Wider range of methods
Other	2	5.7	Less secrecy involved & could have “growers clubs”

RISKY CANNABIS USE

Respondents were asked to rate the frequency with which they participated in certain risky activities associated with the use of cannabis.

Using cannabis with other drugs

Responses to the question “How often do you use cannabis in conjunction with any other drugs?” showed that polydrug use amongst the sample was not uncommon with just 18.0% stating that this ‘never’ occurred, and 11.0% saying that it happened ‘rarely’. Some 35.0% indicated that it was something they did ‘sometimes’, 28.0% said they did so ‘often’ and 8.0% stated that they ‘always’ did so.

Further exploration of what these other substances might be produced 228 responses and revealed that the two most commonly implicated drugs were legal ones i.e. alcohol (62.0% of respondents) and tobacco (54.0% of respondents). Illicit drugs were mentioned less commonly, the most frequently cited being amphetamines by 39.0%, ecstasy by 35.0% and hallucinogens by 13.0%. Other drugs were rarely seen in this context. This data is presented in detail in Table 18.

Table 18: Other drugs used in conjunction with cannabis

Other drug used	Percent of responses (n=228)	Percent of respondents (n=100)*
Alcohol	27.0	62.0
Tobacco	23.5	54.0
Amphetamines	17.0	39.0
Ecstasy	15.2	35.0
Hallucinogens	5.7	13.0
Cocaine	3.9	9.0
Benzodiazepines	3.0	7.0
Inhalants	2.2	5.0
Heroin	1.3	3.0
Anti depressants	0.4	1.0
Other	0.9	2.0
Total	100.0	230.0

**Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted for this item*

Mixing with tobacco

When asked “How often do you use cannabis mixed with tobacco?” it was revealed that this was a relatively common practice amongst the sample with 28.0% indicating that they ‘always’ did so and 14.0% mixing their cannabis in this fashion ‘often’. However, the bulk of the sample were not inclined towards this practice with 35.0% ‘never’ doing it, 17.0% ‘rarely’ doing so and a further 6.0% who said that they did so ‘sometimes’.

Sharing joints and smoking implements

Asked how often they would tend to share smoking implements such as bongs or joints revealed this to be common practice with 28.0% indicating that this occurred ‘always’, 36.0% saying it occurred ‘often’ and 16.0% stating that this occurred ‘sometimes’. Just 12.0% of the sample said that they ‘never’ did this and 8.0% said that it happened ‘rarely’. Further exploration to determine who respondents typically shared with returned 181 responses which showed that most commonly this was with friends (83.0% of the sample) followed by with their partner (28.0%). Acquaintances were also commonly mentioned and constituted 25.0% of responses. This data is presented in full in Table 19.

Table 19: Persons with whom respondents typically shared smoking equipment

Persons shared with	Percent of responses (n=181)	Percent of respondents (n=100)*
Friends	45.9	83.0
Partner	15.5	28.0
Acquaintances	13.8	25.0
Other family members	8.8	16.0
Workmates	8.8	16.0
Strangers	7.2	13.0
Total	100.0	181.0

**Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted for this item*

Using around strangers

In response to the question “How often do you use cannabis with or around strangers?” 42.0% of the sample stated that they did this ‘rarely’ and a further 24.0% indicated that this ‘never’ occurred. There was 24.0% of the sample who indicated that they ‘sometimes’ did this and 10.0% who indicated that they did it ‘often’.

Binging

The question “do you ever binge?” (i.e. use cannabis to excess) saw the sample to be quite polarised with 52.0% indicating that they did not while 47.0% stated that they did. This phenomenon was affected to a statistically significant degree by whether the respondent was dependent upon cannabis according to their SDS score. While 39.7% of those not dependent upon cannabis indicated that they had been known to binge, 62.5% of those who were dependent indicated that they did so ($\chi^2=7.342$, $df=2$, $p=.025$). Generally speaking however, binging was not a common occurrence with over half (53.3%, $n=24$) of those who binged stating that they did so ‘rarely’ and 33.3% ($n=15$) saying that they did so ‘sometimes’. A further 8.9% ($n=4$) indicated that they did so ‘often’ and 4.4% ($n=2$) said that they ‘always’ did so. There were two individuals who did not provide data in response to this item.

Driving and other hazardous activities whilst under the influence of cannabis in the last 6 months

Questions were asked of respondents surrounding activities that may have been impacted upon by their consumption of cannabis over the last 6 months. These activities included driving of a vehicle, their work, their studies and the operation of machinery.

The driving of a vehicle whilst under the influence of cannabis was revealed to be of particular concern with 65.0% of the sample having done so within the last 6 months. The number of occasions when this had happened ranging from one to over 182, with a mean of 85.1 ($sd=77.45$). This occurred despite 46.0% of the sample stating that they thought this could affect their driving performance. The act of consuming cannabis while driving had been partaken of by 32.0% of the sample, with a range of occasions again ranging from one to over 182, but with a rather more moderate mean of 27.7 ($sd=53.71$).

Although the use of cannabis in other potentially detrimental contexts was considerably less commonplace than driving, it did occur despite common perceptions that the drug could impact negatively upon respondents' performance. These occasions included 39.0% of the sample who had been under the influence while working (ranging from one to 182 occasions with a mean of 63.8 (sd=68.98)), 26.0% (ranging from two occasions to 182 with a mean of 43.8 times (sd=56.55)) while studying and 27.0% while operating machinery (ranging from once to 200 times with a mean of 36.4 (sd=58.18)). In the first two of these instances, sizable proportions of the sample (21.0% and 24.0 respectively) mentioned that the use of the drug had the potential to impact upon these activities. This belief was lessened considerably in the case of operating machinery with just 9.0% of the sample believing that cannabis could have an effect on performance.

In general the act of actually consuming cannabis whilst undertaking the activity was considerably less common than undertaking the activity after consuming the drug, however, the use of cannabis while studying proved an exception. In this case consumption of cannabis while studying appeared in fact to be the norm and accounted for the vast bulk of instances in which studying while under the influence of the drug had occurred. This data is displayed in detail in Table 20.

Table 20: Risky behaviours undertaken whilst affected by cannabis in the last 6 months

Behaviour	% Undertaken whilst affected	Mean number of times while affected	% used during behaviour	Mean number of times used during behaviour	% believed cannabis could affect performance
Driven a vehicle	65.0	85.1	32.0	27.7	46.0
Worked	39.0	63.8	22.0	37.3	21.0
Studied	26.0	43.8	20.0	43.7	24.0
Operated machinery	27.0	36.3	9.0	17.3	9.0

These behaviours were also examined in the context of the combined effects of cannabis and alcohol. However, with the exception of driving motor vehicles, undertaking these activities while affected by both of these substances appeared to be very uncommon with just 2.0% having worked, 5.0% having studied and 3.0% percent operated machinery. With respect to driving motor vehicles while affected by both cannabis and alcohol, 28.0% of the sample reported having done so in the last 6 months between one and 26 times (mean=6.2 times, sd=7.32). Some 5.0% indicated that they had actually consumed these substances whilst driving, although this behaviour was relatively rare with no individual mentioning more than two occasions in the last 6 months.

Responses to the question "Do you think using cannabis and alcohol just before or while you drive has any effect on your driving performance?" resulted in just 19.0% of the sample agreeing. This figure appears somewhat curious in the light of the 46.0% who agreed that cannabis alone could have an effect on driving and may suggest that some degree of confusion may have surrounded this question as to

whether it pertained to the potential of substances to affect performance or respondents' personal experience of substances having done so.

TREATMENT

When asked if they would seek professional help in relation to their cannabis use if they felt they needed it, 68.0% of the sample indicated that they would do so. However, at the time of the survey only two individuals (i.e. 2.0%) were doing so. Of these, one was engaged in counselling and one with the mental health system. The periods with which they had been engaged with these treatments were observed to have been relatively short with the individual involved in counselling having been so for three months and the individual engaged with the mental health system for 6 months.

It was, however, noted that 33.0% of subjects had at one time or another been engaged in various treatments for substance abuse. Asked which drugs they had sought treatment for produced 58 responses and showed that the most common drugs they had sought treatment for were heroin (36.4%), amphetamines (36.4%) then followed by cannabis (30.3%) and alcohol (15.2%). Drugs for which respondents sought treatment are located in Table 21.

Table 21: Drugs for which respondents had received treatment

Drugs had treatment for	Frequency	Percent of responses (n=58)	Percent of respondents (n=33)*
Heroin	12	20.7	36.4
Amphetamines	12	20.7	36.4
Cannabis	10	17.2	30.3
Alcohol	8	13.8	15.2
Ecstasy	5	8.6	24.2
Hallucinogens	3	5.2	9.1
Cocaine	3	5.2	9.1
Tobacco	2	3.4	6.1
Benzodiazepines	1	1.7	3.0
Inhalants	1	1.7	3.0
Other	1	1.7	3.0
Total	58	100.0	175.8

**Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted for this item*

Although the most common form of drug treatment received by a large margin was found to be counselling, noted by 60.6% of those who had received treatment, a wide range of other treatment modalities was also seen. This data is presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Treatment modalities experienced by respondents

Treatment modality	Frequency	Percent of responses (n=65)	Percent of respondents (n=33) ^[1]
Counselling	20	30.8	60.6
General practitioner	8	12.3	24.2
Narcotics Anonymous	6	9.2	18.2
Methadone	4	6.2	12.1
Naltrexone	4	6.2	12.1
Therapeutic community	3	4.6	9.1
Mental health treatment	4	6.2	12.1
Buprenorphine	1	1.5	3.0
Other ^[2]	15	23.1	45.5
Total	65	100.1	197

[1] Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted to this item

[2]The other category included 8 respondents who nominated various drug rehabilitation programs, although whether they were counselling or therapeutic was unspecified. Six respondents nominated a range of non-specific treatment modalities.

When asked how long ago this treatment had occurred, respondents indicated that in some cases (5.0%) more than a decade had elapsed. However, the most common response (9.0%) was that it had taken place less than 6 months prior to participation in the survey. A range of periods was seen to exist in between these two extremes and this data is shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Length of time elapsed since most recent drug treatment.

Period lapsed	Frequency	Percent of respondents
Less than 6 months	9	27.3
Over 6 months but less than a year	4	12.1
One to two years ago	7	21.2
Three to five years ago	3	9.1
Six to ten years ago	5	15.2
More than ten years ago	5	15.2
Total	33	100.0

When asked if they had ever visited a mental health practitioner for a problem other than drug dependence, 43.0% of the sample said that they had done so. Psychiatrists were the most commonly mentioned (39.5%) mental health professional in this context, but were closely followed equally by general practitioners (37.2%) and psychologists (37.2%). A range of other mental health professionals were mentioned less frequently and this data can be located in Table 24.

Table 24: Types of mental health practitioner seen by respondents

Type of practitioner	Frequency	Percent of responses	Percent of respondents (n=43)*
Psychiatrist	17	25.8	39.5
General practitioner	16	24.2	37.2
Psychologist	16	24.2	37.2
Counsellor	7	10.6	16.3
Psychiatric ward	3	4.5	7.0
Mental health nurse	2	3.0	4.7
Emergency department	1	1.5	2.3
Other	4	6.1	9.3
Total	66	100.0	153.5

**Totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being permitted to this item*

The most commonly cited period of time to have elapsed since respondents last encounter with this mental health professional was one to two years ago (27.9%, n=12), but a range of other time periods were also observed ranging up to over a decade ago in 14.0% (n=6) of cases. This data is presented in Table 25.

Table 25: Length of time elapsed since last encounter with a mental health practitioner

Period lapsed	Frequency	Percent of respondents
Less than 6 months	9	20.9
Over 6 months but less than a year	6	14.0
One to two years ago	12	27.9
Three to five years ago	6	14.0
Six to ten years ago	4	9.3
More than ten years ago	6	14.0
Total	43	100.0

OTHER DRUG USE

It was noted that the use of other drugs apart from cannabis was commonplace amongst the sample. Unsurprisingly, the most common of these substances was alcohol which had been used by the entire sample (i.e. 100.0%) and by 89.0% in the last year. This was followed by tobacco which had been used by 96.0% of the sample and by 76.0% in the last 12 months. Illicit drug use was also found to be very high with 92.0% of the entire sample having ever used an illicit substance other than cannabis, 63.0% having done so in the last 12 months and 43.0% within the last 4 weeks. The most common illicit substance mentioned was amphetamine which had been used by 87.0% of the sample and by over half (57.0%) within the last 12 months. The second most popular drugs in terms of lifetime history of use were hallucinogens such as L.S.D. and psilocybin mushrooms. Hallucinogens had been used by 79.0% of

the sample but by considerably less (11.0%) in the last 12 months. Also popular was ecstasy which had been used by 75.0% of the sample and by 41.0% in the last year. An array of other substances had also been used by the sample to varying degrees and this data can be found in Table 26 below. A selection of miscellaneous substances was also cited by the 11.0% of the sample who had used other drugs not included in the table. These included five mentions of ketamine, four of gamma hydroxy butyrate (GHB), three of mescaline/peyote and two of datura. Other drugs mentioned in single instances included nutmeg, hops, salvia divinorum and the phenylethylamine marketed as “Tripstacy” (2-CT-7).

It was also observed that injecting behaviour amongst the sample was commonplace with 47.0% of the sample having a history of having injected at some point in their lives. Within the last 12 months, 20.0% of the sample had injected with some drug and more recently, 12.0% of the sample reported having injected during the previous 4 weeks. Details of this injecting behaviour as it pertains to specific drugs can also be found in Table 26.

Table 26: Other drugs used by respondents

Drug type	% Ever used	Mean age at first use	Ever injected	Mean age at first injection	Last 12 months		Last 4 weeks	
					Used	Injected	Used	Injected
1. Alcohol	100.0%	13.0			89.0% mean=117.7 times		82.0% mean=11.1 times	
2. Tobacco	96.0%	13.5			76.0% mean=325.6 times		74.0% mean=25.2 times	
3. Hallucinogens (lsd, mushrooms)	79.0%	18.8			11.0% mean=2.5 times		2.0% mean=1.0 times	
4. Inhalants (paint, nitrous oxide, butane etc.)	50.0%	18.9			9.0% mean=10.9 times		3.0% mean=2.0 times	
5. Amphetamines (speed, crystal)	87.0%	20.8	42.0%	20.9	57.0% mean=19.3 times	20.0	30.0% mean=0.5	11.0%
6. Ecstasy	75.0%	22.3	10.0%	22.4	41.0% mean=9.7 times	2.0%	20.0% mean=1.7	2.0%
7. Benzodiazepines	46.0%	21.2	8.0%	21.9	17.0% mean=37.4 times	1.0%	10.0% mean=6.3 times	1.0%
8. Anti-depressants (prozac etc.) <i>for nonmedical purposes</i>	19.0%	21.3	-	-	9.0% mean=22.3 times	-	2.0% mean=14.5 times	-
9. Cocaine	54.0%	22.8	12.0%	22.2	16.0% mean=5.12 times	1.0%	1.0% mean=4.0 times	-
10. Heroin/opioids	43.0%	21.0	31.0%	20.8	5.0% mean=91.8 times	5.0%	3.0% mean=10.0	3.0%
11. Other drugs	11.0%	23.0	1.0%	18.0	5.0% mean=4.4 times	-	1.0% mean=2.0 times	-

ATTITUDES TOWARDS EXISTING LAWS

This section explored respondents attitudes towards existing laws in four areas: the possession of cannabis for personal use, growing of cannabis plants, the supply of cannabis, and driving while affected by cannabis.

Possession for personal use

Ninety-four respondents discussed their views of the laws concerning possession of cannabis for personal use.

No Penalties

In eighty-two cases it was believed that people should not be penalised for possession of cannabis for personal use. The following excerpts typify the responses:

No definitely, not for personal use.

Why not?

Because for personal use you're not harming anyone else. It's your choice to use it so as long as you are not harming other people I don't think its really anyone's business really.

[ID7, male aged 33]

No.

And why not?

Because there's a lot of other stuff that's worse out there that should be dealt with first. And until they prove that there are ill side effects, then...

[ID52, male aged 30]

For personal use? Well there's no gain for anybody else, it's only personal use, it's like smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, anything like that. And I haven't seen any studies that say it's worse than alcohol.

[ID81, male aged 25]

Do you think any penalties should apply for possession for personal use?

No, not personally.

Why not?

Because you're not hurting anybody else.

[ID44, female aged 33]

No.

And why not?

Because I don't think it should be illegal now. I don't think it should have any kind of element of being against the law, whether it's civil or criminal.

Are there any limits that you think should be on it at all?

Well it has to be regulated somehow...[L]ike people, they only have a certain amount for personal use.

[ID9, female aged 33]

Penalties

Twelve respondents suggested that penalties involving aspects of personal use are appropriate. However, the point at which they should be applied varied among respondents. Some thought laws against personal use should be age-related, whereas others suggested they should be based on the amount of cannabis. For example:

For personal use, penalties? Well yeah I think you still need to have some kind of penalties in there just because at the moment you can't just make it ok for everyone to have it. It's also a lot to do with age as well.

So you think there should be an age limit?

Yes. Ok, let me think... definitely under 18, it's no good for under 18's.

[ID57, male aged 33]

Any situations where you think that possession is inappropriate or should be penalised?

Kids shouldn't have it. I reckon you gotta be 18 to have it, the same as alcohol.

What kind of penalties do you think people should get if they are under 18 and are in possession of pot?

I reckon they should go to a rehabilitation thing and get sent on one of these courses what they're doing now, for under 18. That's my... opinion.

[ID93, male aged 53]

Should penalties apply?

Yeah. I think they are adequate. I think one of the biggest problems with it is that you end up with a criminal record for a minimal amount of possession. It goes on your record and prevents you from travelling overseas etc. etc. I guess it's gotta go. I mean, have a starting point, [unclear] but you don't intentionally deserve to have that sort of record against you but if you've been caught with one joint well I think it's unfair.

So are you saying for one joint or something, there shouldn't be any penalty?

I think there ought to be a pro rata penalty. I mean may be it has to be a certain amount before you get a criminal conviction ... a registered conviction against your name.

[ID34, male aged 52]

Attitudes towards laws regarding growing cannabis plants

Ninety-six respondents discussed the issue of penalties in relation to growing cannabis.

Growing small versus large amounts

Some 80 respondents believed that no penalties should exist for growing small amounts of cannabis for personal consumption. In many cases respondents commented that a small number should be permissible but larger amounts should be subject to penalties. The following excerpts are illustrative:

Yeah I think like two [plants]. I think people should be allowed just two.

What about if you go beyond plants? What do you think should happen?

Then I think you've got to have a real good reason why you've got more.

[ID36, male aged 22]

Well if it exceeds the amount of one plant then I don't think you should be prosecuted but may be just cautioned or something. It all depends. I don't think to have one plant you should go to court or ...

So beyond one plant they should get a caution?

Yeah for a second plant. That depends on how many smokers would be in the household as well. But you shouldn't be over two, either way. That's my opinion.

So two plants you should get no penalty but beyond two?

May be still a caution. If they have a whole plantation growing then that's obviously different.

[ID40, female aged 19]

I think that they should be entitled to have one or two plants.

So one or two plants is okay?

Yes. They could also be monitored so they don't overdo it and don't become a pusher ... If it's a personal use thing and it is legal to have 2 plants, a person who grows more, yes I think because then you become the source or the base and you start becoming greedy and hungry and that's why you have large crop growers and stuff like that.

[ID46, male aged 29]

I think it should be controlled. There should be a place where you can go and buy a certain amount whether it be for medicinal purposes. I know there are a lot of people that use it, whether they have a sore back or have arthritis or for whatever reason. For those people it shouldn't be illegal and may be they should try and control it instead of just trying to outlaw it completely.

So you think it should be grown by the government?

Yeah. Why not. In controlled circumstances. They'd definitely slow it down.

Do you think any penalties should apply for growing?

Depends on how much you're growing...If you had one or two plants I don't see a problem with that ...

[ID43, male aged 26]

No penalties

In 16 cases respondents disagreed with any form of penalty being imposed for growing. Often it was due to an underlying objection to the way in which cannabis is currently regulated.

There's no victim in the crime. A crime is supposed to, there is supposed to be a victim when a crime's committed, but it's a victimless crime. It's a personal choice, if you choose to grow pot, that's cutting out the market, the organised crime. It's accessible, you don't have to have the money and do without other things.

[ID99, male aged 50]

No I don't believe penalties should apply.

And why not?

Because once again, it's a... if you are growing it for yourself, for your own use, then you are only using it for yourself, but if you are growing it for commercial reasons, then I think they should legalise it and make people pay taxes on it, as in the growing of any other crop. Therefore the community is actually benefiting from it, because they are getting the taxes for it, which are going back into where it should: providing public services.

[ID51, female aged 30]

Attitudes towards laws regarding supplying cannabis

Ninety-three respondents discussed their views toward the laws concerning the supply of cannabis.

Penalties for supply

Seventy respondents believed that penalties should exist for supplying cannabis. In many instances this was articulated in terms of small versus large scale supply, where some level should be acceptable at the level of the small scale user. At the organised commercial level, however, it was suggested that penalties should be implemented. For example:

Yes if you're a seller.

What kinds of penalties would you suggest?

Then how am I going to buy it, that's pretty hypocritical there ... if selling it but that would only be once again if it was a large amount ...

Okay, so if it was a small amount?

Small amount, no.

[ID15, female aged 35]

If you grow it yourself and share with your friends, fine. People who get into a business, that own it purely and simply for money and have no emotion or feeling for it [should be penalised].

What kind of penalties do you think should apply for people growing commercially?

Yeah, a criminal conviction and fines that would reflect the size and scale.

[ID86, male aged 56]

I don't think penalties should apply because the majority of that element of this industry is a friend's based network where very small amounts of profit are available to those that do distribute. Of course further up the chain there would be people who, in particular, are providing it for money only and perhaps there needs to be more definition as to who is allowed to do that and how that's regulated. On large scale supply there would have to be a definition. It is a business if we are going to accept it that way. It needs to be regulated as do all others. May be it could be defined in a smaller amount as to somebody buying an ounce or 2 ounces from somebody else is a fair thing and not to be considered a criminal offence but larger scale production perhaps could be.

[ID064, male aged 34]

Yeah I think small penalties should apply, but I still think you should be able to grow your own and that way you don't have to buy off other people ... I'd like to say no, but I know that they're not going to do that, they are going to charge you, so I suppose just small penalties and I don't know, possibly court education?

How about for the larger scale suppliers?

Nah, they've got to give them penalties. That's the whole idea why I want it legal, to get rid of all the big people and idiots. [ID061, male aged 35]

No penalties

Twenty-two people were against penalties being applied to the supply of cannabis at any level. Reasons underlying their views were varied. For some, their objection was situated in a larger belief concerning the legalisation of cannabis. For example:

I don't believe it ought to be against the law, period.

So it shouldn't be against the law, supplying in any definition?

No, I don't think so. Not unless they can conclusively prove down the track that it's going to kill me in 10 seconds or less. And I mean after a 30 year indulgence, how can anyone prove that to me. [ID31, female aged 50]

I think it should be like any other substance, government controlled, you know with taxes and all that. [ID73, male aged 20]

So then for supply, do you think that any penalties are appropriate?

I don't think purely for cannabis, just supplying of cannabis on it's own because I don't think you can say that people out there are drug pushers when it comes to cannabis. People go out and willingly look for and buy it. You don't have people shoving it on to you. May be it does happen occasionally but I have never personally ever come across anyone trying to push drugs on to me. [ID32, female aged 32]

For some, their belief that cannabis should be legal meant that supply should not be penalised. For example:

No. I don't think that penalties should apply. Otherwise you'd have to grow your own.

And are there any other reasons why not?

Well I think it should be legal, so how can I argue with that? I mean, it has to come from somewhere. Growing it yourself, that's time consuming. If you are allowed to do it in your own home, then you could stagger it with hydroponics and you could always have the supply. If you haven't got a hydroponics system, then you have to do it in the ground and you are subjected to the conditions, the weather, so you've only got a small window to actually grow it. So you need suppliers. [ID99, male aged 50]

Driving while affected by cannabis

Ninety-four respondents discussed their views toward the law concerning driving while under the influence of cannabis.

Penalties for driving

Overwhelmingly, it was believed that penalties were appropriate for driving while affected by cannabis. Specifically, some seventy respondents highlighted the appropriateness of penalties in this area. Often this was articulated in terms of the laws applying to drink driving where it was thought the two should be treated similarly. For example:

What kind of penalties for driving do you think should apply?

Similar to driving under the influence of alcohol. [ID5, male aged 39]

Personally it doesn't affect my driving, so, you know up to a certain amount, but then I suppose if you could police it like alcohol, .08 sort of thing, but then you can't ... I don't know, that's a hard one ... Yeah I think it would be not a good idea to drive if you were really, really stoned.

So, if it was like alcohol, the same sort of thing should apply to driving?

Yeah. [ID62, female aged 41]

I think like alcohol, there should be a limit, there should definitely be a maximum level in the blood - I'm not sure how they'd have to test it, they'd have to develop some form of testing it like a breath test [(inaudible) in the blood or anything like that, but there should be a minimum level. [ID80, female aged 28]

No penalties

Among those who discussed the issue, seventeen respondents were opposed to the existence of any penalties for driving while under the influence of cannabis. One respondent who did not agree with penalties for adults did nevertheless feel it should be regulated at some level. In particular, penalties were deemed appropriate for younger drivers. Note below:

No. No penalties but I believe that certain teenagers that have just started to smoke that go through that paranoid come comatose feeling, are slow to react. Their reactions would be a lot slower because like you said, that's the first stage of smoking marijuana is that comatose paranoid feeling. That's what brings on accidents.

So do you think there should be penalties for young drivers?

I think if they're on P plates they should have their P plates suspended, like alcohol.

You don't think the cannabis laws for general adults should be like the other laws?

No. [ID54, male aged 38]

Other respondents believed cannabis did not impact on driving ability and thus penalties were inappropriate. For example:

I don't think cannabis affects driving. I think it would be very difficult to prove that someone was affected by cannabis.

Assuming that they could actually prove that someone was impaired by cannabis, do you think there should be?

I think it would be hard to find a limit. What is an acceptable limit and what isn't.

So you don't think any penalties should apply?

No. It's too much of a grey area. It should be left alone. [ID92, male aged 30]

Do you think penalties should apply?

No.

Why not?

I don't really believe that it affects people's state of driving, personally. I mean I know they've done some studies recently. But I think, ah let's get a grip. [ID98, female aged 30]

THE CANNABIS MARKET

TYPICAL PURCHASING

Frequency of cannabis purchases in the last 6 months

Most of the sample (n=90) had purchased cannabis in the last 6 months. Two respondents (2.3%) purchased on a daily basis, 48.8% less often than daily but at least weekly, 14.8% purchased at least once a fortnight but not weekly, 17.0% purchased more often than weekly but not less often than monthly and 17.0% purchased less often than monthly over the last 6 months. These results are presented in Table 27.

Table 27: Frequency of purchasing cannabis in the last 6 months

Changes in the price of cannabis	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Daily	2	2.3	2.3
Weekly	43	48.8	51.1
Fortnightly	13	14.8	65.9
Monthly	15	17.0	82.9
Less than monthly	15	17.0	100.0
Total	88	100.0	

Missing = 2

Proportion of income spent on cannabis last 6 months

Figure 12 shows that 71.6% of respondents who brought cannabis in the last 6 months (missing = 5) spent between 1% and 25% of their income on cannabis.

On average respondents who purchased cannabis in the last 6 months spent approximately \$50 per week (\$49.90) on the drug per week (range \$0.00 to \$250.00). The mode was also \$50.00 per week (n=19, 24.7%) and the next most frequent amount per week was \$25.00 (n=11, 14.3%).

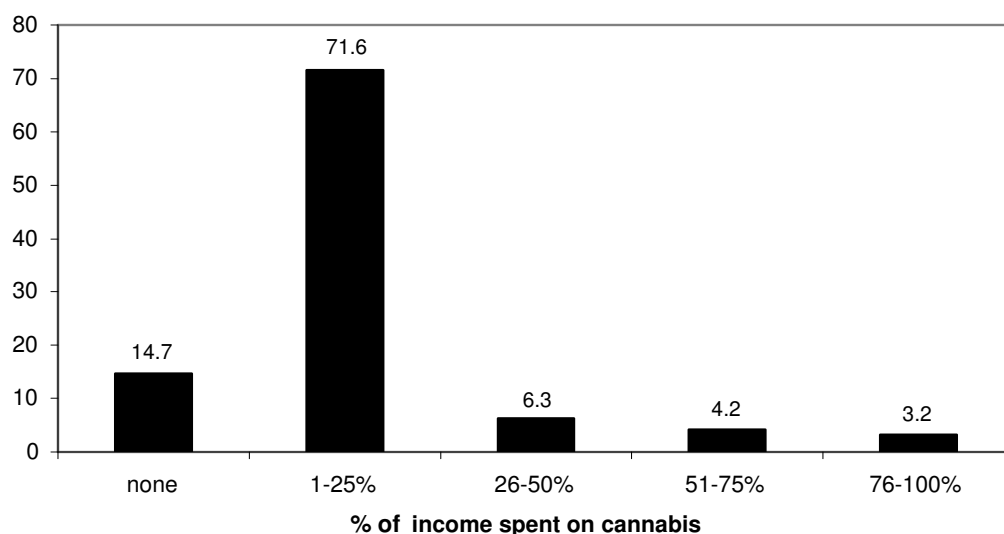


Figure 12: Proportion of income spent on cannabis in the last 6 months

Average time to score last 6 months

On average respondents took 17 hours to score their cannabis in the last 6 months. However, the distribution was somewhat skewed with 53.5% of the sample saying it typically took 30 minutes or less.

Where mainly scored from over last 6 months

Table 28 shows that the majority of respondents (n=54, 54.0%) said they primarily obtained cannabis from over the last 6 months from 'a friend', the next most numerous response was the 'dealer's home' (n=30, 30.0%). Some 8.0% said their typical source of cannabis over the last 6 months was home grown.

Table 28: Person mainly obtained cannabis from over the last 6 months

Source	Frequency	Valid Percent
Friend	54	54.0
Dealer's home	30	30.0
Grew own	8	8.0
Other family member	3	3.0
Mobile dealer	3	3.0
Spouse/partner	1	1.0
Other	1	1.0
Street dealer	0	0.0
Total		

Missing = 0

Usual original source of cannabis scored over last 6 months

Respondents were asked as far as they knew, what was the usual original source of cannabis when they scored over the last 6 months? Responses are given in Table 29. Some 33.0% said a 'large scale supplier', 31.0% said a 'backyard user-grower', 8.0% grew their own and 28.0% did not know. Table 29 also shows the adjusted percentage responses when 'don't know' responses were removed.

Table 29: Usual original source of cannabis scored over the last 6 months

Source	Frequency	Valid Percent	Adjusted Percent ^[1]
Large scale supplier	33	33.0	45.8
Backyard user - grower	31	31.0	43.0
Grew my own	8	8.0	11.1
Don't know	28	28.0	
Total	100	100.0	100.0

[1] Excludes don't know responses

Form of cannabis usually scored over last 6 months

Table 30 shows that 79.8% of respondents said that the cannabis usually obtained over the last 6 months was hydroponic heads, while 14.1% said non-hydroponic heads.

Table 30: Form of cannabis usually scored over the last 6 months

Form	Frequency	Valid Percent
Hydroponic heads	79	79.8
Non-hydroponic heads	14	14.1
Mixture of hydro head and leaf	3	3.0
Mixture of non-hydro head and leaf	1	1.0
Mixture of non-hydro and hydro head	1	1.0
Don't know	1	1.0
Total	99	100.0

Missing = 1

Quantity of cannabis typically scored over last 6 months and reason

Table 31 shows that while 44.0% of respondents said their typical score over the last 6 months was of a 'bag' of cannabis, and 67.1% said they typically scored a bag or less (bag, foil, stick, gram, a few grams) the next most frequent amount typically scored over the last 6 months was an ounce nominated by 15.4% of respondents.

The majority (83.6%) usually purchased half an ounce or less, and they bought significantly more often than those who purchased larger amounts (1.3 vs 0.5 purchases per week, $t(26.4) = 2.885, p < .01$).

Table 31: Quantity of cannabis typically scored over the last 6 months

Quantity	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gram	6	6.6	6.6
A few grams ^[1]	2	2.2	8.8
Stick	8	8.8	17.6
Foil	5	5.5	23.1
Bag	40	44.0	67.1
Quarter ounce	7	7.7	74.8
Half ounce	8	8.8	83.6
Ounce	14	15.4	99.0
Pound ^[1]	1	1.1	100.0
Total	91	100.0	

[1] These responses were re-coded 'other' responses and as such do not appear on the questionnaire

Respondents were asked their reasons for scoring their typical amount. Table 32 presents those results for those who scored a bag or less (a bag, foil, stick, gram or few grams) compared to those who scored more than that amount (a quarter ounce, half ounce, ounce or pound). Across both sizes of deal the three most common reasons cited were cost or economic factors (61.5%), that the amount met consumption needs (41.8%) or availability factors (13.2%).

Table 32: Reason typically scored that quantity of cannabis in the last 6 months

Reasons for scoring that amount	Small amount ^[1]		Larger amount ^[2]		Total %
	n	%	n	%	
Costs/economics	35	57.4	21	70.0	61.5
Meets consumption needs	24	39.3	14	46.7	41.8
Availability	6	9.8	6	20.0	13.2
Less risk of detection	2	3.3	2	6.7	4.4
Control or limit use	4	6.6	0	0.0	4.4
Convenience	1	1.6	2	6.7	3.3
Other	1	1.6	0	0.0	1.1
Total	61	67.0	30	33.3	100.0

[1] Refers to a bag or less (a bag, foil, stick, gram, or few grams)

[2] Refers to a quarter ounce, half ounce, ounce or pound

There was 1 missing case

Respondents could choose more than one response

Shared or split deals over the last 6 months

Respondents were also asked whether the cannabis they obtained in the last 6 months was typically for their own use or to be shared with others. Some 35.9% of respondents said that they ‘often’ or ‘always’ shared or split deals in the last 6 months, while 48.9% said they ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ did so. These results are presented in Figure 13.

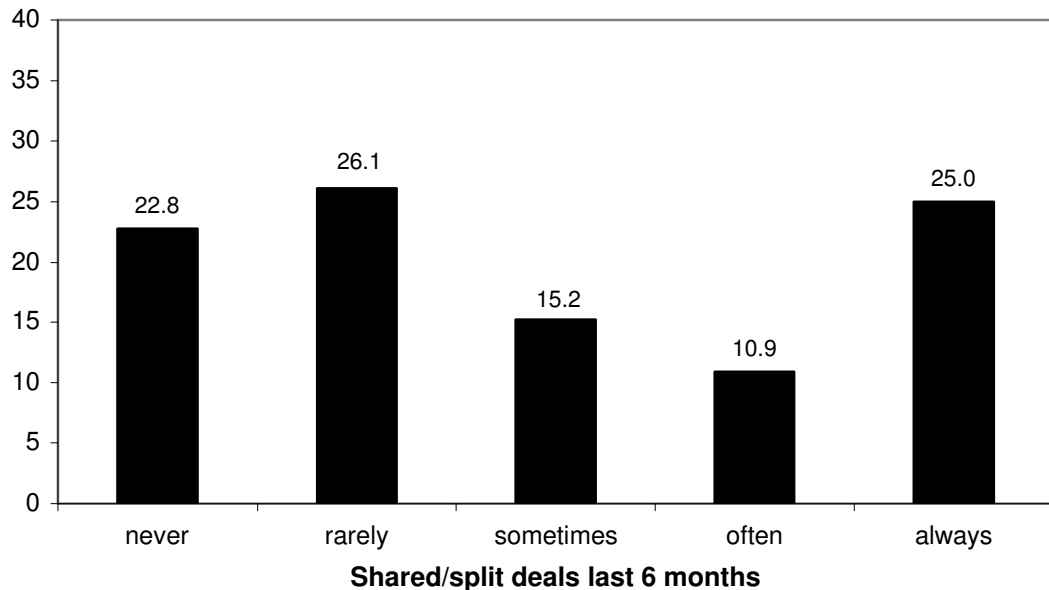


Figure 13: Shared/split deals in last 6 months

Comments on obtaining cannabis

In their qualitative accounts of obtaining cannabis respondents described a number of positive and negative aspects.

Positive aspects

Positive aspects included: the involvement in a relationship with their supplier that was valued as it was characterised by trust and security; the social aspect of scoring cannabis; the quality of the cannabis obtained; and the ease of availability of cannabis. Typical accounts of these factors follow, except for availability which is presented separately in its own section.

Relationship involving trust or security. Some 39 respondents spoke of a situation in which they felt a level of security or trust. In many cases this involved obtaining cannabis from a friend or well known acquaintance and a situation in which they felt comfortable. For example:

People I've known for quite some time and you know I know that they are not going to burn me and ... I know that they are reliable and honest, trustworthy people ... They know that you

know you're going to pay them and you're not going to burn them because they're your friends. [ID6, male aged 47]

What I like is that it's accessible. Like it's really easy 'cause I've known him for so long. So I'm really happy about that. [ID76, female aged 37]

Still other respondents when queried about their source highlighted being able to avoid risky situations:

I know someone that I can get it off reasonably easily and without too much hassle, so there's no dodgy alleyway deals or anything like that. Like, I know the person, he's pretty reliable and trustworthy, so I'm pretty happy with it. [ID23, male aged 31]

Also of note are those who avoid having to go out and buy cannabis either through growing their own, or through having it brought to their home through a trusted supplier. Note below:

I've got a weekly thing happening. Its called the syndicate. And so my friend will come over on a Wednesday afternoon give me my bit of it. He'll go off and give rest of the syndicate their little bits and money gets collected on a Saturday. And that's pretty [much] to the clock every week. I don't usually make any phone calls. It's all done and yeah I'll only make a phone call if he doesn't rock up. And it's a social thing. He'll come over for, have a meal. [ID98, female aged 30]

There's a small group of us who grow our own and share it among ourselves so we never have to go looking to buy any. We can be very selective about who knows that we use it. We can control the quality and reduce the health risks from chemicals being added; virtually eliminate the exposure to any criminal charges or even being seen to be involved. [ID11, female aged 50]

Social Aspect. Among some twenty-two respondents the social aspect being a positive aspect was identified as a desirable aspect of the way they obtain their cannabis. For example:

I like it because it's from my best mate and we've got a large network of friends, and makes it a very large peer community, I suppose you could call it. [ID57, male aged 33]

All the people I get it off are good friends. Yeah, I hang out with him and that's a good thing [be]cause I get to catch up with him. [ID82, female aged 24]

The good thing is relatively safe because it's at a friend's home. I like the interaction with my friends, the non-cannabis related interaction. We enjoy our time together. [ID91, male aged 45]

Quality. Among seventeen people the issue of quality emerged as a positive aspect of the way in which cannabis was obtained. For example:

Because it's through friends you can always ask for a favour. Get it like a week before you got the money. If it's not that good you can ask them to chuck in a couple of extra buds. [ID33, male aged 20]

Another respondent remarked on sampling prior to purchasing thus indicating that she is ensured a satisfactory quality of cannabis:

Yeah [I] can try before I buy.

[ID22, female aged 32]

Negative aspects

Negative aspects of obtaining cannabis emerged in the following themes: problems with their supplier; violence or rip-offs while obtaining cannabis; the presence of other drugs; costs involved; being seen at the supplier's place; and transport concerns.

Problem with supplier. Twenty-nine respondents identified having a problem with their supplier.

He has been busted a couple of times and there is a certain risk. Even speaking on the phone, he's a little bit liberal on the phone sometimes.

[ID1, male aged 28]

Another suggested that there was very little that was positive about his source, also indicating that he received less than he should have:

There's nothing good about it. It can be a hassle ... because you are doing something illegal so it's always bad. The bad things about it, it can give you the stuff around, if you want it straight away, then you can get some and find out it's really small, quite a lot smaller than you usually get it.

[ID60, male aged 21]

Some respondents who were satisfied with their current source did bring up the fact that this has not always been the case. For example:

There was this young girl and I didn't like going up to the corner store and dealing with the people I had to deal with like its very nerve racking and stuff but nowadays its safe and straight forward and no worries what so ever.

[ID7, male aged 33]

Violence or ripoffs while purchasing cannabis. While it is the case that few people reported experiencing violence or rip offs while purchasing cannabis, the fact that it has occurred for some individuals is of concern and suggests the potential does exist for a dangerous situation to occur.

For example, one respondent described a number of situations in the past 6 months in which he experienced ripoffs:

Ok, it happened about 4 weeks ago, I went to purchase a quarter of an ounce of hydroponic off a friend of mine. I had to give the money prior to doing, which I don't like doing. I did so, and when I get the quarter of an ounce back, it was just crap at the bottom of the bag. It was somebody else's crap, that's what I'd call it. I made it known, I didn't give the pot back, I didn't get my money back. That happened 4 times [in the last 6 months] ... Twice from the same person, which I don't know anymore, and two from totally different... there is a fair bit of rip-off out there.

[ID74, male aged 53]

Other respondents described becoming involved in potentially dangerous situations while purchasing cannabis at a supplier's residence:

Well when I went to this dodgy person's house, well for a start the dog attacks us when we walked in, and that's nothing unusual, the dog attacks other members of the family, so that was the dog, I mean that's not even a human and you are getting hammered before you even

get in the door. And you get in there and there are things getting thrown around, and people are screaming and they are yelling their box off so you are getting really really tense, and then you've got this little kid who tries to steal your wallet and he's like five, god it's stupid. And you don't even know if your weed's getting spiked with stuff, like, every time you walk out of that place, because you always get shouted[a free smoke of cannabis] when you are there, and I've talked to so many people about this, it's called 'when we leave this-person's house' - name insert there! Like everybody knows the feeling when you leave the house, because you're that stoned and that paranoid when you leave that house, you almost have to go to yourself, 'I've got to get out of here, otherwise I'm going to die' because it's that tense and everything is full-on, but it's not full-on in a sense, it's just full-on, just everything emotional about it, it's very scary.

[ID65, male aged 18]

Additionally, while most respondents did not report experiencing problems, some respondents believed that the possibility was always there. During discussions with respondents, some suggested that this was an issue for them. For example:

Sometimes there's a bit of violence there. I mean this lady's lovely and that, I'll go there and people coming and going all the time and that and there's also that undercurrent of anything could happen, you know what I mean. I mean, she's a lovely lady but she's got a bit of a temper you know. Most aboriginals that come in there, they're angry people you know so I worry a bit sometimes about ... not me getting bashed up but there's going to be a confrontation. Like some guy comes in drunk and then someone gets sad, that sort of stuff. And it's not a racist thing either. I was there once and this lady was there and she [inaudible] so she had a machete, a big machete and said 'get out' and slammed it on the table. My hand's here! You know, unpredictable.

[ID28, female aged 27]

If you get ripped off, you're prepared to get violent. Then they just cut off your drug supply. So it can lead to violence if they rip you off. I had a partnership, like a brother, and it's like worst of enemies now just over an ounce of pot. He was gonna come me over. I was gonna get violent over it until I realised, why get violent over an ounce of pot? Is it worth doing a year in jail over an ounce? So you start getting logical [be]cause the amount of guys in jail. It would be a sad story if I killed this guy over \$50 bucks of pot. Sheer lunacy. Yeah, it will lead to violence if you get ripped off. Most of the times it's verbal but it can lead to actual physical violence.

[ID42, male aged 37]

Other Drugs. While the issue of other drugs was a less prominent theme, it is nevertheless important to address. In particular, some respondents noted the presence of other drugs where they purchased cannabis as a concern. For example:

The dodgy side of it I do not like. There are okay people but the environment is dodgy and there can often be other people around that I don't know. There's always other drugs involved.

[ID69, female aged 40]

Another respondent discussed the fact that one of his suppliers also supplies opiates thus causing a stressful situation:

He also deals opiates so when I go there to get pot I often feel tempted to buy opiates which I otherwise might not of thought of so that's a real negative.

[ID17, male aged 32]

The cost involved. Twelve respondents believed that having to pay for their cannabis was a negative aspect. The following excerpts are illustrative:

I dislike that I have to buy it cause I would rather grow my own so I don't have to waste my money on it. [ID4, male aged 20]

I'd prefer to grow it so it wasn't costing me anything. [ID33 male aged 20]

What I don't like is that I don't have enough money to buy it. [ID81, male aged 25]

Being seen at the cannabis supplier's place. Nine respondents commented on the issue of being seen while purchasing cannabis. For example:

I don't like the criminality part and still get a little bit of paranoia. 'Cause, look around and see who's parked across the street. Strange cars in the driveway, get sus[pect]. [I] always have a feeling after I go and get it to look in my mirrors to see if anyone's tailing me and I don't like that part. [ID2, male aged 48]

Yeah. I don't like that. Yeah because it's only a quiet street. People see things like that, you know cars pulling in and out. [ID16, female aged 33]

Another respondent discussed having to occasionally leave his regular supply network and approach other sources:

I go outside of the network I don't feel too comfortable waiting in a car at somebody's house ... On the sly ... you might be watched or you don't know. [ID36 male aged 22]

Transporting issues. Also related to issues of being seen is the problem of transporting cannabis once it has been purchased. Seven respondents suggested carrying cannabis was a concern. For example:

I feel also a nervousness about travelling with a larger amount because it looks like that's what I carry when in actual fact I'm just trying to get home. [ID64, male aged 34]

I know myself when I'm driving home and I've got an ounce in the car, just the thought of it is like, scary. [ID55, female aged 39]

MOST RECENT SCORE

Qualitative account of most recent score

Before being asked any quantitative questions about their most recent cannabis score respondents were asked to tell the interviewer in their own words what happened the last time they scored cannabis. Several prominent themes emerged in these accounts: the matter-of-fact nature of the decision and transaction; whether the transaction was 'decent' or 'sordid'; and acquiring cannabis on credit.

Matter-of-fact nature of the transaction. Overwhelmingly respondents described their most recent score as a very matter-of-fact transaction. Of the seventy respondents who commented, in no case could the situation be understood as 'drug pushing'. 'Drug pushing' was not something experienced by this sample the last time they scored

cannabis. The following excerpts are typical in the sense of there being clear intent on the part of the respondents to acquire cannabis:

The person was a friend, and we'd been hanging for some pot because we'd been away and we just asked if he had some spare and he sold it to us. [ID80, female aged 28]

Last time? Sitting there, watching a movie. Called him up, went to get it, drove around, picked it up, drove home, had a smoke.

And how would you describe the person that you got it from?

He's a friend. I know him pretty well. [ID84, male aged 19]

I placed my order, they called me when it came in and I went and had a cone, picked it up...

How long ago was the last time?

Two or three weeks ago now. Been 2 weeks say 2 weeks yeah.

You bought a \$50 bag?

Yep.

How long did it take from when you called them to when you got it?

About a week actually. [ID2, male aged 48]

He's a friend. Called him up. Said 'how ya going. Lets have a bit of a hook up'. He said 'Yeah no worries'. You don't even have to say anything. [ID43, male aged 26]

I collected money off two people and went to the place, went in for a joint myself.

And how would you describe the person that you purchased from?

Very pleasant. Gave me a cup of tea as well.

Would they be a dealer or a general person, that kind of thing?

Just a general person.

And what happened after you had a cup of tea and a joint?

Yeah he gave me the gear and I gave him the money. [ID89, male aged 28]

Sordid versus decent nature of transaction. Among respondents in which this was discussed, most described a situation which they scored cannabis as being of a 'decent' nature. Among forty-eight people this was the case.

Some respondents obtained from the house of a friend or acquaintance in which some form of a social visit occurred such as in the following example:

I make a phone call and that's that. Pick up the phone and ring, suggest that we might get together and business as usual.

So would you go over to their place?

Yeah. I nip over or he nips over, one or the other. It's never dash in dash out. We're friends anyway so we'll have a coffee or whatever and chat. We incorporate it in the visit which is a safety precaution as well. [ID31, female aged 50]

Just made a phone call and me mate came around and that was it. Within an hour he was there....

So you just stayed in your home and he dropped by?

Yeah. [ID10, male aged 42]

Some respondents described not having to leave their home in terms of either having it delivered or living with someone who supplies them. For example:

One respondent described living with someone who grows and always receiving her cannabis as a gift:

They asked me if I would like some pot and I said yes and they gave me some ... A few grams on different occasions. The amounts vary but no more than a few grams each time. [ID26, female aged 37]

In other cases, however, respondents described what might be understood as a level of discomfort with the way they obtained their cannabis. Fifteen people described situations which were risky in some way. For example, one respondent discussed the fact that she tries to avoid having direct contact with her dealer because of previous events:

I don't normally go, my partner does now because I owe her money. But I don't think I should have paid that, she ripped me off so I'm not paying her. Well she gave me some crud and I didn't want it.

Was that the last time?

No that was like months ago. But normally we would just pull up in the driveway, my partner runs in but she's always very angry, the person inside. She's always yelling and screaming so I don't like that sort of situation anyway [be]cause I know I'll say something. I just wait in the car and my partner runs in. [ID16, female aged 33]

Another takes the precaution of parking the car at a different location, thus indicating the presence of risk in obtaining his cannabis:

Yeah, I called him up, just asked if he had anything in, he goes 'yeah I'd be able to get you some'. He didn't have anything in so he goes 'he can get me some from to someone else as long as I drove him there'. So I drove him there and we got it.

So you went to your friend's place?

Yeah I went to my mate's house and picked him up. And then we drove to the other guys house. We parked somewhere else. You always know where they are so you know where you can walk to. You sort of just don't draw attention to the house. [ID8, male aged 22]

Two other respondents described feelings of discomfort with the way they obtained their cannabis. As a result one respondent commented on her intent to use other sources:

The last time we all sort of take turns getting it in our own group. But between all of us we know a guy and we know where his apartment is and that's generally one of us will go and see him. But it's kind of [scary] because just recently some guy has moved in across like (inaudible) his apartment. And so when you walk outside into the veranda, like some guy's moved in and takes photos of the cars in the car park. Which is, we don't know if that has anything to do with him. So its kind of last time one of us has got to pull the short straw and actually go over, which wasn't me. But the person that went didn't park their car in the car park and just went up. Because of that, that was the last time. We've kind of said we're not going to go back there. So we've all got other sources that we can buy from because that was the last time.

[ID27, female aged 20]

The last time I scored I went with a friend to this guy's flat who I don't know and we just went into this guy's place, gave him the money and he gave us a sachet and we sat there and chatted for about 5 minutes and left. He's not the sort of person that I'd want to know where I live or anything like that.

[ID32, female aged 32]

Acquiring cannabis on credit. Thirteen respondents suggested that debt was involved in their scoring of cannabis. Specifically, in twelve cases respondents arranged to make payment at a later date:

I went to the dealers place, I actually got a stick on tick until tomorrow, had a like a cone each there and then went home and had a couple of buckets.

[ID18, male aged 16]

Well last time I decided to purchase a bag, I met one of my male friends at his home. He gave me ... an ounce bag. We had a cup of tea together. His wife was there. We shared a laugh. He invited to smoke from his personal stash, which I would have accepted, and then I would have driven home with a bag, arranging payment for a later day.

[ID91, male aged 45]

Yesterday I was waiting for my boyfriend to come over. I was sitting there thinking I might be able to get credit off his friend and then he came over and I asked him if his friend would give me credit and we rang him up and went over there and he gave us credit and then we got the foil and smoked it.

[ID24, female aged 17]

One respondent described having settled a debt he had incurred from a former visit to his dealer:

I went down at 7.30 and there were a big bunch of people there and I gotta walk over them all and um, just go around to his room and he shares a house with his cousin or something, and he gives me the ounce, no it was a half ounce and I gave him \$150 cos I owed him \$10 from the last time and he gave me some extra buds and says here's an extra smoke for you and hauled [it] back through all the people, jumped in the car and off I went.

[ID100, male aged 40]

Time to score

Ninety-five respondents commented on their most recent score. The mean time to score on their last occasion was 967 minutes (16 hours 7 minutes) with a mode of 60 minutes, a minimum of 0 minutes, and a maximum of 1 month. However, an analysis of the amount scored for the 15 cases where the time to score was greater than 180 minutes found that the majority were larger amounts. Thus five were ounces, one was a half ounce, and two were quarter ounces and one was a pound. An analysis of 55 cases where the last purchase was a gram, a stick, a foil or a bag, (i.e. less than a quarter ounce) found the mean time to score was 390 minutes, a mode of 60 minutes, a minimum of 0 minutes, and a maximum of 1 week. Some 76.4% of this group said their last score took 60 minutes or less.

Who scored from at most recent score

Table 33 shows that the majority of respondents (n=57, 60%) said that their last score was from a 'friend' the next most numerous response was the 'dealer's home' (n=29, 30.5%).

Table 33: Person obtained cannabis from at most recent score

Source	Frequency	Valid Percent
Friend	57	60.0
Dealer's home	29	30.5
Other family member	3	3.2
Street dealer	2	2.1
Mobile dealer	2	2.1
Spouse/partner	1	1.1
Gift from friends	1	1.1
Total	95	100.0

Missing = 0

Original source of cannabis of most recent score

The 95 respondents who described their most recent score were asked *as far as you know, what was the original source of that cannabis?* Responses are given in Table 34. Excluding the one respondent who refused to answer, 37.6% said a 'backyard user-grower', 30.1% said a 'large scale supplier' and 32.3% did not know. Table 34 also reports adjusted percent with 'don't know' and 'refused to answer' excluded.

Table 34: Original source of cannabis at most recent score

Source	Frequency	Valid Percent	Adjusted Percent ^[1]
Backyard user - grower	35	37.6	55.5
Large scale supplier	28	30.1	44.4
Grew my own	0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	30	32.3	
Refused to answer	1		
Total	94	100.0	

Missing = 1

[1] excludes 'don't know' and 'refused to answer'

Form of cannabis at most recent score

Table 35 shows that 75.8% of respondents said that the cannabis obtained at the most recent score was hydroponic heads, while 15.8% said non-hydroponic heads. In all, 80.0% of respondents purchased hydroponic heads or a mixture of hydroponic heads and leaf.

Table 35: Form of cannabis at most recent score

Form	Frequency	Valid Percent
Hydroponic heads	72	75.8
Non-hydroponic heads	15	15.8
Mixture of non-hydro head and leaf	4	4.2
Mixture of hydro head and leaf	3	3.2
Don't know	1	1.1
Total	95	

Missing = 1

Quantity of most recent score and reason

Table 36 shows that while of respondents said their last score was of a 'bag' of cannabis, and 58.9% scored a bag or less (bag, foil, stick, gram) the next most frequent amount was an ounce obtained by 21.1% at their last score.

Table 36: Quantity of cannabis at most recent score

Quantity	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gram	5	5.3	5.3
Stick	7	7.4	12.6
Foil	5	5.3	17.9
Bag	39	41.1	58.9
Quarter ounce	5	5.3	64.2
Half ounce	5	5.3	69.5
Ounce	20	21.1	90.5
Other	9	9.5	100.0
Total	95	100.0	

Missing = 0

Respondents were asked their reasons for scoring that amount. Table 37 presents those results for those who scored a bag or less (a bag, foil, stick, or gram) compared to those who scored more than that amount (a quarter ounce, half ounce, or ounce). Across both sizes of deal the three most common reasons cited were cost or economic factors (55.8%), that the amount met consumption needs (34.7%) or availability factors (17.9%). Among reasons cited by fewer responses there were some interesting differences between those scoring smaller versus larger amounts. Thus five (8.9%) of those scoring smaller amounts compared to none of those scoring larger amounts said they scored that amount to limit their use. Two (5.1%) of those scoring larger amounts compared to none of those scoring smaller amounts said they did this because they disliked scoring, and three (7.7%) of the larger amount scorers compared to none of the smaller amount scorers said that they got that amount as they were planning to sell some of the cannabis they scored.

Table 37: Reason brought that quantity of cannabis at most recent score

Reasons for scoring that amount	Small amount ^[1]		Larger amount ^[2]		Total
	n	%	n	%	%
Costs/economics	32	57.1	21	53.8	55.8
Meets consumption needs	19	33.9	14	35.9	34.7
Availability	11	19.6	6	15.4	17.9
Control or limit use	5	8.9	0	0.0	5.3
Buying to sell	0	0.0	3	7.7	3.2
Dislike scoring/less hassle	0	0.0	2	5.1	2.1
Less risk of detection	1	1.8	1	2.6	2.1
Other	2	3.6	4	10.3	6.3
Total	56	100.0	39	130.8.0	127.4

[1]Refers to a bag or less (a bag, foil, stick, or gram)

[2]Refers to a quarter ounce, half ounce, ounce

Cost of most recent score

Respondents were asked the cost of their most recent score. Cost ranged from \$0.00 (a gift, n=6, 6.3%) to \$2,900 (n=1), with a mean cost of \$120.89. Excluding the outlier \$29,000, the maximum amount spent came to \$350.00 and the mean \$91.33. The modal amount spent on the last score was \$25.00 (n=32, 33.7%), the next most frequent amount spent was \$50.00 (n=21, 22.1%), followed by \$250 (n=11, 11.6%).

Shared or split of most recent score

Respondents were also asked whether the cannabis they obtained the last time they scored was for their own use or to be shared with others. Just under half (n=46, 48.4%) the sample scored for their own use, a similar proportion (n=47, 49.5%) to share with others, and two respondents (2.1%) scored for the purpose of dealing. Among the 47 who shared the deal, most (n=36, 76.6%) shared it with one other person only. Of those who shared a deal at their last score, the modal amount spent by them as an individual was \$25.00 (n=12, 26%) with a mean of \$46.39.

PRICE, POTENCY AND AVAILABILITY

Current cost of cannabis

Respondents were asked to estimate the costs of a gram and an ounce of hydroponic and non-hydroponic cannabis. Results of these questions are presented in Table 38. Those who brought cannabis in the last 6 months were also asked what they paid for the drug the last time they scored it. These results are presented in Table 39.

Table 38: Estimated cost of cannabis

Amount & Type of cannabis	n	Cost in Australian Dollars			
		Mean	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
A gram of hydroponic	62	22.39	25.00	10.00	50.00
An ounce of hydroponic	93	300.00	300.00	200.00	600.00
A gram of non-hydroponic	52	19.82	25.00	5.00	50.00
An ounce non-hydroponic	82	221.65	250.00	80.00	350.00

Table 39: Amounts of cannabis brought in the last 6 months and prices paid last time

Amount & Type of cannabis	n	Cost in Australian Dollars			
		Mean	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
Gram of hash	1	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Cap of hash oil	2	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Gram of hydroponic cannabis	9	25.00	25.00	10.00	50.00
Gram of non-hydro cannabis	3	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Hydro (Buddha) stick	10	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Non-hydro (Buddha) stick	3	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Hydro foil	11	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Non-hydro foil	8	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Hydro 25 bag	26	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Non-hydro 25 bag	9	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Hydro 50 bag	36	49.31	50.00	25.00	50.00
Non-hydro 50 bag	13	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Hydro quarter	11	80.45	75.00	50.00	150.00
Non-hydro quarter	5	78.00	75.00 ^[1]	70.00	100.00
Hydro half ounce	15	158.33	150.00	120.00	300.00
Non-hydro half ounce	7	125.71	125.00 ^[2]	100.00	150.00
Hydro ounce	32	267.81	250.00	200.00	350.00
Non-hydro ounce	16	221.25	250.00	120.00	350.00
Hydro pound	2	3250.00	3600.00 ^[3]	2900.00	3600.00
Hydro 100 'bag'	5	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

[1] This was bimodal with two respondents reporting &\$70.00 and two reporting \$75.00

[2] This was bimodal with two respondents reporting &\$120.00 and two reporting \$125.00

[3] This was bimodal with one respondent reporting &\$2900.00 and one reporting \$3600.00

In their general comments on the cannabis market twelve respondents indicated that price related, in part, to one's personal source of cannabis.

For example, three respondents also commented on their experiences with cost and different suppliers.

It's changed in the last three years, I think. It used to be really expensive to buy a few years ago. But maybe that was just where I was getting it. Now (inaudible) where we're buying is cheaper.
[ID82, Female aged 24]

It's become more expensive. That's pretty bad hey. I'm not very good at making good contacts.
[ID72, male aged 18]

Yeah you just get good people and bad people, the price is average, yeah but it depends on the people, some people flatten a 50 bag and give it to you spread out and others will pack a 50 bag full of [buds] ... lovely people, who are few and far between.

[ID79, female aged 22]

Potency

Table 40 shows that 59.0% of respondents believed that the potency of cannabis in Perth over the previous 6 months was 'high'.

Table 40: Strength of cannabis in the last 6 months

Strength of cannabis	Frequency	Valid Percent
High	59	59.0
Medium	23	23.0
Low	1	1.0
Fluctuates	13	13.0
Don't know/Not sure	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Missing = 0

In their general comments on the cannabis market a number of respondents commented on what they believed were the main factors influencing the potency of cannabis. These included whether the cannabis was hydroponically grown or not, the strain or variety of cannabis, aspects of the growing process, improvements in skill of growers, and finally factors concerning the individual cannabis user. Examples are given below:

Hydroponic versus non-hydroponic

Fifty-two people suggested that being hydroponically grown was one of the factors contributing toward a more potent product. The following responses are typical.

Hydro is a lot better in the effect that it can give you. If it's just the normal leaf I'd smoke a lot more.

[ID13, female aged 47]

Another respondent commenting on the weaker potency of non hydroponically grown cannabis, also suggested that less cannabis is required to reach a desired effect:

Hydro is obviously a lot stronger than bush. I prefer to smoke the bush because I don't like getting zapped. But with strong hydro you smoke less.

[ID86, male aged 56]

Strain

The strain of the cannabis plant was also seen as impacting on the potency of the cannabis. Thirty-seven people commented on the importance of the strain. Typically respondents simply stated that the strain of the cannabis plant was important, without going into further detail. Some respondents appeared to possess more detailed knowledge. For example, one respondent who discussed the higher potency of hydroponically grown cannabis also noted the importance of the particular strain on the final product:

I would say at the moment, if it gets pushed out with bush and only reaches at its maximum level 12-13% THC content. Okay, that's bush. That's what they call cannabis sativa. That's our strain here in the southern hemisphere. Cannabis indica that they grow hydroponically climbs to 28-30%. They got it at 28% at the moment, that's how high it is and they're pushing for higher. So you can notice the difference.

So you're saying here that the strength is dependent on whether it's hydro or bush or whether it's [dependent upon strain]?

Yes definitely. Indica produces more THC than sativa but indica comes from sativa.

So has the strength of cannabis overall changed much since you first started using?

Oh yeah. Oh my god yeah. The first bush that I smoked would have been coming in around the 9-11% mark. It's increased slightly because what happens now is they're crossing. It's only hybrid and crosses but there's no original strain, I doubt there's an original strain of sativa left and that raises the THC content. [ID54, male aged 38]

One respondent who grows hydroponically for personal use, believed that there should be no distinction made between hydroponic and non-hydroponic cannabis in the context of decriminalisation, because method of growing has no impact on the potency. Note below:

I mean, how you grow it shouldn't make any difference at all. What affects the potency of the plant is not that it's grown hydroponically, it's the type of plant that you grow. If you grow, for example, a Shiva, that's an extremely powerful plant. It doesn't matter if you grow it in soil or if you grow it in non-soil, it's still going to have the same potency.

[ID14, male aged 52]

Two current growers held somewhat similar views concerning the strength of cannabis. For example, a non-hydroponic cannabis grower commented:

People are under the misunderstanding that hydro cannabis is stronger than cannabis that is not grown hydro. It's got nothing to do with it, - it's the strain of plant. So I could have ... one strain of plant, 2 clones or cuttings, grow one outside, grow one indoors and when they have finished their cycle have them tested, and they will be the same THC level.

[ID21, male aged 37]

A current hydroponic grower responded:

Ah, well it gets back to the THC content. Well the general rule is that the hydroponically grown indoor plants have a greater THC content.

So hydro is high THC?

Well, actually it's not even true, it's a misconception. It's the strain of the plant which is grown hydroponically which makes it strong, it's not the growing hydroponically, but because of the controlled environment, people have been able to develop good strains hydroponically. I've known a lot of people who are cutting the hydroponically grown plants, and then growing them in the bush, and they're just as strong. [ID78, male aged 46]

A former cannabis grower, when queried about the potency remarked:

I think it can vary.... according to the type of plant and growing method used.

So the type of plant, what would be more potent?

A strain with a [particularly] high THC value.

So is that hydro versus bush?

No, as far as I'm aware potency can be achieved using either methods. Like high potency can be achieved using either method as far as I'm aware. [ID26, female aged 37]

In many cases, respondents spoke more generally about the impact of the strain on potency. For example, one respondent spoke of his experience in obtaining hydroponically grown cannabis and the significant variation he has encountered:

I don't buy a lot of hydro buy every time I get hydro it is of a different variety, there's so many varieties...And each one has a different potency, you can't really predict it... [ID1, male aged 28]

Aspects of the growing process

Some twenty-one respondents suggested that aspects of the growing process impacted the potency of cannabis. In particular, this referred to the level of knowledge of the grower, the experience of the grower, or the way in which the grower treats the product throughout the process.

For example, one respondent commented on the skill of growers in producing better strains:

It's actually getting better and better. The growers, especially commercial growers seem to really know what they are doing. The strains they are getting are just phenomenal. [ID87, male aged 40, never grown]

Another believed that the increasing potency was related to improvements in growers skill:

It's getting better all the time. People are getting better at growing. [ID82 female aged 24, never grown]

Other respondents spoke more generally about the way in which the experience or skill of the grower is important. For example:

The person I get it from seems to be able to grow it all right. But then you can get some that's crap. But what I get is fine. [ID76, female aged 37, never grown]

In some cases this was articulated in terms of how a particular aspect of the process was dealt with. According to three respondents, the curing process has a lot to do with the final product in terms of potency. The following excerpts typify the discussions:

You can get strains, like a strain would have a potential strength, but if you don't grow it properly it's never going to reach that strength. And more often than, I mean, there are still wankers out there who totally fuck up perfectly good pot because they can't cure it properly. [ID53, male aged 31, former grower]

And how it's harvested as well. I think the curing process has a lot to do with the potency of the marijuana. [ID92, male aged 30, never grown]

Other comments exhibited more variation. For example, one respondent cited the point at which the cannabis is harvested as being important:

...It depends on when you harvest the weed that it gives a different effect as well. If you harvest the weed when the hairs on it are white, it will have a different chemical content to the hairs when they're red, which I've read on the internet actually, but I've never given it a test. I should give it a test. Most of the hairs on the weed are brown when you get it, so most people are harvesting it after it turns brown, after the whole flower itself is starting to die. [ID65, male aged 18, current grower]

Another discussed a specific technique of growing as increasing potency:

What some people do is they'll grow bushies for a while until it expands until it buds or whatever that's usually the way its grown, then they'll put it through hydro and that has like a really weird effect ... They'll take it out of the ground and put it into a hydro set-up. [ID41, male aged 18]

Factors relating to the individual

According to twelve respondents factors associated with the individual cannabis user impacted on the issue of potency.

For ten respondents tolerance to the drug was a factor in how the potency of cannabis was experienced. For example, one respondent suggested his experience may also have been related to his level of use:

...Some of the non-hydro stuff that I get is extremely good like you have a joint and you're smashed. But because I don't smoke a shit load that could be the reason... [ID1, male aged 28]

Another respondent commented that her perception of decreasing potency might be related to her personal circumstance where she requires more cannabis to achieve the same effect, but she didn't identify her tolerance increasing as a possible explanation:

It is pretty potent but I don't think it's as potent now as it was when I first started using it.

Do you have any idea why?

Well just because now it would take about two cones to get me stoned and it probably only lasts 1/2 hour to an hour. When I first started using, on one cone I would be stoned for the rest of the day. [ID24, female aged 17]

Other respondents believed that tolerance may be specific to one type of cannabis and as such some respondents suggested that varying their supply source was one way to deal with tolerance resulting from relying on a single product:

Depends on where you get it from. Well you get it from some people and it's just, it doesn't even do anything but then from some people one cone can just knock you out. It just depends. And even if they do have good stuff, you keep going back to them it doesn't seem to do any good and then you go to someone else and it just seems to be weaker even when it's not ...

That's why it's good to have a couple of dealers that you can go to. So you don't always get the same stuff. [ID39, male aged 19]

It's strong, but it's starting not to do anything, so I'm looking around. [ID60, male aged 21]

It is worth noting that this theme also emerged in the context of other discussions among some participants. In particular, one respondent commented that the amounts she currently purchases means that she uses the same product for a period of time, thus contributing to tolerance.

...You have the same type of pot for a long period of time when I buy it half an ounce and you can become a bit immune to the specific type of pot your smoking. When you try somebody else's or have a different, other pot now you notice that the effects will be different. That's I guess a downer that you get immune to the same pot... [ID22, female aged 32]

Other respondents who discussed aspects of cannabis supply noted:

And is the quality always good from him?

Yeah. Got good stuff. He always rotates it really well as well.

What do you mean?

Well a lot of people you just get the same stuff over and over and over. Because his bulk guy sometimes gets [inaudible] from other, like parts of the country. Like I think through bkie gangs, and when his bulk guy gets different ounces, he gives some to my guy and then we'll get some of that as well. That happens quite regularly. [ID38, female aged 19]

Availability

Table 41 shows that 60.0% said that cannabis was 'very easy' to obtain in Perth over the previous 6 months.

Table 41: Ease of obtaining cannabis in the last 6 months

Ease of obtaining cannabis	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very easy	60	60.0
Easy	31	31.0
Difficult	3	3.0
Very difficult	1	1.0
Don't know	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Missing = 0

In their qualitative accounts concerning the way in which they obtained their cannabis twenty four respondents commented on the availability of cannabis. The following excerpts are typical and reflect the ease of accessing the drug:

It's always available. It's never really a problem. [ID67, male aged 21]

And I never actually need it but if I would like some then I could get it off my friends. They always have it. Or I can get it off the dealer which always have it which is a really close location. [ID41, male aged 18]

Yeah, marijuana is always available. If not it will be available the next day. Or you go to another house. I've got like 5 houses I choose from. [ID37, female aged 23]

Before being asked quantitative questions about the cannabis market respondents were asked to comment on factors affecting the availability of cannabis over the time they had been involved in the market.

According to respondents, availability of cannabis appears to depend upon a number of factors: Personal contacts, seasonal factors, whether the cannabis is hydroponically grown or not, and at times, the impact of police operations.

Personal contacts

One factor that seems to be related to perception of availability is personal contacts. This was a theme that emerged among 24 respondents. For example:

I mean that's not necessarily due to any environmental factor. It just simply could be due to an increase in knowing more people who have access to it. It's got nothing to do with the actual market itself. [ID53, male aged 31]

Other respondents commented on the way in which their increasing or decreasing social circles had an impact on the availability of cannabis:

I think the longer you're around, the more people you know, the more available it is. [ID96, female aged 32]

I suppose when I was younger it was easier to get because I was doing it more often and mixing in those circles. [ID25, male aged 37]

Another respondent noted that it has become more difficult for him to obtain cannabis since having distanced himself from his drug networks. In this case the respondent had used other drugs in addition to cannabis, but was changing his behaviour at the time of the interview. Note below:

...Depends on who you know and how many people you know... I'm trying to stay away from knowing most of the people, but yeah so I just go with friends you know.

So sometimes it's more or less available? Has this changed since you first got involved in the market?

It's become harder for me since I've first really got into it ... I mean if you go for all these things as well [respondent refers to list of other drugs], most of the people with these things can get you pot as well. [ID12, male aged 21]

Seasonal factors

In 23 cases seasonal variations emerged as a factor associated with availability of cannabis. In particular, such variations impacted only non-hydroponically grown cannabis. Among 14 respondents cannabis was seen less available during the Christmas season:

There's always a drought at Christmas. And there's usually [a lot] around the end of summer, summer going into autumn because that's when most people do their growing, natural growing. [ID2, male aged 48]

January, February. One of the biggest reasons because of that is because people growing it outside that's the cycle of the year. [ID7, male aged 33]

Other respondents when queried about issues impacting availability commented:

Around Christmas it's harder cos everyone's with their family then ... All the dealers are like with their families so you can't buy it. [ID24, female aged 17]

It's funny, usually the market's flooded with it, and sometimes, everywhere dries up within two days and you can't get it anywhere, and that's usually around Christmas and stuff. People put their price up. [ID61, male aged 35]

Five respondents mentioned increased availability occurring during the summer months. For example:

It goes through cycles. Towards Christmas [availability] starts going up and then towards the end of summer, that's when another crop [is] being harvested, especially the non-hydroponics. I'm sure there would be dry patches after huge police busts and raids and things like that. But mainly the climate affects the cycle. [ID95, male aged 30]

Type of cannabis (hydroponic versus non-hydroponic)

Twenty-one people commented on the type of cannabis being a factor in availability. In particular, seventeen people expressed the view that hydroponically grown cannabis was readily available, whereas five people were of the view that non-hydroponically grown was available. The following responses are illustrative:

Oh well since hydro's come in there's been a lot more availability. You can just about always score but before hydro's come in I remember it was always a real hassle to score. You know you go see 20 people and you might get somewhere but these days, with hydroponics there's so much of it. [ID42, male aged 37]

There's more hydro on the market than what there is bush weed. [ID20, male aged 50]

You don't come across [non-hydroponically grown] very often anymore, so it's generally...all hydro [ID30, female aged 28]

Also of note is the suggestion that personal contact plays a role in being able to obtain non-hydroponically grown cannabis. It may be that while hydroponic cannabis is more readily available, non-hydroponically grown can be available depending upon personal network. For example,

Bush stuff is very, very rare, very rare. In my circle anyway. [ID6, male aged 47]

Another respondent who identified cannabis as being readily available in Perth, did note the increased difficulty in obtaining non hydroponically grown cannabis. Note below:

I find it's available here in Perth all the time. I've never seen it [the market] dry. But if you're looking for non-hydroponic buds I find it's a lot harder. You have to specifically ask. [ID97, male aged 23]

Police operations

Police operations were seen as a third factor seen to impact the availability of cannabis. This was the case among 10 respondents. For example, one respondent commented:

For a while it did get dry but that's because the police got all the bikies and they're the main ones bringing it all through.

So then the supply dried up a bit?

Yeah.

When was that?

About a month, 2 months ago may be. They busted them before that but it just takes a while for the streets to get it. [ID39, male aged 19]

Another respondent discussing her personal situation, noted:

It can be difficult but I seem to manage to be able to you know get some.

Do you know why it would be difficult to get?

Because of the police because they are cracking down on it and you know burning it
[ID13, female aged 47]

In most cases respondents spoke generally about the impact of raids by police on the availability of cannabis. There were, however, a small number of cases where it was suggested that some raids occurred within the context of police corruption. For example, according to one respondent, the police were involved in orchestrating a change in the level of cannabis availability in order to benefit financially:

I know it was because I used to distribute for one of the biggest growers in Perth and he used to deal with the police. And the police told him 'we got to get more this year, we'll make less around, we'll push the price up'.
[ID78, male aged 46]

It is beyond the scope of this report to comment on the veracity of such claims. However, given that the report, is in part, a representation of cannabis users' perceptions of various aspects of the cannabis market, it is important to provide as comprehensive a representation as possible.

Changes in price, potency and availability of cannabis over the last 6 months

Table 42 to 44 show that most respondents thought that over the past 6 months: the price of cannabis had remained 'stable' (n=80); the strength was 'high' (n=59); it was 'very easy' to obtain (n=61); and availability had remained 'stable' (n=67).

Table 42: Changes in the price of cannabis in the last 6 months

Changes in the price of cannabis	Frequency	Valid Percent
Increasing	5	5.0
Stable	80	80.0
Decreasing	5	5.0
Fluctuating	4	4.0
Don't know/Not sure	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Missing = 0

In their general comments on the cannabis market some respondents commented on the cost of cannabis. While the price itself may have remained stable, seventeen people commented that the quantity of cannabis sold for the same price had decreased. For example one respondent suggested that the amount purchased for \$25.00 is less than it was in the past:

Price hasn't changed, but the quantity has.

How does that work?

The fact that [the] size of what you used to be able to buy for 25 has decreased.

[ID68, male age 27]

Table 43: Changes in the strength of cannabis in the last 6 months

Changes in the strength of cannabis	Frequency	Valid Percent
Increasing	13	13.0
Stable	62	62.0
Decreasing	7	7.0
Fluctuating	12	12.0
Don't know/Not sure	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Missing = 0

Table 44: Changes in ease of obtaining cannabis in the last 6 months

Changes in the strength of cannabis in the last 6 months	Frequency	Valid Percent
More difficult	8	8.0
Stable	67	67.0
Easier	12	12.0
Fluctuates	6	6.0
Don't know/Not sure	7	7.0
Total	100	100.0

Missing = 0

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SHAPE OF THE CANNABIS MARKET IN WA

This section explored the cannabis selling and supply process in WA, as it was understood by cannabis users themselves.

Respondents were asked: “Now in general terms I’d like you to tell me how the selling and supply process works. I don’t want you to be specific with details or provide me with any names. I simply want you to provide me with a rough idea of how the cannabis market works.” Seventy-two respondents commented on the issue.

Two kinds of market

There were 47 respondents who suggested that there are two levels to the market: the lower level end user groups, including small scale growers who self-supply, and the larger scale profit oriented (criminal) groups. Most saw the two levels are quite separate. For example:

The cannabis market works by a network of friends, who can form a co-op, in putting in part of the money, each putting in part of the money into one unit and purchasing the unit and distributing it to an equal share to the amount of money being given, therefore it brings the amount of the total unit down, because you are purchasing a pound or half a pound instead of an ounce or two ounces. Another part is people that grow cannabis and sell cannabis ... You could say it's for profit, but in the long run it's not profit because 3 months later, they're going to spend that money again buying cannabis off the person who's just bought the cannabis off them, because they've run out and [the other person's] crop has come through. So it's really a ... a support-supply system, because even though you are selling cannabis, and I have no qualms about it at all, you are selling cannabis, you know, you are selling to somebody for what purpose? For his own purpose, his own purpose, and you know you can rely on that purpose 3 months time down-the-track to supply you, with the same fair amount that you supplied him.

And there is others who grow large amounts of cannabis, 100 plants and above, which sell purely for profit, but as an average cannabis user that most people are, they wouldn't even come into contact with them. There are only 2 or 3 people who are going to go out and buy 50 pounds, and then distribute it among their friends, so really the higher level of growing is never met by the lower grade of distribution. There are a lot of steps in between, and even though pot is just pot, there is a lot of money to be made out of pot, so therefore those at the top of the ladder will keep it that way, and be very private, they are very private people. But as an average pot smoker, they all grow dope and they all supply to each other.

[ID74, male aged 53, current grower, current seller]

Secondly, there is some suggestion of a fragmented nature to the cannabis market, most notably between the grower and seller. Twenty-one of the respondents who commented on the two levels of the market suggested that a separation exists between the grower and seller. For example, one respondent suggests a general description of the way in which the market operates:

A grower these days, usually an indoor organised grower, will have one, two may be three houses that ... he or she has rented. Converted into hydroponic [factories] with lights and hydro set-ups, pumps and often air filters. Those people will get their crops in and sell them by the pound, usually I think, to a larger scale dealer who will then sell ounces to a smaller scale dealer, who will then sell 50s or 25s to users. I don't know how many people who do that. I don't know any growers directly right now.

[ID90, male aged 28, current grower, past seller]

A similar description is provided by an additional respondent, whose experiences in the cannabis market differed somewhat to other participants. In particular, this respondent currently grows and has been contacted in the past to grow cannabis for supply to areas in northern Western Australia. He declined at that point but nevertheless expressed his intent to grow cannabis for profit at some point in the future. In the following excerpt he was discussing his intent to grow and supply to one person, and moved on to a description of the selling and supply process according to his experience:

...Like this person he will buy two [ounces] off this one, two off that, two that, then put them all together when he's got 16 [a pound] and then go and leave that somewhere else, that's what he does.

[ID21, aged 37, current grower, former seller]

It appeared that cannabis users who did not participate beyond personal use might not have knowledge concerning activities existing outside of their personal networks.

Friends and small scale suppliers

In 40 cases cannabis users point of reference in terms of the selling and supply process was their personal contact. This referred to either their participation in a small network involving backyard growers, or purchasing from friends who obtained their supply from dealers. The following responses were typical:

My main experiences are with friends and acquaintances that grow their own, or have other friends and acquaintances that grow their own. So as far as that goes, it's mainly not-for-profit, it's just to recoup expenses. And that's the people I prefer to buy it off. On occasion, I do have to purchase through other people and those people, I'm assuming, are one of many middle men and that it's come through a long string of them. Most of the time I have no idea where it comes from originally and it comes from hydroponic labs that mass-produce it for profit. I don't really ask too many questions when it comes to that.

[ID95, male aged 30, past grower]

At the lower end of the market place it's a very personal thing and it's all amongst friends. Nobody really wants to deal with people that they don't know and they are only interested in helping their friends out. So a group of friends come together. We see how much we can afford, we find another friend who might have that, or know somewhere alternatively to get that, and eventually, we would literally just visit a friend for a few hours and enjoy their company at the same time as transact as to what we were looking for in the first place.

[ID64, male aged 34, past grower, never sold]

Another who currently buys his cannabis through a small network involving a personal grower, did nevertheless comment on the likelihood of having purchased cannabis originating from larger scale organisations:

I don't know what sort of distribution chains they use but I'm sure I have probably smoked pot from those chains and not known about it.

[ID17, male aged 32, former grower]

Others have suggested supply might ultimately occur from larger organisations if personal contacts were absent. For example:

Well, in my experience, it's always been from a friend's backyard, it's never been through some big organisation. I guess if you start, well if you didn't know people, then you sort of are... yeah, if you didn't know people that actually grew it themselves, that's when you get to a stage where you are going into the big organisations. But my own experience has always been close friends, or friends.

[ID23, male aged 31, former grower]

Such lack of detailed knowledge concerning larger scale organisations may be attributable to a number of reasons. Firstly, it could be due to the fact that involvement in a personal network separates one from direct involvement in larger scale organisations. Thus, respondents might not have any experience with the market beyond their personal circumstances. For example:

My knowledge would be based on just my interest and experience. I just ring the person up and he rings somebody else up and they ring somebody else up. Eventually I found out if something's available and when I can pick it up.

So you never have direct access to the source?

Its always buyers.

And you don't know anything about the source. Whether its large scale, small scale?

No. [ID34, male aged 52, past grower]

Involvement of large scale criminal organisations from South Australia

Three people suggested the involvement of large scale criminal organisations based in South Australia in the cannabis market in Western Australia. In two cases there was a general comment made concerning the involvement of organised crime. For example:

Well I know it comes from South Australia. And then it gets dealt to houses. And then I know the houses move around sometimes. Sometimes it's at one house and then it'll be at another house. So they all change. It's a family.

[ID37, female aged 23, current grower never sold]

Another respondent was of the view that much of the higher quality product was imported from South Australia by various people, including bike gangs:

The real good gear comes from South Australia, brought over by truck drivers and bikies and just people, you know, not even criminals, just whoever. They come over from South Australia ... A lot of people grow hydroponically which we can get as well, but it's not as good gear. But that's really small scale, there is not much dealing involved in there. Most dealers in hydroponically [grown cannabis] is for themselves and a few close friends, and also bushies as well, just for yourself. I doubt very much the bush gear in WA is big dealing. It's not worth it, no-one wants it, it's not good enough, the strains aren't good enough.

[ID57, male aged 33, never grown, never sold]

A third respondent who grows and sells to a regular buyer suggested:

Well, we grow it, we just grow it. Somebody just comes along and takes it all away, just hands me the wad [of cash]. They must go and sell it. They buy 10 ounces and they go off, they must sell it to... yeah we don't ask too many questions, but obviously it must go... well a lot of the... in Perth, it's mainly Aboriginals that do the selling, because they are being used by heavies. They are called safe houses. The Perth market is run by South Australia, the South Australian mafia, you know? They basically get credit, so these guys buy them by pounds or 10 ounces - in bulk, and then they give it to these guys, ounces and ounces in credit, or a whole pound, and it's on their back. They have to sell it to make the money. These people also have a house across the road. They keep the stuff there, and they travel across or from behind or across, you know, it's all set up, these houses get bought by these people. And then the Aboriginals just pay rent or something like that, but they are owned by Mafia, in South Australia. It's all South Australian run.

[ID75, male aged 31, current grower, current seller]

The extent to which cannabis and other drug markets are separate

As part of their qualitative accounts to a couple of questions, including their most recent score, some 32 respondents suggested that other drugs were available if they were interested. In some cases respondents stated their cannabis supplier could access other drugs although they tended to only deal in cannabis. For example, one respondent described her supplier in the following manner:

It's like he doesn't provide other stuff, but he can. The guy he gets his pot off, like his boss, that guy does other stuff and so he gets it off him. [ID38, female aged 19]

Another respondent noted that while she does not have direct access to other drugs, her cannabis supplier does inform her of what else available and is able to provide other drugs:

Usually the person that I'm getting it off has already tried them and tells me how good it was or how bad it was and sometimes they can get a deal like if you manage to get a few people to buy it, like about 10, you get one for free. Stuff like that. They never say 'you wanna buy this as well' they just say 'oh by the way we've got some really good Es you know' and then if I'm interested I'll ask them to tell me more and if not it wouldn't be mentioned again.

Does he usually have other drugs?

No but if someone asks he can get it for them but he doesn't keep it with him. Paranoid. [ID40, female aged 19]

One respondent commented that his cannabis supplier only dealt in cannabis and that suppliers tend to deal in different drugs. At the same time, he proceeded to say that other drugs were available to him through that same supplier:

The people I go to they just sell cannabis and like dope. If they're your friend they'll ask you if you want some or they can get you some. They just ask you if you want it.

Generally what other drugs will they offer you?

Just speed or valiums, you know, Dexies, something simple. Yeah, It's generally like they get it for you at cost. They won't be doing it deal or to make money. It's like passing it on, as a friend.

In the past when you've had other drugs is that how you would get them?

No, you just know the people that sell the different stuff. Some people sell pot. The others sell [other drugs] [ID8, male aged 22]

Two other respondents recounted conversations with their cannabis suppliers concerning the availability of other drugs. In both cases the respondents had approached the supplier for cannabis. In once case the respondent was offered other drugs. In the other, the respondent solicited other drugs:

I went to a friend's house to get an ounce. I just mentioned it [amphetamines] in passing and he happened to have some so he gave me some. Well, I bought some. [ID82, female aged 24]

Well in passing conversation that there's meth ice I think which he showed me, I had a look at. I was tempted to ring up my mate who used to go halves with me all the time and get a pack.

So it was generally just mentioned...or you asked?

That's the first time I actually ever mentioned anything about [it]. [ID87, male aged 40]

Also of interest are other respondents' comments concerning the fact that although their suppliers might deal in cannabis alone, they are exposed to other drugs when forced to leave their regular network. One respondent discussed having purchased other drugs when moving outside of his regular supply network:

He just sells [cannabis]. If I have to go outside that network.

If he doesn't have what [you are after]?

Yeah, more of an environment where there's multiple people that I don't know (inaudible) then, yeah, there are others.

So there are other dealers that sell anything?

Yes.

Do you ever get other stuff when you're buying?

Very rarely. [ID36, male aged 22]

My close circle of friends knows that I smoke pot and that I don't do anything else so if I'm buying off of a friend of a friend and he does something else then maybe he'll say, maybe he wants to make some more money and sell me something. No, I don't do it.

When you've been offered, what's usually been offered to you?

Usually speed. Speeds the biggest problem around these days. [ID19, male aged 22]

EXPERIENCE OF GROWING CANNABIS

Ever grown cannabis

Over two-thirds (n=70, 70.7%) of the sample had grown cannabis (missing=1). A summary of their growing status is provided in Table 45.

Table 45: Growing status

Number of plants grown to maturity	Non-hydro		Hydro	
	N=70		N=70	
	n	%	n	%
Never tried	7	10.0	51	72.9
Tried but failed	10	14.3	3	4.3
Small scale past (1-2 plants)	8	11.4	3	4.3
Medium scale past (3-9 plants)	8	11.4	3	4.3
Large scale past (10+ plants)	5	7.1	1	1.4
Small scale current grower (1-2 plants)	18	25.7	5	7.1
Medium scale current (3-9 plants)	11	15.7	0	0.0
Large current past (10+ plants)	3	4.3	4	5.7
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0

Recently grown cannabis

Some 39 (56.5%) of those who had ever grown cannabis, had done so in the last 12 months. Most (n=30, 76.9%) of these used non-hydroponic methods only, seven (17.9%) used only hydroponic methods and two (5.1%) grew hydroponic and non-hydroponic cannabis. Some 21 (65.6%) of the 32 recent non-hydroponic growers successfully produced a harvest to maturity (producing heads), but only about half (n=17, 53.1%) of the 32 recent actually harvested their crop. Of the four who did not get to harvest their mature plants, one had their plants 'ripped off' (stolen), one was apprehended by police before he had time to harvest, one produced only 2 mature plants which were both males, and thus did not produce female heads, and for the remaining one no explanation was given.

On the other hand 100% (n=9) of those who had grown hydroponically in the last 12 years grew their crops to maturity and almost all (n=8, 88.9%) of these harvested the cannabis. Five of the 32 who had grown non-hydroponic cannabis said that they had planted seeds in the last 12 months but none had germinated by the time of their interview. Two-thirds (n=14) of the 21 participants who had grown non-hydroponic cannabis plants to maturity cultivated more than two plants (mode=3, range=3 to 25). Numbers of hydro and non-hydro plants grown to maturity in the last 12 months are presented in Table 46.

Table 46: Numbers of Hydro and Non-hydro plants grown to maturity in the last 12 months

Number of plants grown to maturity	Non-hydro N=32		Hydro N=9	
	n	%	n	%
0 (not successful)	11	34.4	1	11.1
1	3	9.4	1	11.1
2	4	12.5	3	33.3
3	5	15.6	0	0.0
4	4	12.5	0	0.0
5	0	0.0	0	0.0
6-10	2	6.3	0	0.0
11-20	2	6.3	1	11.1
21-30	1	3.1	1	11.1
31-100	0	0.0	1	11.1
More than 100	0	0.0	1	11.1
Total	32	100.0	9	100.0

Proportion of cannabis smoked in previous 6 months that grew oneself

Those 39 respondents who had grown cannabis in the last 12 months were asked what proportion of the cannabis they smoked in the last 6 months they had grown themselves. Only one-quarter (n=25) of the whole sample consumed any own-grown cannabis over the last 6 months. Among those who had grown cannabis in the last 12 months just over a third had not consumed any self-grown cannabis in the last 6 months and only 21% (n=8) said that most of the cannabis they consumed over that period was self grown. These results are presented in Figure 14.

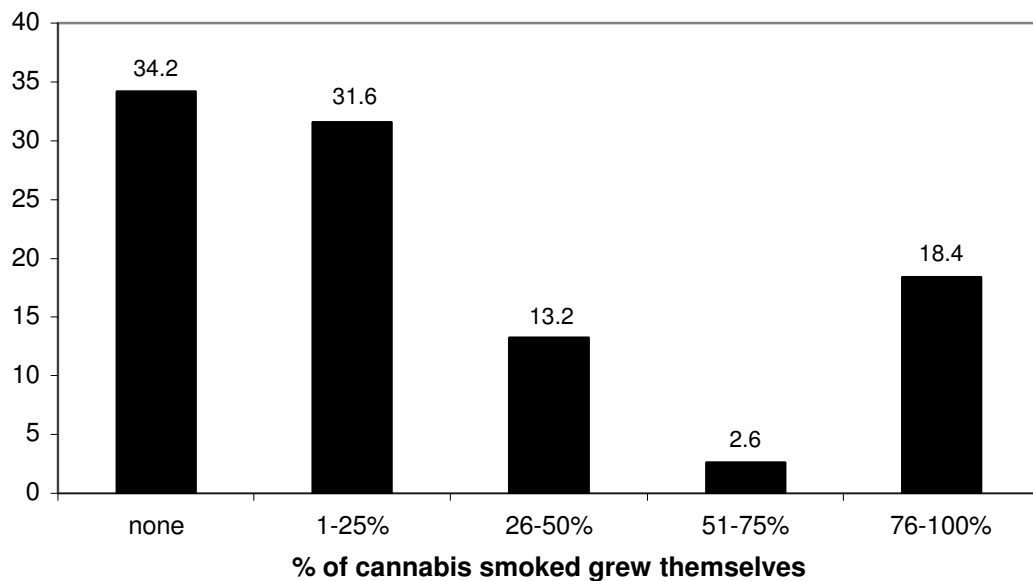


Figure 14: Percent of cannabis smoked in last 6 months grown oneself

Proportion of cannabis grown in last 6 months that was given away

Those 39 respondents who had grown cannabis in the last 12 months were asked what proportion of the cannabis they grew in the last 6 months they had given away to others. Only one fifth (n=19) of the whole sample gave away any own-grown cannabis they had grown over the last 6 months. Among those who had grown cannabis in the last 12 months just 50.0% had not given away any self-grown cannabis in the last 6 months and only 8.9% (n=3) said that most of the cannabis they grew over that period was given away to others. These results are presented in Figure 15.

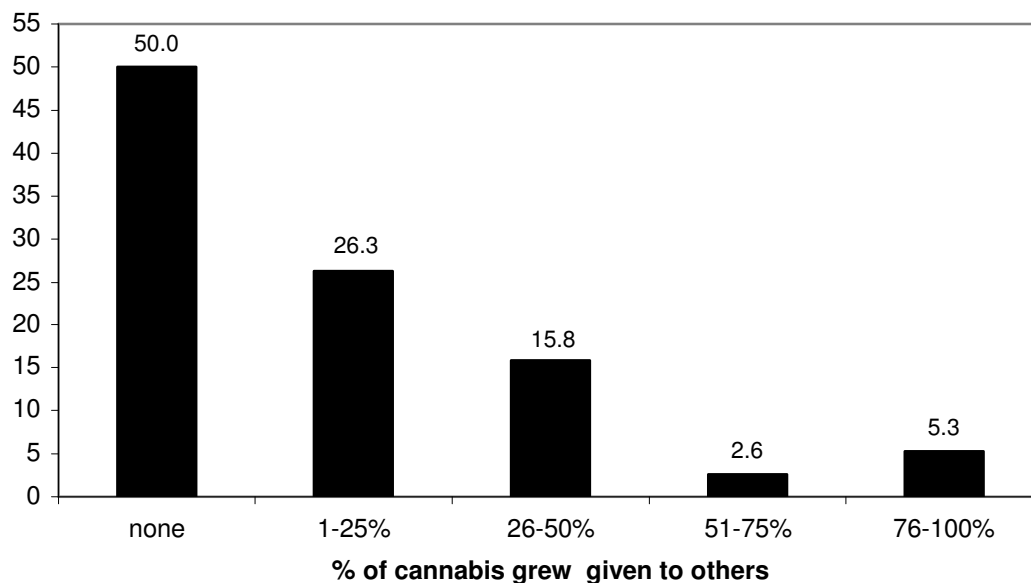


Figure 15: Percent of cannabis grown by oneself in last 6 months that was given to others

Violence and 'rip-offs' when growing in the last 6 months

Only three respondents, 7.7% of those who had grown cannabis in the last 12 months said that they had been subject to violence or rip-offs in the past 6 months.

Reasons for growing cannabis

Prior to the quantitative questions regarding growing, respondents were asked to tell the interviewer about their experience of growing including how they got involved, decisions to grow hydro, or non-hydro, reasons for growing etc.

Fifty-nine people commented on their reasons for growing. Respondents were comprised of both current and past growers and experienced varying levels of success in their attempts. Reasons for growing included: the cost of purchasing cannabis; growing for profit; experimentation; enjoyment of the growing process; self sufficiency; the social aspect; avoidance of the criminal element; and self supply for medicinal use.

Cost of purchasing cannabis

Some 30 respondents suggested that the excessive cost of purchasing cannabis was a factor in their decision to attempt to grow. The following response is typical:

I was at a point where I was using it and I was finding the cost of buying it, the hassle of buying it, it was just too much. [ID34, male aged 52, former grower]

Another respondent who formerly grew cannabis for personal consumption also mentioned the fact that money was an issue:

[T]he price of dope up north, which is way too expensive. So instead of buying it, save myself some dollars. [ID42, male aged 37]

Profit

Four respondents suggested they were motivated by profit in their efforts to grow. For example, one respondent who was not currently growing at the time of interview discussed the way in which an initial attempt to grow came to be about profit:

My ex husband's brother had a farm down in "M" and he had a few growing in his back shed. He showed us when we went down there one day and oh yeah sounds like a good idea. So we took one tub home with us and a table, and there's about 8 plants that usually go on one table but that wasn't enough. We decided to get greedy didn't we ... So we ended up having 3 tables with 8 on so that's 28 plants at a time and they were hydro on the trays with the typical hydro set up with the tubs underneath, with the water going through the trays with the lights on them. 28 at a time.

Was the 28 plants, was that because you could make [money]?

Yeah mega bucks, make money. [ID15, female aged 35, past grower]

One respondent currently growing for personal use suggested that the possibility of financial gain factored into his decision to attempt growing using different methods. Note below:

Decision to grow would have been many years ago, shortly after I was smoking it on a regular basis. I could see there was money to be made so the greed factor came in, so then I started off as your typical backyarder and I'd grow the plants in the ground.

How many did you grow or how many did you plant?

Oh gee some years I'd have 50 in the ground. But it was never very successful simply because, come harvest time, to find the people with that amount of money that could hand it over, [I] just didn't have the contacts back then. So I was having to start to split it up in to smaller lots dealing with more people running a higher risk either side (inaudible). I'm not even going to bother even though the financial reward could be there I just thought no its not worth the hassle, the phone calls ... So then some years after that the hydro game was starting up. So I thought 'well lets do it hydro' so I did successfully grow it hydro but much smaller quantities because it was inside the house.

How much would you have grown?

Six to nine plants - good returns. [ID 21, male aged 37, current grower]

A third respondent was part of type of syndicate where he provides clones to others in addition to selling cannabis. Although he was of the opinion that he was not involved in growing at a high level, he nevertheless participates at a higher level than most of the respondents. A current hydroponic grower, he expresses an interest in exploring aspects of growing cannabis, but it is also clear that profit is a contributing factor:

I like to grow it. I like to grow it in soil as well, but I like to experiment. I grow in soil and in outside hydro pots. Just all different ways. You see, I'm the key holder of the strains. I hold the strains and I do the breeding and I sell or take percentages of people's harvests. Like, I just give them so many clones, and I get a payment when they harvest, they give me a percentage of the crop. I will then either sell it, or... well if they are able to sell it on their behalf, then they just hand me a wad of money. [ID75, male aged 31, current grower]

Experimentation with growing

Experimentation was suggested as a reason for attempting to grow by 28 respondents. Factors precipitating experimentation were varied and generally articulated as being related to a favourable set of circumstances. Some spoke of being in a position where they had access to a place in which they could grow:

Okay, it wasn't hydro [be]cause it was a seed I got out of a foil. We had a back yard where we could do it. So you know, jiffy pot, grew it inside for a little bit until it was (inaudible) until it was strong enough. We just put it in the garden. Not giving it really much more attention than everything else in the garden. [ID098, female aged 30]

One respondent spoke of attempting to grow both hydroponically and non-hydroponically. His attempt growing hydroponically came about when his friend moved to his own place:

Well my mate moved out so we bought a hydro kit and we gave it a whirl and was successful in the first attempt. And then I tried it again and did alright, got a couple of ounces out of it. And then I did a bush plant and I got about an ounce out of that. And then I did another hydro, but lot more in-depth, and I got think 2.5 ounces out of that.

How come you went back and forth between hydro and the bush?

I was just experimenting, I wasn't really in it for anything else. I was just interested. [ID12, male aged 21]

For others, becoming motivated to experiment was related to being in possession of some seeds:

It was just mainly for my personal use and a friend had given me a pile of seeds and so I thought oh well I'll just give it a go and had help from a young boy, but that just didn't sort of work. [ID47, female aged 47]

Ok, I was given some seeds from a friend. And I planted them in pots. I grew them in my backyard. I don't know what they were. Once they got to a certain level... [ID83, female aged 26]

Enjoyment derived from growing

According to 13 respondents, aspects relating to an enjoyment of growing factored into their efforts to grow cannabis. Some situated their interest in the context of gardening and the pleasure derived from it:

Because I'm a natural green thumb. Ultimately that's what it boils down to ... I like growing plants. Nothing to do with the [growing of cannabis]. I mean it is, but it's not ... [ID68, male aged 27, current grower]

I don't really like hydro pot. I love gardening so I'm quite happy to watch [mine] grow in the garden and in my current house I feel like I'm fairly secure, nobody's going to come into my backyard. And if I've got one plant ... [ID22, female aged 32]

Others interest was located on a different level in the sense of developing knowledge specific to cannabis growing.

I've been growing for many, many years; probably a year after I started smoking I started growing; initially went through seeds then went to cuttings and clones and as I got my degree in horticulture [unclear]. I've always been against hydroponics for the reasons I told you previously, the chemical aspect; I think it's too much friggin around and I go for the hobby; I enjoy the whole art of it, where I don't have the monetary inclination of cloning every 3 months to get a constant crop. So I enjoy the processing of growing it, manicuring the head or whatever. [ID97, male aged 23, current grower]

Another respondent who is not currently growing also expressed an interest in acquiring knowledge specific to cannabis:

In younger years I certainly attempted many times growing marijuana in back gardens of houses that I've lived in. I enjoyed tending them as well as obviously the product availability at the end of the day. It's similar to growing yourself some vegetables. I've bought books concerning the growing of it, techniques concerning the growing of it, adapted and adopted techniques from that, experimented with those techniques. I've then moved on to indoor growing and experimented with those techniques, to a small degree, not a large scale production by any means and then haven't grown any for the last 5 years or so. [ID64, male aged 34, past grower]

Still other respondents attributed an aesthetic quality to the plant itself. For example:

Well, I just got interested in the plant itself as well. Just naturally, Just planted some seeds in a pot, to see what became of it. A plant came up...I've never seriously grown it for, to try and get anything off it, I'm just interested in it, it's a nice plant. [ID52, male aged 30, current grower]

Another respondent who spoke of both the difficulty in growing and the cost involved in purchasing, also suggested an appreciation of the plant at the level of aesthetics:

And it starts from a seed and you get your fully mature plant and you have a look at it, you know, it's incredible, It is really. [ID10, male aged 42, past grower]

Self-sufficiency

According to 12 respondents, the desire to become self sufficient was an additional aspect underlying attempts to grow cannabis.

Well I guess my concerns were that I didn't like going, you know, having to depend on somebody else, you know, for when I wanted to smoke. That was number one ... I said 'look I can grow my own. I can do this'. So basically we went out and bought the hydroponic gear, and got a clone from the guy who actually sold me the hydroponics stuff. [ID14, male aged 52, past grower]

Well, yeah, just to avoid the hassle of having to, trying to chase people up, and at certain stages, I've had my own place so I've had the opportunity to grow it. Where I'm living now, I'm living in an apartment - units, so you can't really grow it there. At certain stages, where I've been working, it's been out in the bush, so I've had the opportunity to grow things out in the bush as well. [ID23, Male aged 31, past grower]

Another respondent, speaking of the fact that he was reluctant to grow because of the illegality, nevertheless continued in an effort to become self-sufficient:

But it doesn't stop me from putting some seeds in the ground and just seeing what happens and if one tends to thrive I'll maybe camouflage it. It would be nice to grow a nice plant and be able to store it and use it at your own leisure. [ID25, male aged 37, current grower]

Social Aspect

The social aspect as it relates to growing was an additional theme that emerged in the course of discussions with cannabis users. Four respondents understood this aspect to be an important factor in their efforts to grow. One way in which the social can be conceptualised is a communal feeling existing among friends who grow and share their own product. For example:

[T]here was four of us sharing the house... we always shared the work. [W]hen it was harvest time it was like yeah ok we've got this to last us, you know, divide it up, you know. We divided a bit up for ourselves and just had a bit sort of like a communal between four of us... yeah sort of a communal vibe up there. [I]t was good, it was nice. [ID6, male aged 47 past grower]

The social also had to do sharing different products for the purpose of maximising access to different varieties of cannabis. As one respondent notes:

...I grew it cause it was cheaper and, my friends were growing it too and then we ended up swapping so we had a bit of variety so that we didn't build up a resistance to it as quickly so we all swapped a couple of bags with each other and then you have four different kinds of [cannabis]... [ID2, male aged 40, past grower]

The social as it is implicated in the sharing of different strains is also interesting in the context of the broader cannabis market. On a micro level, the self-supply of small groups occurs, in part, as a means to access different varieties of cannabis. On another level, there is some suggestion that aspects of the larger scale operations work in a similar manner.

One respondent, although never having grown, suggested that the cannabis market was organised in the following manner:

Well I know for a fact that there's a couple of set ups where some of the growers have combined powers together and, let's say for instance, it might be 5 growers, and they'll grow different strains of pot as well. I've had a certain market lined out where I imagine they would go to either one central bloke for distribution down to seller dealers, which is broken up and then broken down into smaller and smaller lots. [ID87, male aged 40]

Another respondent who currently grows indicated a similar account:

Within our circle, we grow it, just grow 10 ounces or something just to pass on. It's always sold, it's no question of where to sell it ... Somebody just comes along and takes it all away,

just hands me the wad [of cash]. They must go and sell it. They buy 10 ounces and they go off, they must sell it to... yeah we don't ask too many questions, but obviously it must go... well a lot of the... in Perth, it's mainly Aboriginals that do the selling, because they are being used by heavies. They are called safe houses. The Perth market is run by South Australia, the South Australian mafia, you know? [ID75, male aged 31, current grower]

This is suggestive of there being organized growers with different intentions. On one level are those whose objective is to provide fellow users within the group with different strains. On another, are those growers whose different strains are for profit. On this basis we can infer two understandings of the social or communal as it relates to cannabis. Specifically, the way in which one group understands it as part of a larger culture of cannabis where smokers assist one another. This can be contrasted with another facet of cannabis where the social or communal is implicated in profit.

Avoidance of the criminal element

Five respondents suggested that a desire to avoid the criminal factor inherent in the cannabis market was a factor in their decision to grow. For example:

I had some seeds and I decided I would like to try to grow my own so I didn't have to pay for it or be involved with other criminals and my plants grew on one occasion to a immature stage so they died before they got to a mature stage. And on a new occasion they grew to a mature stage and were males. [ID26, female aged 37, past grower]

I'll tell you why, I grow because it ends up being cheaper, you don't have to buy (inaudible) everything, and it's just you and your weed, no middle man, no black market, no money. It's just there for you and, you know, it's better. [ID65, male aged 18, current grower]

A fifth respondent used for medicinal reasons in that he believed it had a beneficial effect upon his epilepsy. Although he did not explicitly speak in terms of avoiding the criminal element, of note in this instance is the suggestion that by growing his own supply he avoids having to obtain cannabis from street sources:

Well I personally put together half a dozen plants and press it up and dry it out so that I've got a whole year's [supply] to fall [back] on. I don't need to go out on the street. [ID20, male aged 50, current grower]

Reasons for non-hydroponic growing

Thirty-two respondents suggested that their attempts to grow had been using non-hydroponic methods. Those who grew non-hydroponically expressed a number of reasons for doing so including: experimentation; their belief that bush weed was a healthier product; that it was less complicated than hydroponic methods; and a perceived greater risk of growing hydroponically.

Experimentation

Thirteen respondents suggested that their non-hydroponic growing efforts could be understood as experimenting. For example, one respondent described her growing attempts in the following manner:

What I would do is throw a seed in and if it comes up, I'll water it and if it grows, it grows, and if it doesn't, it doesn't, if it gets ripped off, it gets ripped off, that's it. I don't buy any lights or preparation, no shit like that. [ID62, female aged 41 former grower]

According to another respondent, her efforts also centred on acquiring seeds and planting them without any concerted effort:

I just had some seeds and I had a big mob and I just ended up chucking them in this kind of trough thing and there was a lot of little crap ones and I ended up giving a whole heap of seedlings away [be]cause I didn't want to [grow all of them] and just a couple bloomed and I just kept on going. I threw about 50 seeds down, not expecting hardly any to come up. I got a lot, I had to give a lot away. [ID16, female aged 33, current grower]

On this basis it can be inferred that in cases where a desire to experiment is present, it is often easier to begin with non-hydroponic growing. As one former grower stated when asked her reasons for choosing non-hydroponic methods:

Basically it meant minimal expense and technology [ID26, female aged 37, former grower]

Better product

Some 12 people expressed the view non-hydroponically grown cannabis was their preference due to it being more natural than hydroponically grown. Thus their attempts at growing were limited to non-hydroponic methods. For example, one respondent referred to non-hydroponically grown cannabis as being preferable in terms of both taste and weaker potency:

I find that even naturally grown good marijuana is not that strong but it's more a tasty thing whereas in hydroponics it's just geared to try to get that full effect of THC. It can be a little bit too much. [ID25, male aged 37 current grower]

Others highlighted the chemical aspect of hydroponically grown as a way to discuss their preference of non-hydroponic methods. Those holding such views included:

So is that the reason why you've chosen to use outdoor plants?

No, I've chosen outdoor plants from the chemical - remember. So it's mainly the chemical quantity of the hydros. Oh my lord, that's the danger. And plus the bush, being a lower percentage of THC, your body doesn't build up tolerance. That's why a lot of people these days don't like bush when they buy it, because it's not getting off the hydro, [be]cause hydro's got twice the THC amount.

[ID54, male aged 38, current grower, current seller]

Involved nature of hydroponic methods

6 respondents mentioned the more involved nature and higher expense of hydroponic growing.

You have to grow hydro in a hydroponic solution under lights, Well not necessarily under lights, [unclear].

So it was more of a hassle to grow hydro, is that why you didn't grow hydro?

It's a lot more expensive. You need at least \$1,000 to set up basic hydro. And you also need to have the room and there's also huge amounts of electricity that you use and it's just a lot more sus[pect] as well. [ID32, female aged 32, current grower, never sold]

Perceived risk associated with hydroponic growing

For six respondents it had to do with a perceived greater risk associated with growing hydroponically:

Yeah growing hydro its more of a hassle 'cause you have to have the lights and worry about the smell a bit more, cause usually its in a contained area and the smell gets out of control whereas, [if] you're outside and the wind takes it away and you don't have to worry about it too much. It's a lot easier.

So you've never [grown hydroponically]?

I've never no. I wouldn't even have the guts to do something like that. I'd be a wreck that the police would be knocking down my door.

[ID7, male aged 33, current non-hydroponic grower, never sold]

Interestingly, one person noted that while she did smoke hydroponic she would only grow non-hydroponically due to the risks associated with hydroponic growing:

No I don't do hydro. I smoke it but I don't want to get into that.

How come you grow that kind?

[Be]cause I don't want to get caught with hydroponic gear and I got too much to risk with my family. [Be]cause then you can get carried away and do too many plants. And I'm just growing it just for my own purpose. Just to have a few cones.

[ID16, female aged 33, current grower, past seller]

Reasons for hydroponic growing

Nine respondents gave reasons why they grew using hydroponic methods. These could be summarised in two themes: concealment and quality.

Concealment

Relative ease of concealment was suggested as a reason for choosing hydroponic methods by six respondents. This was understood in two ways. Firstly, concealment had to do with issues of privacy and ensuring that one's choice to grow (and smoke) cannabis was not made public:

If it grows in your garden you can't really have a barbeque! There's other factors that would bring it to people's notice and though I believe that the majority of people do mean well, it's not for someone else to judge what I choose to do so it eliminates that whole issue as well. It keeps it private.

[ID11, female aged 50, current grower]

Another way concealment might be understood is the elimination of theft of one's plants. For example, one grower states:

Because there is too many rip-offs outside.

Just to avoid rip-offs?

It's just to avoid rip-offs. I mean, if you are going to look after them, why should somebody else smoke them? But there is no other reason, that I've spoken to all my friends, there is no other reason why we don't grow outdoors, apart from the reason that they go, you know. And

indoors, well growing it indoors costs you money actually, a lot more money than it does outside, a lot more money! So there is no reason to do it. It's just that the police or the media or whatever have got this thing that it's so much stronger.

[ID74, male aged 53, current grower, current seller]

This is the reason why hydroponics is so much better, because it's indoors. I mean, you can have it indoors, you can have it in a shed, so it removes a lot of the theft, the stealing, the confrontations, because like I say, if I'm growing it in my back garden and somebody comes into my garden and starts cutting my plants down, there's going to be trouble!

[ID14, male aged 52, past grower, never sold]

Quality

Among five people quality was as a factor underlying decisions to grow hydroponically, albeit in different ways. For some, quality referred to producing the best product that was free of adulterants that would harm one's health. For example:

And wanting to grow our own really didn't have as much to do with legal issues as quality. On occasion we have experienced cannabis that had side effects such as headaches or inducing coughing and we found out that was directly related to the chemicals used in the growing process. If they're grown outside - herbicides, things like that, if they're grown hydroponically - growth accelerators and things like that. So it was a health issue and we chose to do it in the most safe way as far as our health was concerned ... It keeps it private, keeps it safe and keeps it quality controlled I guess so we don't have to worry about someone else spraying it with something or infecting it in some way.

[ID11, female aged 50, current grower, past seller]

A second way quality was understood was the potency of hydroponically grown. Specifically, the view that hydroponic is stronger than non-hydroponic and is therefore a better product. For this respondent the goal in using hydroponic methods is to optimise the strength of the product:

[Be]cause it's basically better quality pot and because you can control the atmosphere. What I mean by control the atmosphere is like you can leave your light on for an extra two days so the plants get an extra two hours' sunlight, improve the strength of your plant. With hydro you control the atmosphere.

[ID42, male aged 37, past grower, never sold]

In two other cases the perceived better quality of hydroponics is highlighted by contrasting it with non-hydroponically grown:

The stuff in the ground doesn't make you as bent. Like you ... you gotta have more of it and it's not as good.

[ID8, male aged 22 current grower, past seller]

Do you prefer hydro? Why is that?

You don't have to smoke as much. Bushy's a bit rough.

[ID44, female aged 35, current grower, never sold]

Indeed, a former cannabis grower suggested that one of the reasons he stopped was because he was able to purchase a product that suited his preference. Thus, he was able to avoid the risk associated with growing his own:

There was no need to support myself once the hydroponic came along because it was a guaranteed strength and that was what we were after.

[ID64, male aged 34, past grower, never sold]

Both hydroponic and non-hydroponic growing

Eleven respondents noted that they had attempted growing using both methods. As with the previous discussion, responses were varied. For some respondents it was part of an overall experimentation process with growing. As one respondent noted:

Experimentation

According to seven respondents, efforts to grow using both methods occurred as part of a general desire to experiment with growing. As one respondent noted:

I've only grown a few crops in my life and my interest in growing [inaudible] gardening plants generally and something that my uncle told me: it was all like a hypotenuse or what ever test. So I planted all these seeds at different times around a full moon basically to see which ones were best and you know yes all the plants came up and I got lots of them. I didn't even really try to grow again until about 5 years later when I got my first hydro kit, my first and last hydro kit, which I installed under my house and grew a successful hydro crop under there which kept me in pot for a few months ... didn't bother selling any.

[ID17, male age 32 current grower]

Difficulties in the growing process

Two respondents indicated that movement between the two methods were related to the difficulties encountered in the growing process:

I've only tried growing a couple of times, probably because it is illegal and I didn't want to get caught and all that stuff. Originally I just had some seeds in one of my \$25 bags, planted them in the ground and just grew them naturally in my backyard. Nearly all of those died, or they became males. They get affected by all the bugs like other plants, like aphids and stuff. I lost the whole lot so it was a waste of time really. I tried growing hydroponics which gave me an \$1800 power bill for three months and the whole crop got eaten, these bugs ate them out from the inside. So I lost everything there. So I think it is easier just to grow one or two plants in the backyard, but you've just got to be really lucky. It's hard to grow.

[ID61, male aged 35, current grower, past seller]

Another respondent who stopped growing hydroponically due to the associated costs, suggested that moving from one growing method to the other was in some respects related to the difficulties experienced in growing cannabis. Note below:

So I just grew a plant at home in the ground. And then, I decided to put it in pot plants so I could constantly pour nutrient stuff in it. And I had two of them. But. Like one of them died. I didn't really know what I was doing. And then I like put a small, I wanted to get it growing quickly so I bought a small hydroponic thing so I, yeah. You get like three plants every month or something like that ... Or more like three every three months, I reckon.

[ID8, male aged 22, current grower, past seller]

Perceived harms associated with hydroponics

An additional respondent who has grown successfully using both methods eventually decided against using hydroponically grown because of the perceived harms associated with it:

I now have doubts serious doubts about the health of hydro cannabis. I wouldn't bother doing it myself.

So when you did grow the hydro you weren't that concerned?

No I didn't have any idea about it at that stage I just thought it was fine.

[ID17, male aged 32, current grower, never sold]

Choice of crop size

There were 50 respondents who commented on their choice of crop size. In many cases crop size consisted of one to two plants although in a few cases the numbers were larger. Three primary themes emerged: perceived need; experimentation; and fear of detection.

Perceived need.

In 29 cases the number of plants appeared to be based on personal need. For example, one former grower said:

How many are growing at the one time?

3 or 4.

So why that amount of plants?

Just for my own need.

[ID77, male aged 46, past grower, never sold]

Another respondent in discussing growing two plants notes:

For my own personal use. I'm not a pusher, I don't sell it. I won't.

So how much do you get off those two plants?

Probably around 4 to 6 ounces.

[ID46, male aged 29, current grower]

In some cases, decisions regarding perceived need incorporated the possibility that not all plants would produce harvestable heads. This could be due to factors such as some plants dying due to disease, or the fact that only the female plants are of use. The assumption that not all plants would reach fruition resulted in planting a higher number with the intention of achieving something smaller. For example:

And is there a reason why you chose 8 cuttings?

Well you should expect to lose one or two, perhaps through root-rot or something, so I think probably for me I need about 6 to smoke. I mean you never really know how it's going to go, so often you might put in a bit more. [ID78, male aged 46, current grower, past seller]

My most successful try I think I got four plants, four females, the males were ripped out before harvest. I would have got all up about almost 10 ounces. That was non-hydroponics. And that was for personal use, no selling. It saved me a lot of money, it lasted me almost 6 months. It was good. [ID95, male aged 30, former grower]

Unanticipated outcome

In some sixteen cases the resulting crop size was unanticipated in the sense of there being no specific effort to achieve a specific crop size per se. Rather, the outcome is arbitrary; one based on opportunity where people have seeds and decide to plant them. For example:

To see how easy it was. I had some really nice bush buds so we got the seeds out of that. We grew 4 plants. [ID96, female aged 32, former grower]

Fear of detection

Four respondents were of the view that the possibility of being caught by the authorities impacted on the size of crop. For some this referred to the idea that being caught with a smaller as opposed to larger number was in their best interest. One respondent adjusted his crop size as a result of being apprehended in the past. When queried about his decision to grow 3 or 4 plants he stated:

I used to grow more and the time I got caught I had 27 plants... Ever since then I've just not grown that amount. It's only ever been 3 or 4 and I did change my growing habits; for a little while in the middle we used to take clones just near the end of the vegetation season, just grow little heads like this and you just have 10 of them lined up instead of a plant as such, you just grow a head but that died in the arse.

[ID97, male aged 23, current grower non-hydro, past seller].

According to another respondent:

You grew four. And because that was a convenient amount?

Yeah, that's all I need. [I] don't want to get busted. If I get busted with four [that's different than] if I grew a whole back yard ... Think I'll have a problem explaining [that].

[ID2, male aged 48, past grower, never sold]

The number of people involved in growing

Thirty-six respondents commented on whether their efforts to grow included others.

Alone

According to 22 respondents, attempts to grow did not involve additional people. Typical was one respondent who noted:

Yeah, just me. The last times that I've had, my mates have been looking after it, not really looking after it, but helping me look after it. But these ones, these are mine. I've shown a couple of people, I don't generally show anybody because the more people you tell, the more people who know and then the word gets around and then somebody who doesn't like you, someone who is not friends with you will come round and take them because they don't give a shit about you. Whereas your friends, they don't do that, because you know you don't do that to your friends. [ID65, male aged 18, current grower]

Another when asked if he was the sole person involved responded:

No. Just myself. And over East I've grown it. Different. I don't know, plants grow differently over East. They grow smaller and bushier and seem to be more thick with resin. But I've also been busted over East. [ID100, male aged 40, former grower]

Peer group

Thirteen respondents indicated that their growing involved a small peer group.

For example, one respondent began by stating he was the only one involved, but during the course of the discussion it became apparent that he was part of a peer group whose intent was to self-supply. Note below:

No it's just me. We had this big argument a long time ago. We all sat down and everyone wanted to do it and I said it becomes organised crime when you sit down in a circle and do this. Regardless of whether we're called a co-op or what. Because we're all at a table and we're all talking about a drug that's illegal, it becomes organised crime. Took me about a month to make it friggin sink in. So now we grow separate but we're together. Help each other out. [ID54, male aged 38, current grower]

Another respondent shares with a small group thus ensuring that a plant is always available:

Oh no, its 4 clones yeah you keep the clones going, now were getting into detail, some years ago, 3 years ago when I visited, Amsterdam one of the main reason was, well apart from a good holiday, was to come back with some good seeds and so yeah, germinate them and then you clone them or take cutting and then you either sell the cuttings or give them to your friends and then you've always got a circle of quality plants around so that when mine are finishing off, I'll go and get some more off so-and-so and when my are in full growth I'll snip them and take them around and give them to so-and-so just so that you keep it a small circle. [ID21, male aged 37, current grower]

The peer group might also be comprised of those living together, whether partners, or friends and housemates as indicated below. When asked if anyone else was involved in growing he responded:

Yes, friends. They make sure that they water it, and make sure they know what's going on, just basically caring for a plant. It was my housemate so we were both going to benefit from it so we made sure we were both doing our mutual bit [ID68, male aged 27, current grower]

Syndicate supplying for profit

One atypical respondent is involved with a syndicate of growers for the purpose of supplying for profit. Although he does not feel he can be classified as a larger scale grower his involvement does go beyond self-supply:

And I probably get about 10 ounces every 8 weeks. I sell that for about 3 grand. And then I get cuts, percentages, from 5 other people, and they give me weed on alternate [occasions] We set up times, so it rotates [ID75, male aged 31, current grower]

The difficult nature of growing cannabis

Another theme that emerged throughout discussions with cannabis users was the difficult nature of growing. Twenty-eight respondents discussed the difficulties associated with growing cannabis.

Inadequate knowledge - general

In seven instances failing to grow successfully was attributed to a lack of knowledge. For example, one respondent who experimented unsuccessfully with growing as a way to save money remarked:

I can't grow. I've got no hope. I don't know enough...I tried to germinate them on wet cotton towels. [ID35, female aged 25, former grower]

Inadequate knowledge - specific

An additional fifteen respondents discussed a number of specific reasons for why they believed their attempts to grow were unsuccessful. These cases may also be understood as a lack of requisite knowledge. For example:

I set up a light structure within a cupboard and thanks to a friend who suggested the idea and I ended growing up growing a plant to about this high...

So about two inches high?

Yeah, then it died on me [be]cause I'd over fertilised it. That's the only attempt I've had. [ID59, female aged 34, former grower]

I had seeds like when you get a bag sometimes you get little seeds in it. And because my guy, that's what he did, [he said] "you should plant your own". And I go "alright" and I tried and it just didn't work for me.

Was this inside or outside?

I tried to move it in a bit of cottonwool, you know with little seeds. I tried to do that and then when it kind of sprouted I put it into a pot and then it kind of grew to this tiny thing then it stopped. Just died. Very hot I think. [ID38, female age 19 current grower]

Other growers have achieved a successful harvest but have been dissatisfied with the outcome. In this regard, inadequate knowledge can be made manifest in the quality of the product. Note below where the respondent is able to harvest his crop but feels that level of success is dependent upon level of knowledge. Note below:

Sometimes the growth may be stunted and I just pull them out, dry them and may be have a light smoke. I don't grow big plants or anything like that.

How much would you have got when you pulled up the stunted ones?

A couple of grams! Not very good at that.

So will you try to score within the civil penalty range?

Yep and if growing one or two plants is okay then I might look into a bit of research into how to grow some good marijuana plants and I might even read a book about it and do a bit of research before I grow. Take a bit more care. [ID25, male aged 37, current grower]

Another respondent when queried about how often he grew replied:

Only probably once a year for the last three years, and it's only been three plants.

How much have you been getting off each plant?

I don't know. Most of it's just crappy leaf so it's all cooked up.

[ID81, male aged 25, former grower]

Rip-offs

There are, of course, other factors impacting on the outcome of attempts to grow cannabis that may not be directly related to one's level of knowledge. Rip-offs are one external factor impacting on growing. Some 17 respondents discussed the impact that having plants stolen had on their growing behaviour. Fourteen respondents spoke of actually having their plants stolen at some point. According to one respondent, his decision to attempt hydroponic growing was related to having his outdoor plants continually stolen:

More recently I've attempted indoor growing. Well before that, I've actually grown in my garden, and always, always had it ripped off. I've never once grown it in my garden without getting it ripped off. So more recently I've grown indoors and had moderate success.

[ID78, male aged 46, current grower]

Another respondent spoke of limiting his attempts to grow because of previously having his plants ripped off by some friends:

How frequently have you grown?

Quite infrequently because of the friends and acquaintance factor, ripping off.

[ID95, male aged 30, former grower]

The possibility of having one's plants stolen has impacted other cannabis users in additional ways. For example, a current grower has factored the possibility of theft into his growing behaviour, both in terms of the way he grows and the level of secrecy he maintains:

Well, growing pot... well I smoked it for a long time, but when I met my ex, she was growing pot, and she was very good at it, so she showed me a bit. I've never grown it hydro, I only grow it in the ground. She prepared the soil for months ahead. She would go down the beach after a storm and get all the seaweed, and wash all that off, prepare the soil, so on and so on. Well I don't go to all that trouble now, because when I put them into the ground, I've either been ripped off or arrested. So I've put them in pots. And that's pretty much to germinate the seed, put it in a smaller pot, and gradually re-pot them in a bigger pot. That way I can move them around to the best sun as well, get the maximum sun that I can give them without - you see I'm still maintaining some sort of covert nature there.

[ID99, male aged 50, current grower]

Other external factors impinging on the growing process

For example, one current grower who has grown using different methods discusses the fact that events outside his control can quite easily prevent him from a successful harvest:

Well I've grown hydro indoors and I've grown hydro outdoors and I've grown organically outdoors ... If I do grow now I just chuck a couple of seeds into the garden, into the veggie patch next to the tomatoes and the sweet corn.

And how often do you do this?

I always put in a couple of seeds at the beginning of summer, spring summer.

And how many of those generally would...?

Probably 2 out of 3 years I'll have a crop. Other years, because I don't put in a lot of seeds, snails or dogs - I've got a big dog and sometimes she'll just go and take a dump on the patch and I'll lose all my plants. Yeah so probably 2 out of 3 years I'll get a crop to fruition and that's usually just a couple of plants. If I'm lucky. [ID90, male aged 28, current grower]

Still another describes the way in which her recent efforts to grow failed because of the actions of her gardener. Note below:

And S and I planted a few seeds earlier this year and then our gardener came and, for some reason, I don't know why, put weed killer all through the garden and killed them.

[ID32, female aged 32, current grower]

EXPERIENCE OF SUPPLYING CANNABIS

In this section of the questionnaire it was explained to respondents that some people supplied cannabis for profit (selling), some supplied cannabis on a 'not-for-profit' basis (distributing) and some people gave cannabis away. This description preceded detailed questions about involvement cannabis supply in order to get a more fine-grained understanding of the nature of that involvement.

Giving cannabis away

Overall, 87 (89.7%, missing =3) respondents said that they had ever given cannabis away. Three-quarters (n=75) of the sample gave cannabis away during the previous 6 months. Of those who gave cannabis away in the last 6 months the majority (n=54, 72.0%) did it on 10 occasions or less over that period. People to who they gave cannabis to over that period are presented in Table 47. Table 48 shows that almost all (93.3%) those who gave cannabis away over that period gave it to friends.

Table 47: People gave cannabis to in the last 6 months

Person	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Friends	70	61.4	93.3
Other family members	14	12.3	18.7
Acquaintances	11	9.6	14.7
Partner	9	7.9	12.0
Work mates	6	5.3	8.0
Own child	2	1.8	2.7
People I don't really know	2	1.8	2.7
Total	114	100.0	152.1

Respondents could give more than one response. Missing = 25

Table 48: Original source of cannabis given away in the last 6 months

Person	n	%
Another back-yard user-grower	23	30.7
Large scale supplier	18	24.0
Grown by respondent	13	17.3
Don't Know	21	28.0
Total	75	100.0

Missing = 25

Distributing cannabis (not-for-profit)

Overall, 69 (71.1%, missing =3) respondents said that they had ever distributed cannabis 'not-for-profit' or bought on behalf of others 'not-for-profit'. About half (n=52) the sample distributed cannabis 'not-for-profit' or bought on behalf of others over the previous 6 months. Of those who distributed cannabis in the last 6 months approximately two thirds (n=34, 65.4%) did it on 10 occasions or less over that period. People to who they distributed cannabis to over that period are presented in Table 49. Almost all (94.2%) those who distributed cannabis over that period distributed it to friends. Table 50 shows that 41.2% of those who distributed cannabis on a not-for-profit basis over the last 6 months said that they believed the original source of that cannabis to be large scale criminal suppliers.

Table 49: People distributed* cannabis to in the last 6 months

Person	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Friends	49	57.0	94.2
Acquaintances	12	14.0	23.1
Other family members	10	11.6	19.2
Work mates	8	9.3	15.4
Partner	5	5.8	9.6
People I don't really know	2	2.3	3.8
Own child	0	0.0	0.0
Total	86	100.0	165.3

* Refers to 'not-for-profit' transactions

Respondents could give more than one response

Missing = 48

Table 50: Original source of cannabis distributed in the last 6 months

Person	n	%
Large scale supplier	21	41.2
Another back-yard user-grower	17	33.3
Grown by respondent	4	7.8
Don't Know	9	17.6
Total	51	100.0

Missing = 49

Selling cannabis for profit

Overall, 47 (49.5%, missing =3) respondents said that they had ever sold cannabis for profit. Some 13 respondents said that they sold cannabis for profit in the last 6 months, but only three considered themselves to be 'cannabis dealers'. Notwithstanding that numbers here are small and need to be treated with caution, of those who sold cannabis for profit in the last 6 months approximately half (n=7, 53.8%) did it on 10 occasions or less over that period. People to whom they sold cannabis over that period are presented in Table 51. Almost all (92.3%) those who sold cannabis for profit over that period sold it to friends. Table 52 shows that those who sold cannabis for profit over the last 6 months said that they believed the original source of that cannabis was roughly evenly divided between large scale criminal suppliers, the respondent, and other small-time growers.

Eleven of the 13 who sold cannabis for profit over the past 6 months also said that distributed cannabis on a 'not-for-profit' basis over the same period.

Table 51: People sold* cannabis to in the last 6 months

Person	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Friends	12	60.0	92.3
Acquaintances	2	10.0	15.4
Other family members	1	5.0	7.7
Work mates	2	10.0	15.4
Partner	1	5.0	7.7
People I don't really know	2	10.0	15.4
Total	20	100.0	153.9

* Refers to 'for-profit' transactions

Respondents could give more than one response

Missing = 48

Table 52: Original source of cannabis sold for profit in the last 6 months

Person	n	%
Large scale supplier	4	30.8
Another back-yard user-grower	4	30.8
Grown by respondent	3	23.1
Don't Know	2	15.4
Total	13	100.0

Missing = 49

Those 13 respondents who sold cannabis for profit in the last 6 months were asked to estimate what proportion of their income in the last year came from the sale of cannabis. These results are given in Figure 16. Some 23.1% said that 'none' (or less than 1%) of their income came from sale of cannabis and 46.2% said between 1% and 25% of their income came from this source over the last 12 months. Income derived from selling cannabis over the last 12 months ranged from \$80 to \$13,000.

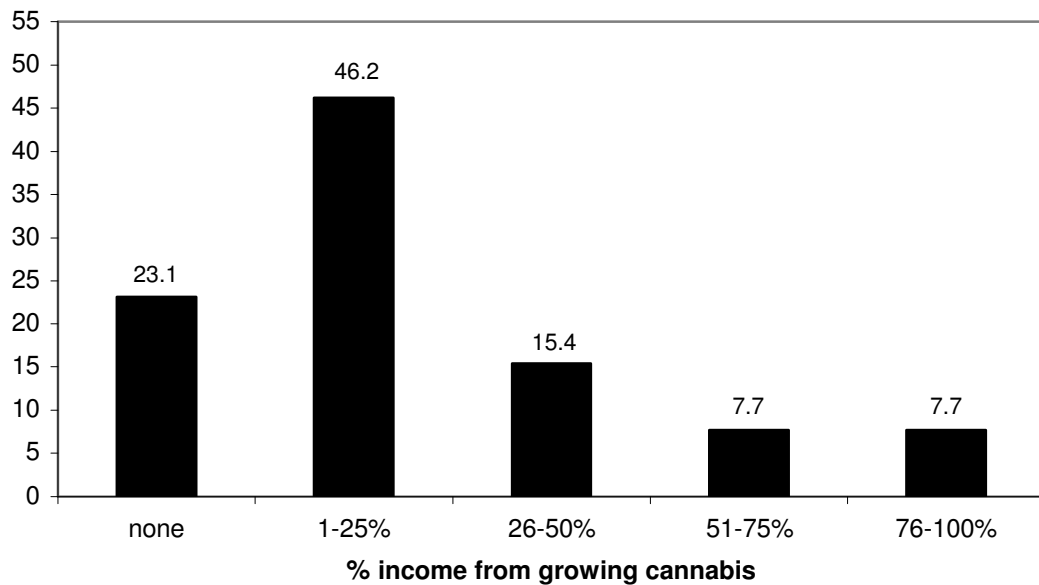


Figure 16: Percentage of last year's income from growing cannabis

Eight (66.7%) of the 12 respondents (1 missing case) who said that they had sold cannabis for profit in the last 6 months said that they had 'also exchanged cannabis for other drugs or favours' at some time in their life. Similarly 9 (75.0%) said that they had given cannabis to people who buy from them.

Of the 51 respondents who said that they had distributed cannabis (not-for-profit in the last 6 months) 48 (94.1%) said that they had not experienced violence or rip-offs when selling or distributing, 2 (3.9%) said '1-2 times' and one (1.9%) said '5 or more times'. Of the 13 respondents who said that they had sold cannabis for profit in the last 6 months 10 (76.9%) said that they had not experienced violence or rip-offs when selling or distributing, 2 (15.4%) said '1-2 times' and one (7.7%) said '5 or more times'. Two of the 3 cases experiencing violence or rip-offs when selling cannabis were the same as those when distributing cannabis. Thus overall there were 5 (9.2%) of the 54 cases who sold or distributed cannabis in the last 6 months reported violence or rip-offs over this period.

Selling drugs other than cannabis

Respondents were asked whether they had ever sold drugs other than cannabis. Results are presented in Table 53. All together there were 31 (34.0%) respondents who had ever sold drugs other than cannabis, but 29 (93.5%) of these had not done so in the last 6 months. Ten (32.2%) of those who had ever sold drugs other than cannabis had not sold cannabis.

Table 53: Ever sold* drugs other than cannabis

Person	n	%
No	64	66.0
Yes, but not in the past 6 months	29	29.9
Yes, occasionally	2	2.1
Yes, regularly	2	2.1
Total	97	100.0

*Refers to 'for-profit' transactions
Missing = 3

Most of the 30 respondents who had ever sold drugs other than cannabis had sold to friends (80.0%) or acquaintances (36.7%). These results are presented in Table 54.

Table 54: People sold* other drugs to

Person	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Friends	24	43.6	80.0
Acquaintances	11	20.0	36.7
People I don't really know	7	12.7	23.3
Work mates	5	9.1	16.7
Other family members	3	5.5	10.0
Other users	3	5.5	10.0
Children	1	1.8	3.3
Partner	1	1.8	3.3
Total	55	100.0	183.3

* Refers to 'for-profit' transactions
Respondents could give more than one response, 30 valid cases.

Drugs other than cannabis sold by the 30 respondents who had ever sold other drugs are presented in Table 55. Drugs most often mentioned included amphetamines, which had been sold by 24 (77.4%) of these respondents and ecstasy sold by 18 (58.1%) of the group.

Table 55: Other drugs ever sold*

Person	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Amphetamines	24	31.6	77.4
Ecstasy	18	23.7	58.1
Hallucinogens	12	15.8	38.7
Heroin	11	14.5	35.5
Cocaine	6	7.9	19.4
Alcohol	1	1.3	3.2
Tobacco	1	1.3	3.2
Inhalants	1	1.3	3.2
Benzodiazepines	1	1.3	3.2
Other drugs	1	1.3	3.2
	76	100.0	245.1

* Refers to 'for-profit' transactions

Respondents could give more than one response, 30 valid cases.

CANNABIS AND THE LAW - EXPERIENCE

PRIOR CONTACT WITH POLICE REGARDING CANNABIS

Nearly half (n=46, 46.5%) of the sample reported prior contact with West Australian police regarding a cannabis-related offence (missing=1), and 40 (87.0%) of these were apprehended by police for a cannabis-related offence. None had been imprisoned for a cannabis offence. Eight respondents said that they had been given an infringement notice for a cannabis offence, however, given that the question specified 'in WA only' this would not have been possible. It is not possible to determine from the data whether these respondents were referring to a summons, but this would seem likely and it would tally with the data that only 24 were arrested but 31 attended court (1 missing case) for cannabis. These results are presented in Table 56.

Table 56: Prior contact with justice system as an adult

Cannabis-related contact with the law	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Apprehended	40	21.1	87.0
Informal warning	23	12.1	50.0
Formal caution	7	3.7	15.2
Infringement notice	8	4.2	17.4
Charge	31	16.3	67.4
Arrest	24	12.6	52.2
Attended court	31	16.3	67.4
Convicted	26	13.7	56.5
Imprisoned	0	0.0	0.0
Any contact with police	46	100.0	413.1

Respondents could give more than one response, 54 missing cases

Most respondents who had prior contact with police regarding cannabis had been apprehended one (n=20, 43.5%) or two (n=10, 21.7%) times. There were three people (6.5%) who had been apprehended 3 to 5 times, three people (6.5%) who had been apprehended 6 to 10 times, and two people (4.3%) more than 10 times. In terms of convictions, 15 (32.6%) had one conviction, five (10.9%) had 2 convictions, two (4.3%) had 3 convictions, and five people (10.9%) more than 3 convictions.

LAST CONTACT WITH POLICE REGARDING CANNABIS

There were 42 respondents who described their last contact with police regarding cannabis (refused=2, missing=2). Table 57 shows that most of those whose last police contact related to of cannabis concerned possession (n=32, 76.2%) and/or a cannabis implement (n=15, 35.7%), with less related to cultivation (n=6, 14.3%) and/or sell/supply (n=6, 14.3%).

Table 57: Last contact with police regarding cannabis

Last contact with police for cannabis was regarding	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Possession of cannabis	32	54.2	76.2
Possession of implement	15	25.4	35.7
Cultivation of cannabis	6	10.2	14.3
Sell/supply cannabis	6	10.2	14.3
Total	59	100.0	140.5

*Respondents could give more than one response
42 valid cases, 58 missing cases*

Table 58: Reason for last contact with police regarding cannabis

Last contact with police for cannabis was regarding	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Police investigating another matter or person	11	20.0	26.2
Routine patrol	7	12.7	16.7
Suspicion of cannabis possession	6	10.9	14.3
Suspicion of cannabis cultivation	6	10.9	14.3
Non-drug non-criminal matter	6	10.9	14.3
Suspicion of cannabis use	5	9.1	11.9
Suspicion of cannabis selling	3	5.5	7.1
Suspicion of presence of other drug	2	3.6	4.8
Non-drug criminal matter	2	3.6	4.8
Other	7	12.7	16.7
Total	55	100.0	131.1

*Respondents could give more than one response
42 valid cases, 58 missing cases*

All together there were 16 (38.1%) respondents whose last contact with police regarding cannabis was motivated by police suspicion that they were committing a cannabis offence (possession, use, cultivation or selling). Some 26.2% said their last police contact for cannabis was a result of police investigating another matter or person, and in 16.7% of cases police were on routine patrol. These results are presented in Table 58.

Table 59 shows that most commonly people were with friends (n=17, 40.5%), or on their own (n=14, 33.3%), on the last occasion they had contact from police regarding cannabis.

Table 59: People with at last contact with police regarding cannabis

People with at last contact with police for cannabis was regarding	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Friends	17	37.8	40.5
No one	14	31.1	33.3
Partner	8	17.8	19.0
Child or children	2	4.4	4.8
Other family members	2	4.4	4.8
Acquaintances	1	2.2	2.4
People I don't really know	1	2.2	2.4
Total	45	100.0	107.2

*Respondents could give more than one response
42 valid cases, 58 missing cases*

Most commonly people were in their own home (n=15, 35.7%), in a motor vehicle (n=11, 26.2%), or in a street, park or beach (n=10, 23.8%), when they last had contact with police regarding cannabis. These results are shown in Table 60. There is a concern about people driving a vehicle while under the influence of cannabis. Nine (81.8%) of the 11 said that they were under the influence of a drug at the time, in each case the drug was cannabis and in one of these cases they were also affected by alcohol. In four of these cases the person was the driver, in five cases the person was a passenger.

Table 60: Location of last contact with police regarding cannabis

Location of last contact with police for cannabis	Frequency	% Respondents
Own home	15	35.7
In motor vehicle	11	26.2
Street/ park/ beach	10	23.8
Other public place	3	7.1
Club/ pub	2	4.8
Others home	1	2.4
Total	42	100.0

*Respondents could give more than one response
42 valid cases, 58 missing cases*

In 35 of the 42 cases respondents said that things were seized by police at the last contact with police regarding cannabis. Qualitative data showed that, in almost every case cannabis was seized, in about five cases implements were seized and in a few cases stolen goods were seized. One respondent claimed that money went missing while police were in attendance.

Overall 27 (64.3%) of respondents said that they were under the influence of a drug the last time they had contact with the police regarding cannabis. The type of drugs

they were under the influence of is presented in Table 61. Clearly cannabis was the drug most (85.2%) respondents were affected by.

Table 61: Type of drug affected by at last contact with police regarding cannabis

Type of drug affected by at last contact with police for cannabis	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Cannabis	23	69.7	85.2
Alcohol	6	18.2	22.2
Amphetamines	1	3.0	3.7
Other drugs	3	9.1	11.1
Total	33	100.0	122.2

*Respondents could give more than one response
27 valid cases, 0 missing cases*

Two-thirds (n=31) of those who reported police contact were charged, and over half (n=26) were convicted of a cannabis-related offence. For thirteen participants, this was their first conviction (missing=3). Sixty participants admitted ever being apprehended or caught by the police for an offence not involving cannabis, although about one-third (n=21) of those participants cited only non-criminal offences (eg. speeding). Over one-third (n=37) of the sample had a criminal record (including both cannabis-related and non-cannabis-related offences).

Qualitative accounts of last police contact regarding cannabis

Some 41 respondents gave a qualitative account of their last contact with police regarding cannabis. Such contact occurred in either a public or private setting.

According to twenty-six respondents their cannabis-related contact with police occurred in a public setting. These could be organised into 5 themes: police contact regarding another matter; using in a public space; when scoring from dealers; and under the influence in a vehicle – as driver or passenger.

Among the fifteen respondents whose last cannabis-related contact with the police occurred in a private setting some occurred as a result of drug-related enquiries which led police to visit the respondent's home and the remainder were opportunistic after police were making enquiries on non-drug related matters.

Police contact regarding another matter

Fourteen people experienced cannabis-related contact with the police only after being approached in the context of another matter.

Well what happened is I was at a bus stop a guy [came] up and was yakking to me for a while. He'd just broken into the high school. Someone got a description ... of him and said that he'd been seen catching the bus. Bus was pulled over by the police about a [kilometre] up the road and they checked me him and another guy because all three of us matched the description, I just happened to have something on me ... They took me for a video interview and then I was handed a summons for court. [ID18, male aged 16]

I was riding my bike into town and didn't have a helmet and this police officer stopped me and said he was going to arrest me for not having a helmet. So they put me under arrest and then they take me somewhere ... to the police station, and then walked out and put me in the back of the car and they said "is there anything in your bag" and I said "not really" and they went through my bag and they found the tin of pot and stuff and so I got taken to East Perth, searched, fingerprinted, put in a cell and then given bail. Had to go to court. Went to court and the judge sent me to drug court. [ID28, female aged 27]

Another respondent was caught when the transport company he was using to send cannabis to a friend was raided. Note below:

I was asked by a friend to on sell some cannabis and was desperate for money which is something that I don't normally do. But being a friend I did and I put it in a box and taken it to a transport company to have it road freighted up there [be]cause I wouldn't put it on an aeroplane. And as it turned out there was a raid on that transport company that afternoon, with regards to another drug matter that they had been tipped off against, and they had found my little stash. [ID21, male aged 37]

Using in a public space

Seven respondents were approached by the police for smoking cannabis in a public place. The following excerpts typify the descriptions:

I was going to the movies. It was a long time ago, not in the last 6 months. And we parked at the car park in Hay St and we walked down with the idea that we would smoke a joint from the top floor to the ground floor, which we did and it was quite pleasant and enjoyable and we were quite excited about going to the movies. And I walked out into Hay St and I had the roach and I went to relight the roach and I didn't know there was an unmarked police car and watched me lighting. And they came up behind me and put their hand on my shoulder and took me away. They arrested me, they charged me and I went to court.

[ID69, female aged 40]

[T]here was 4 of us all in our mid to early 40's. We were outside a gig down at XXXX, around the corner from the venue, having a smoke and these cops came along. They were probably around our sons' ages. They said "Well, don't you think you should know better than this at your age?". We were sort of like "Yeah, I suppose we should". They said "alright, put it out and, move on and don't let us see you back here again" sort of thing. And while they are talking the joint is still going around, it was like well if we are going to get nailed then I'm going to get nailed, least I could have got rid of the evidence then you know....[T]hey just said, yeah they said that we should know better and they didn't want to see us outside again. So we didn't.

[ID6, male aged 47]

When scoring from dealers

Four respondents who commented on the question said that their contact with police resulted from attempting to purchase cannabis from a dealer. For example, one respondent was apprehended with two days remaining on a suspended jail term.

So what happened, you had gone over to buy a gram from the dealer's house?

Yeah. And the cops were waiting. They were watching it [be]cause it was a house they wanted to shut down [be]cause it was open house to anybody. They were real dumb buggers.

So they waited until you came out?

Yeah they waited until I came out and then they busted me. Actually I was walking around the corner and they come past and they looked at me. They must have realised I just scored. [Be]cause I think they got me and they're gonna search me. Then they wanted me to give information against the dealer but they only stuck their hand through the grille and I said I can't recognise a hand in a door so when they realised that ...

So did they take you to the police station?

No, they said come to the cop shop next week to pick up your summons for the court.

And what did you get from that?

Normally it would have been a \$50 fine but because I was on a suspended jail term I got an \$800 fine and another 2 years' suspended jail term.

And what effect did this experience have on you?

Yeah that made me realise, Christ almighty I'm gonna go to jail over a gram of bloody pot.
[ID42, male aged 37]

Under influence and in a vehicle

Of the 26 respondents who experienced contact in a public space, nine respondents were in a vehicle while under the influence of cannabis. In four cases respondents were driving the car and the situations varied considerably. The following excerpts are illustrative:

Last contact was something stupid...I had a mull bowl in my car. [I]it had a little bit of mull in it and the cop goes "You've been smoking a bit of mull. Empty your pockets" and just like that. But we were in XXXXXX cops so they would have just took it for themselves and smoked it themselves.

So they pulled you over for something else and then saw the mull bowl?

Yeah, yeah.

Okay, and then what happened? Did they just take it away from you?

Yeah, that was it. [ID4, male age 20]

My ex-boyfriend and I went through a booze bus and it was caught. They searched the car and found a sachet and they let us off with a warning. They took the dope ... Not even a caution just verbally cautioned [ID37, female aged 23]

A fourth respondent was under the influence of both cannabis and alcohol at the time of his contact with the police involving a motor vehicle. Note below:

The last time, well I was just pulled over for a random breath test. And they asked about the tin that was on the floor, and I just got a fine, because I wasn't over .08 I think, I was over .05 but under .08, and the other person said that the pot was hers, so she had to go to drug counselling thing or whatever. [ID52, male aged 30]

In four cases respondents were a passenger in a vehicle when police contact occurred. While it is the case that the passengers were under the influence, it is not always clear as to the condition of the driver. Note below:

We were driving in the car and my mate was being a maniac and we got pulled over. And they searched him [be]cause they thought he was off [his head]. He wasn't even stoned actually. I dropped the dope in his car, like tried to hide it under the seat and that. [unclear] So well you're gonna have to get a caution.

They said they were going to caution you and then what happened?

Yeah they said they would send it out in the mail ... Legally take me in there and then like fill the form out with me and I had to sign it and he had to sign it and a Justice of the Peace has to sign it. And that never happened.

So you didn't have to attend the police station or anything like that? They just left you to go?

Yeah. [ID56, female aged 19]

Yeah we went down a no-through road to a dealer's house at the end, a large scale dealer I guess you could say, to pick up an ounce and they refused us, got back in the car, drove up the street and went around the corner and pulled over by 4 narcotic officers. They raided the car but didn't search us though. I had a broken leg at the time and I think they were trying to keep their distance ... They just gave us a warning. [ID12, male aged 21]

Another respondent described being in a friend's parked car and using cannabis when they were approached by the police.

Well, what happened was one of my friends, the only time he ever actually bought ounces to sell off ... So like, he bought three ounces and they were what you'd call personal use ounces. And one of them was for himself and the other two were broken into half ounces and he was selling them to his friends. What we did was, I went with him and he went and picked it up at his friends and (inaudible) the dealer ... What happened was we went and picked one of my friends up and we went and had a session in his car ... Yeah. And we didn't have it hidden or anything. We were in the process of smoking it. So we had like, we had, like one of my friends was rolling a really big sized jay. And then we had like about five of them. Three of them were in his pouch, his jacket and one of them was one the dash in front of the steering wheel. And the cops put the spotlight on us and then they saw us and it was obvious they knew what we were doing. That area is known for youngsters or whatever smoking weed. So they pulled into the park and they were, they just said "how ya going?" and they shone the spotlight on us. And they would have seen that we had red eyes so they knew that we were stoned. And all my friends in the car were quite scared, but I was like calm about it ... They searched us all and they said "look, we know you guys have got weed". [Be]cause they found scissors on my friend. That was the main indication that we had weed. He got searched first because he was shaking really badly. And that was not from smoking weed. It was [fear]. So they pulled him out of the car and they searched us all. And I didn't have any ID on me or anything and I didn't have any weed on me. So I didn't get into trouble. And, while they were driving up to the car we were all hiding our stuff. We had a bong, and we had like 50 bucks worth of weed chopped up (in the bong). (Inaudible). The guy that was driving, he just put it under his seat. The two ounces that he had he hid in the gear box boot. And so they only found a fifty on us. They didn't see the joint that I said was on the dash. They searched the whole car and didn't find the two ounces and a massive jay. It was obvious it wasn't a cigarette. Like let's just say you see a 15 centimetre cigarette. You know that it's a joint.... He flashed his torch on it a million times and they did not even pick it up. They must have been idiots. And then, so they threw away the fifty bucks worth and my friend had to go to a drug seminar. And they said to him, he met the guy that like cautioned him that night. And he said, how much was actually in the car, and he said we had two ounces and there was a massive jay right on the dash and they could not believe it. They could not believe it. [Be]cause they'd fully searched it.

[ID41, male aged 18]

In one case it was unclear as to whether the respondent was the driver. However, he was under the influence of cannabis and travelling with a group of friends when police involvement occurred:

Some friends and I were driving over to Melbourne, over the Nullarbor plain. We had just passed, I mean, we were 20 kilometres from the South Australian border, when of course, being in a combi van, the bastards pulled us up, and essentially I had a tin of dope in my bag which I had forgotten about, so I didn't have it on my person. When they went through the bags, they found that, they just asked whose it was, I said it was mine. Essentially, I put my hand up, it was my pot ... because if I didn't, they would have pulled the whole car apart. They asked us to report to the Eucla police station, where I did, which involved ... going back the way we came. The duty sergeant presented me with a form, where it asked me whether I wanted to plead guilty and asked me if I wanted to turn up in court, I think. And I pleaded guilty and I said I didn't want to turn up, gave them the form, got back in the car, and we continued on. Everyone was very civilised about it. [ID53, male aged 31]

Drug-related inquires which brought police to respondent's home

One respondent who was using for medicinal purposes described what happened when police arrived at his home while he was in hospital:

Yes, with a warrant to search. They found a small portion of pot and an apparatus. My wife told them that it was mine and then they turned up at the hospital and threatened to take me away. Lock me up. They threatened to take me out of the hospital and lock me up. I was to say that as soon as I was out of hospital I will come and make a full statement. And this I done. And then I went to court. I was fined \$800... They actually threatened me at that time. For me to make a statement then and there and I couldn't do this. I told them when I get out of hospital I'll come and see them immediately. And that's what I did. [ID20, male aged 50]

Other respondents suggested that the police possessed some misinformation about them and acted upon it. For example:

Apparently somebody said I was a big drug dealer so the police came around to my house, to my parents' house because I was only 18 or 19. They came around at 7 o'clock in the morning and my mother who is a perfect angel, a church-goer, doesn't know anything bad, was shocked to find the police at the door. They came in, they searched my room, they found 10 seeds and arrested me. Took me in for a day in jail, court. I ended up with a criminal conviction and a \$100 fine. That's why I reckon cops suck. [ID58, male aged 38]

Okay, living at my grandmother's house, I'd just finished work. Some friends of mine who were speed addicts had got busted and my pager was found there at the house. So when I got home from work I'm sitting at home, my phone rings, I'm asked do I live here, I said yes, there's a knock at the front door, it's whatever they're called, the tactical defence force, yeah, front door and back door. They thought I was a big speed dealer ... And they came in and they you know trashed my bedroom and they found a packed tin of dope and a bong. And they arrested me and taken to XXXXXX, whatever that police station is down there ... I was charged. [ID98, female aged 30]

Four respondents involvement with the police occurred in a private setting, but was related to events other than drug-related matters in their own home. For example:

Well police contacted me for a statement on a work related matter, ... definitely not drug related. So they contacted me and picked me up from my home and in the vehicle on the way to the station one of the cops said, one of the officers said "Did you just have a smoke?" and I said "Yes, how would you know?" "Oh I can smell it from your breath." And he asked me

whether I was still willing and capable for the statement. I said yes so we went through with all that. When they drove me home again they warned me, indicating that they might come back and search my place. [ID91, male aged 45]

I went to someone's house to pay \$25 I owed them, it was a good friend. And his girlfriend let me in, and there was four detectives in there, going through the place. Apparently, he'd been doing break-and-enters and he had speed there and possibly other drugs, which I never knew about. And the police found all that; the speed, the needles, everything. They let him off in the end. I was the only one who got charged, and that was just from visiting. I was unlucky to get charged. I don't know what he done or who he gave up, but somehow he got off. [ID61, male aged 35]

Outcome of last police contact regarding cannabis

Those who had contact with police were not asked as part of the quantitative questions what the outcome was of that contact, this was determined from the qualitative accounts of the incident and is summarised in Table 62 below. It shows that 24 respondents were convicted of a cannabis offence as a result of their last contact with police. Cross-tabulating this finding with responses to the question regarding non-drug charges showed that 7 of these 21 had also been convicted of a non-cannabis criminal offence. However, it is not possible to determine which offence preceded which, so one cannot say that the cannabis conviction was their first conviction for these 7 cases, although it was the only conviction for the 14 other cases.

Table 62: Outcome of last contact with police regarding cannabis

Outcome	Frequency	% Respondents	Adjusted %
Charged, court appearance and convicted	21	51.2	55.3
Informal warning	13	31.7	34.2
Summons and convicted (no court appearance)	3	7.3	7.9
Juvenile caution	1	2.4	2.6
Charged, awaiting outcome	2	4.9	
Don't know	1	2.4	
Total	41	100.0	

41 valid cases, 1 missing case

Overall attitudes regarding police and own behaviour during last police contact regarding cannabis

Respondents were asked to indicate which of a list of words described overall the way in which the police conducted themselves at the time of their last contact with police regarding cannabis. Some 61.0% of the sample said that police behaved lawfully, 43.9% said that they were respectful and 36.6% said that they were friendly. On the negative side, 48.8% said that police were hostile and 39.0% stated that they were offensive. These results are presented in Table 63.

Table 63: ratings of police conduct overall

Police conduct	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Lawful	25	26.6	61.0
Hostile	20	21.3	48.8
Respectful	18	19.1	43.9
Offensive	16	17.0	39.0
Friendly	15	16.0	36.6
Total	94	100.0	229.3

*Respondents could give more than one response
41 valid cases, 1 missing cases*

Respondents were asked to indicate which of a list of words described overall the way in which they believed that they behaved towards police at the time of their arrest for their first cannabis offence. The vast majority (95.5%) of the sample said that they were cooperative with police, and a similarly large proportion (88.1%) said that they were respectful and two thirds (65.7%) said that they were friendly toward police. On the negative side, just over one in ten (10.4%) said that they behaved in a hostile manner toward police and a negligible proportion (4.5%) stated that they were offensive to police. These results are presented in Table 64.

Table 64: Overall behaviour toward police

Behaviour Toward Police	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Friendly	31	27.4	73.8
Hostile	7	6.2	16.7
Respectful	33	29.2	78.6
Offensive	3	2.7	7.1
Co-operative	39	34.5	92.9
TOTAL	113	100.0	269.1

*Respondents could give more than one response
42 valid cases, 0 missing cases*

Respondents were asked to indicate how accurately a list of statements related to how the police conducted themselves at their last contact regarding cannabis.

Some 45.5% of the sample agreed either somewhat or strongly with the statement that *police respected their rights as a citizen throughout the incident* whereas 35.7% of disagreed either somewhat or strongly with the statement. These results are presented in Figure 17.

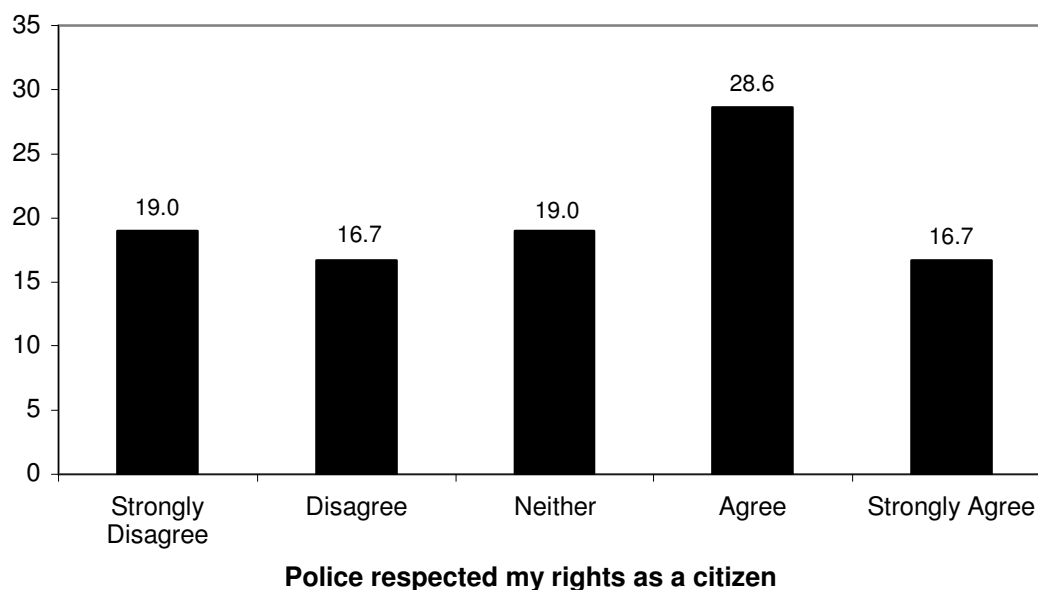


Figure 17: Police respected my rights as a citizen

Some 30.9% of the sample agreed either somewhat or strongly that they were *unfairly singled out for special attention* the last time they had contact with police regarding cannabis. There were 61.9% of respondents who disagreed either somewhat or strongly with the statement. These results are presented in Figure 18.

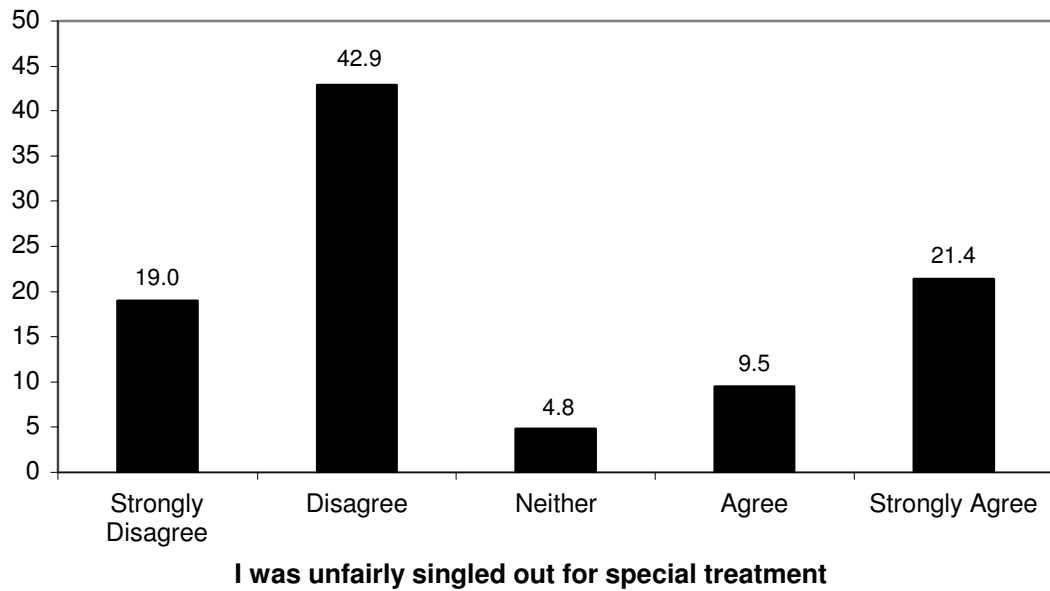


Figure 18: I was unfairly singled out for special treatment

Some 40.5% of the sample agreed either somewhat or strongly that *police abused their powers* the last time they had contact with police regarding cannabis. There were 47.7% of respondents who disagreed either somewhat or strongly with the statement. These results are presented in Figure 19.

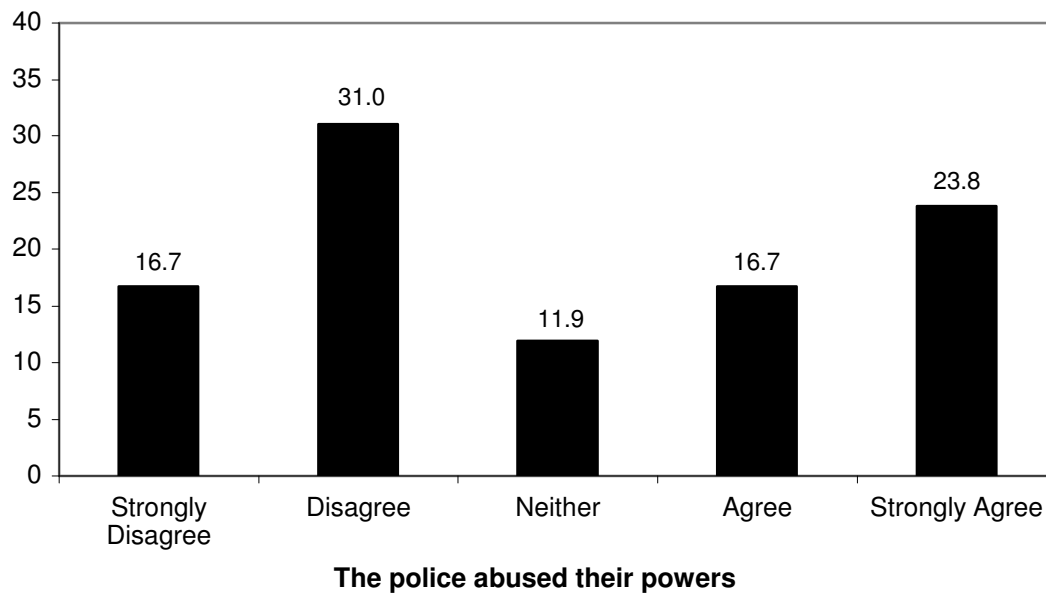


Figure 19: The police abused their powers

The overwhelming proportion of respondents (95.3%) who had contact with the law regarding cannabis agreed somewhat or strongly with the statement *I realise that by using cannabis I may be arrested from time to time*. These results are presented in Figure 20.

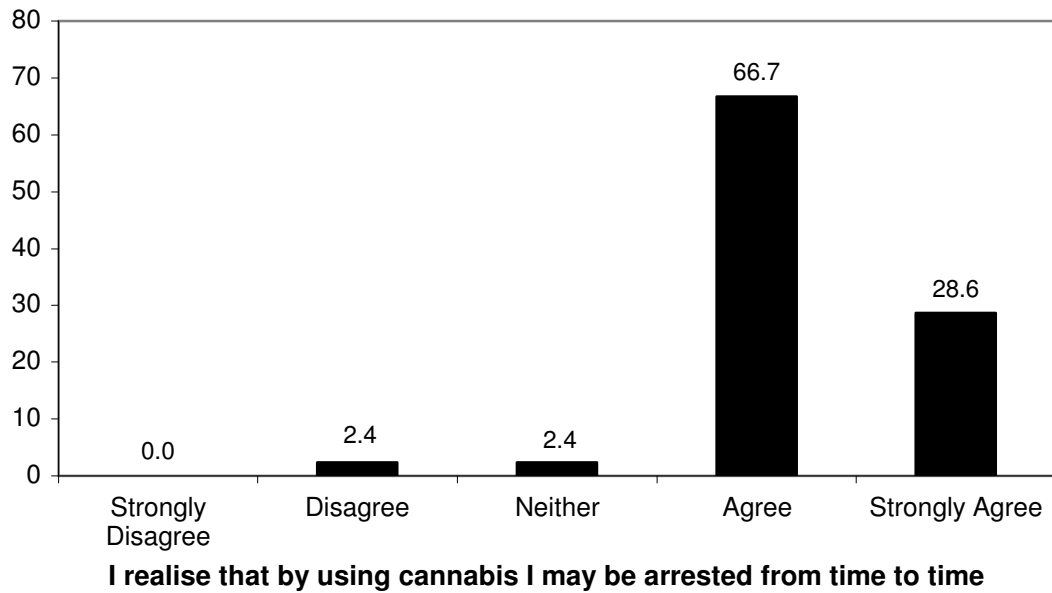


Figure 20: I realise that by using cannabis I may be arrested from time to time

Some 47.6% of the sample agreed either somewhat or strongly that at their last contact with the police regarding cannabis that they *broke the law and that the police were just doing their job*. These results are presented in Figure 21.

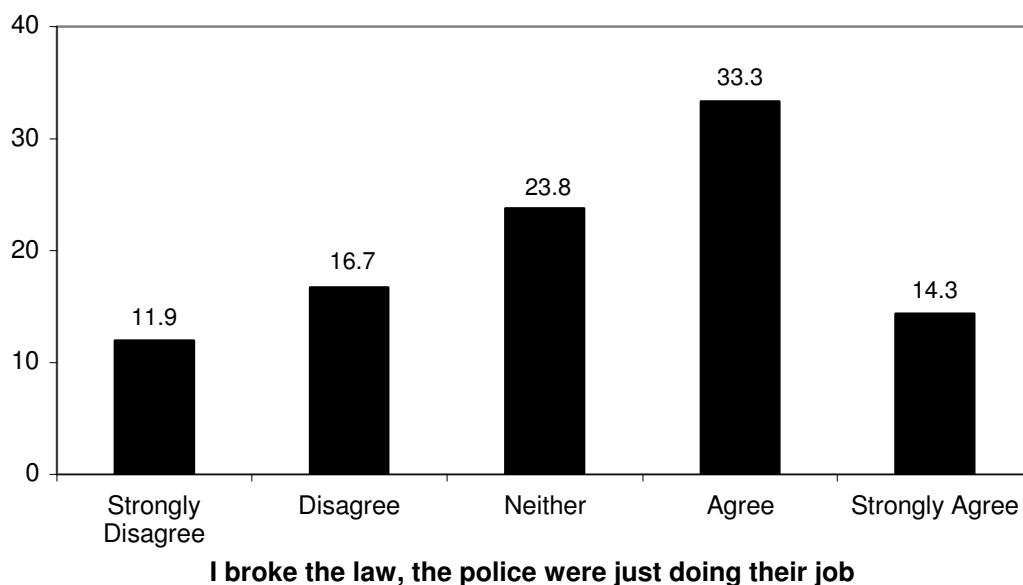


Figure 21: I broke the law, the police were just doing their job

Social consequences of last police contact regarding cannabis

Respondents were asked what consequences they had as a result of the incident. Table 65 shows that 35.7% said that their last contact with police regarding cannabis made no difference to them and 26.2% had employment problems.

Table 65: Social consequences of last police contact

Consequence	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Made no difference	15	24.6	35.7
Employment difficulties	11	18.0	26.2
Relationship difficulties	6	9.8	14.3
Problems with being known to police	6	9.8	14.3
Financial problems (due to fine)	6	9.8	14.3
Overseas travel difficulties	5	8.2	11.9
Emotional problems	5	8.2	11.9
Other	7	11.5	16.7
Total	61	100.0	145.3

*Respondents could give more than one response
42 valid cases, 58 missing cases*

Five of the 11 who reported employment difficulties described the nature of these: one who was intending to join the navy decided they could no longer do this; one was offered a job but failed the police clearance; one said he was currently unable to look for work because he was doing community work; and two said that having a criminal record adversely impacted on job applications, one of these stating he was waiting for the 10 year record expungement to come up. Four of the 6 who reported relationship difficulties described them: one reported strained friendships; one that their children had become afraid; one had become wary of neighbours who had notified the police; and one had said that their relationship with their grandmother had been affected as they had been living with her at the time of the police contact. Only one of the six respondents who noted further problems with police gave further explanation. This was that police treated him 'badly' when they see him. Two of the 5 who noted overseas travel difficulties simply said that this was the result of having a criminal record, but no further explanations were given. None of the 15 who said that there were no consequences of their last apprehension by police ('made no difference') gave any further explanation.

Social consequences by the outcome of last police contact regarding cannabis

Table 66 presents the social consequences by the outcome of police contact. It shows that in 9 (81.9%) of the 11 cases reporting employment difficulties had been convicted, and the remaining two had been charged and were awaiting their court appearance. Ten (76.9%) of those who said the contact with police had no adverse social consequences ('made no difference') had been given an informal warning.

Table 66: Social consequences of last police contact by outcome of police contact

Social Consequence	Outcome of police contact				
	Informal warning	Summons and conviction	Charged and court conviction	Charged awaiting outcome	Juvenile caution
Made no difference	10	1	4	0	0
Employment difficulties	0	1	8	2	0
Relationship difficulties	0	1	3	1	1
Problems with being known to police	1	0	4	0	0
Financial problems (due to fine)	0	1	3	1	0
Overseas travel difficulties	0	0	4	0	0
Emotional problems	2	0	3	0	0
Other	1	0	5	1	0
Total	14	4	34	5	1

*Respondents could choose more than one response on the social consequences variable
40 valid cases, 2 missing cases*

Impact on cannabis use of last police contact regarding cannabis

Those who had previous contact with the law regarding their cannabis use were asked what impact this had on their use at their last contact. Results are presented in Table 67. Some 85.7% of respondents reported that their last contact with police had no impact on their cannabis use.

Table 67: Impact on cannabis use of last police contact re cannabis

Impact on cannabis use	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Made no difference	36	81.8	85.7
More careful about where and how used	4	9.1	9.5
Stopped for a while	2	4.5	4.8
Reduced consumption initially	1	2.3	2.4
Other	1	2.3	2.4
Used less	0	0.0	0.0
Changed to (or increased use of) other drugs instead	0	0.0	0.0
Total	44	100.0	104.8

*Respondents could give more than one response
42 valid cases, 0 missing cases*

Ratings of change in attitude to the legal system as a result of last police contact regarding cannabis

Respondents were then asked to rate the extent to which their attitudes to the police with regard to six emotions changed as a result of this incident.

Some 45.2% of the sample said that they had become 'somewhat' or 'much' less trusting of police as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis. A similar proportion (47.6%) said that their level of trust in police had not changed as a result of the incident. These results are presented in Figure 22.

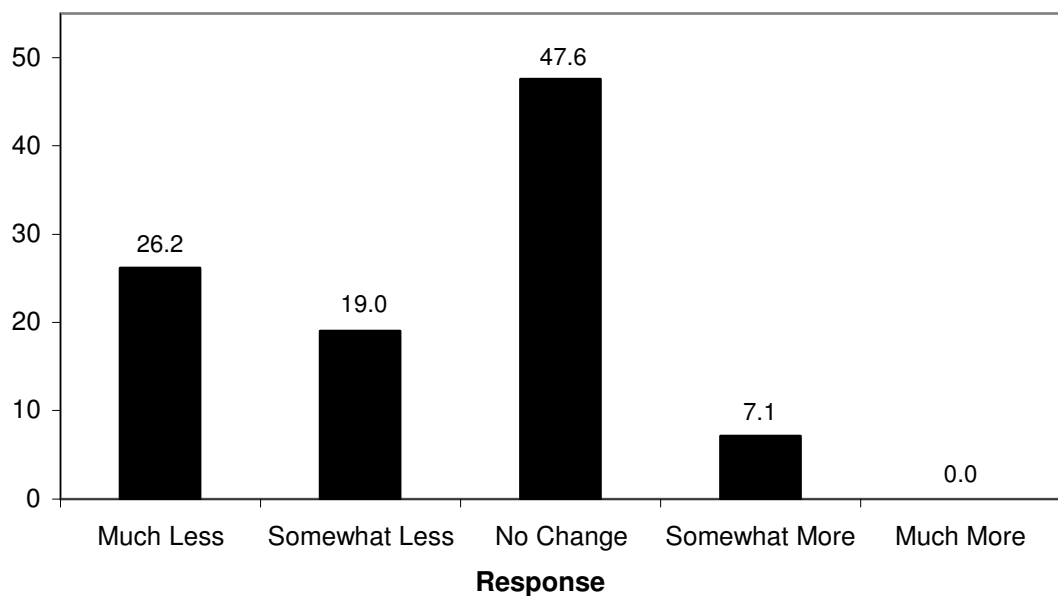


Figure 22: Change in level of trust in the legal system as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis

One third (33.3%) of the sample said that they had become 'somewhat' or 'much' more fearful of the legal system (the law in general, the cannabis law, police and the courts) as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis. Some 61.9% said that their level of fear of the system had not changed as a result of the incident. These results are presented in Figure 23.

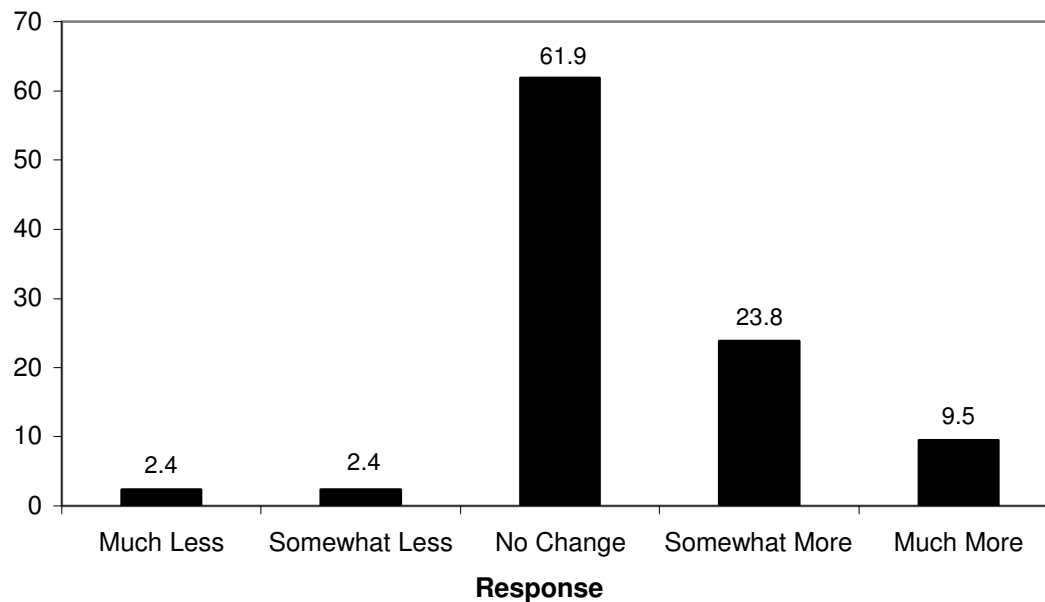


Figure 23: Change in level of fear of the legal system as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis

Some 38.1% of the sample said that they had become ‘somewhat’ or ‘much’ more antagonistic towards the legal system (the law in general, the cannabis law, police and the courts) as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis. Some 54.8% said that their level of antagonism toward the legal system had not changed as a result of the incident. These results are presented in Figure 24.

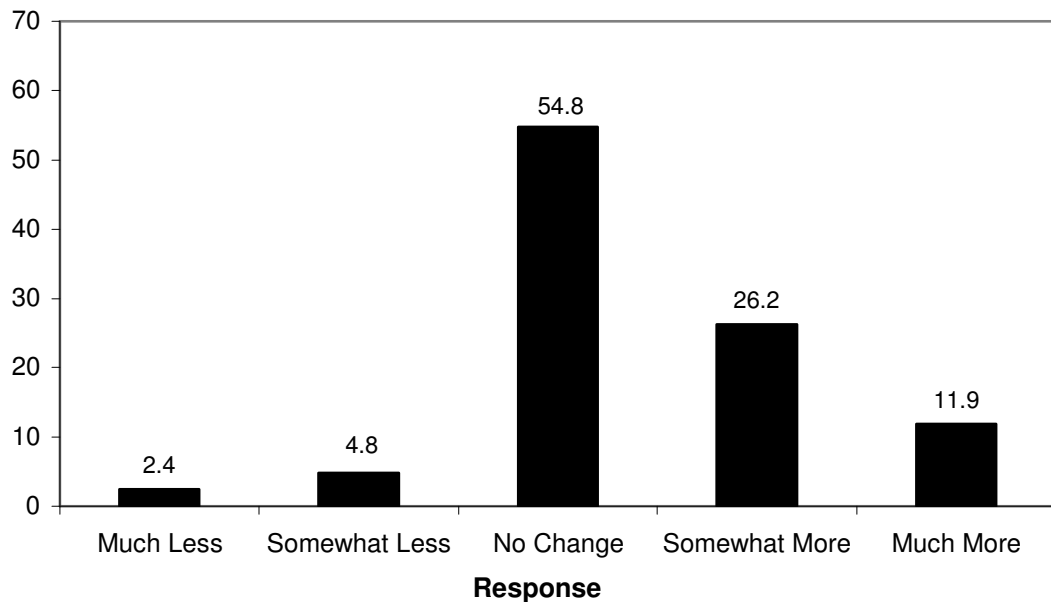


Figure 24: Change in level of antagonism towards the legal system as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis

Some 47.6% of those who had some previous contact with the police regarding cannabis said that their last contact left them feeling much or somewhat less respectful towards the legal system (the law in general, the cannabis law, police and the courts). For 38.1% there was no change. These results are presented in Figure 25.

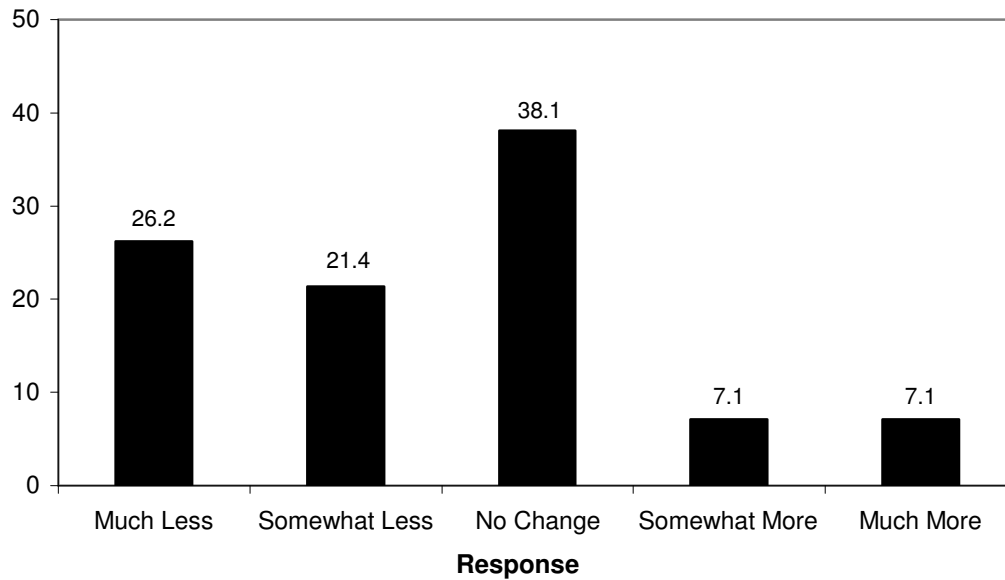


Figure 25: Change in level of respect towards the legal system as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis

Figure 26 shows that 71.4% of those who had previous contact with police regarding cannabis said that their last contact had no impact on their sense of hostility toward the legal system (the law in general, the cannabis law, police and the courts). Some 21.4% said that they had become more hostile toward the system as a result.

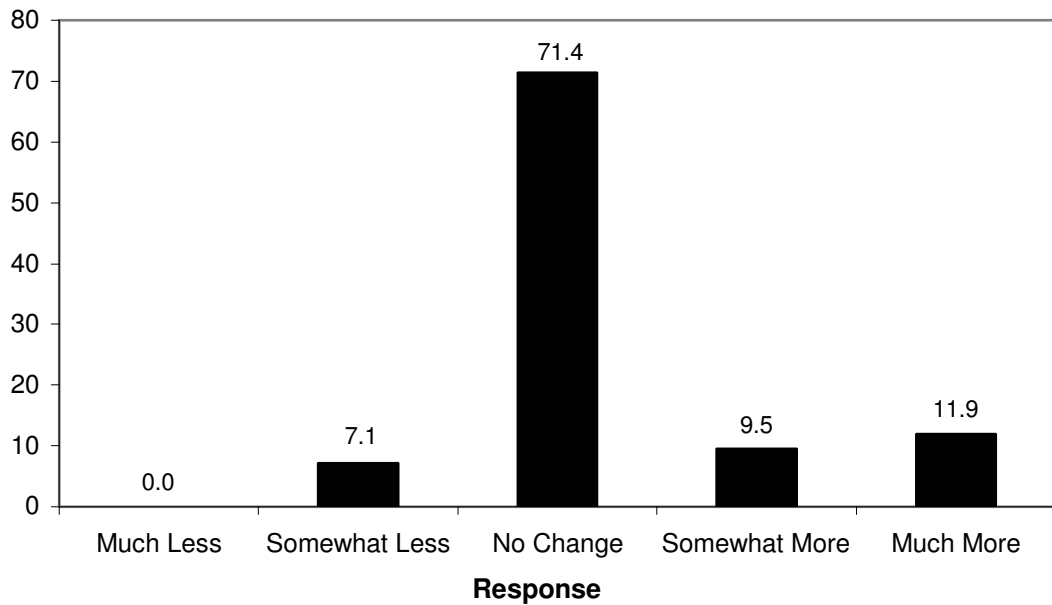


Figure 26: Change in level of hostility towards the legal system as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis

Figure 27 shows that 59.5% of those who had previous contact with police regarding cannabis said that their last contact had no impact on their sense of friendliness toward the legal system (the law in general, the cannabis law, police and the courts). Some 33.3% said that they had become less friendly toward the system as a result.

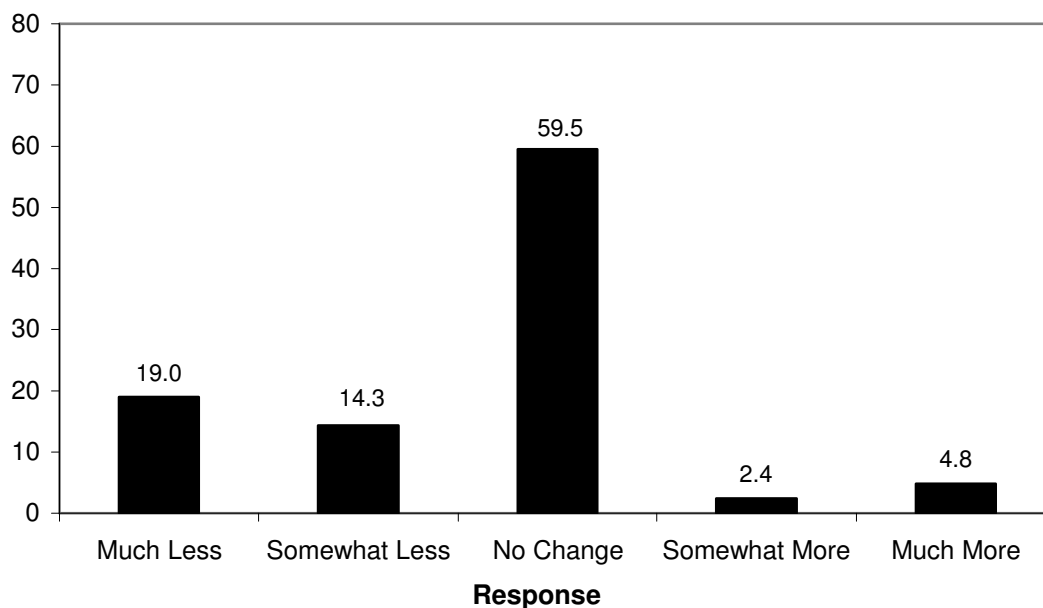


Figure 27: Change in level of friendliness towards the legal system as a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis

Qualitative accounts of impact on attitude to the law and police

Forty-two respondents discussed the way in which their cannabis related contact with the police impacted their attitude toward the law, police and the courts.

For seventeen respondents, having contact with the police for a cannabis related incident had a negative impact on their views towards the police. This was articulated in two ways. Among those who believed there was a change in attitude as a result, the following themes emerged: enhanced existing negative feelings towards police and the law; maintained existing negative feelings; perception of unjust treatment; sense that the cannabis laws were unfair and required change; and the view that the cannabis laws were wasteful of criminal justice resources.

There were 5 respondents who suggested that they had a positive experience the last time they had contact with police regarding cannabis and in some cases this resulted in them improving their attitude toward police.

Enhanced negative feelings

For 11 respondents their contact resulted in contributing to or enhancing negative feelings towards the police in particular.

It made me leave the city for 8 or 9 years. I lived in the country to stay away from the cops. Basically. Cos I felt unfairly treated in that respect.

And your attitude towards them didn't change?

I've smoked with police so to me they are all corrupt. I thought they were upholding the law but they are just the same as everybody else [ID58, male aged 38]

Another respondent discussed the way in which that incident precipitated a negative attitude towards the police:

I felt it was very petty, the whole thing and I didn't feel it was warranted their behaviour for the actual charge was warranted, do you know. And this is going back 20 years ago and even though it wasn't a big deal for the amount. I think it gave me an experience of how the police can operate, which I didn't particularly like. It set up a mind set for me in terms of how police behave. [ID69, female aged 40]

Maintenance of negative attitude

Six respondents suggested that there was no change in their negative attitude as a result of that experience. For example:

It didn't change, it just reconfirmed what I already felt. And that the laws were unjust. Many times, more often than now, the punishment would outweigh the crime.

[ID71, male aged 20]

I don't agree with it at all.

Did this incident change your attitude?

Oh no it didn't change. At the end of the day I'm going to go home and get stoned. They give me a fine, okay I'll pay it and go home and smoke the rest. [ID33, female aged 24]

Perception they were unjustly treated

Also contributing to a negative attitude was the perception of being unjustly treated by the police during the incident. Thirteen respondents discussed feeling unjustly treated.

It made me angry. Because the other guy got off I was angry. In my opinion I wasn't hurting anyone. He was found with all sorts of things in his house and didn't have to pay a cent...I walked into someone's house that was getting raided for something that was obviously a lot more serious than anything I've ever done. The police took all the drugs and the goods, and the guy walked away scott free. And he's the shiftest person around. I don't know how he got away with it, or who he dobbed in, or what deal he made. [ID61, male aged 35]

Another respondent was raided by the police in the belief that she was a drug dealer:

The police wrecked my house, they totally trashed my lounge room, broke a lot of things. They weren't very happy. We went to town, they tried to get me to implicate everybody I knew in drug dealing; I didn't know any drug dealers and all they could do was charge me for personal possession. It was a \$250 fine plus costs of \$62.50 I think. And that was that. They were pretty pissed off and smashed up the lounge room. They even tried to get my young daughter to find stashed marijuana ... It was the first time I had actually been arrested so I didn't really know what was going on. They got away with a lot of crap until I went and saw a lawyer after the youngest officer came around and asked me for sex.

[ID31, female aged 50]

Cannabis laws unfair and should be changed

Eleven people suggested that the laws require change. Note the following examples:

...[I]t certainly doesn't help with regards to [the] sort of things [like] sending people to prisons...to learn about bad attitudes and newer crimes . [ID3, male aged 40]

I more so want them to make it legal so that sort of thing won't happen. [ID18, male aged 16]

Waste of resources

According to three people criminal justice resources were being wasted pursuing cannabis offenders like themselves. For example one participants response to the question concerning the impact of the incident on his attitude was as follows:

I felt that their time was better spent chasing real criminals. [ID36, male aged 22]

Positive impact improving attitudes to police and the law

Five respondents suggested that their involvement with the police and the justice system was positive, in some cases improving their attitude to police and the law. For example:

It didn't change much. Actually I got a bit more respect for the police after the way they treated me. I realised they were just doing their jobs. [ID78, male aged 46]

...I mean I was actually quite impressed that I was listened to in court, and my individual story was taken into account. It wasn't just another single parent trying to make some money, it was for personal use only. I walked out of there with a lot more respect than the first time I'd been in and been told I was about to head to [prison]. [ID55, female aged 39]

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE REGARDING THE WA CANNABIS CAUTIONING SCHEME

Some 57.1% (n=56, missing=2) of the sample said that they had heard about the WA Cannabis Cautioning scheme, but none had ever received a caution under this scheme.

CONTACT WITH POLICE FOR NON-CANNABIS RELATED OFFENCES

Some 61.9% (n=60, missing=3) of the sample had been apprehended by police for non-cannabis-related offences. Table 68 shows that 45.8% (n=27) of these had attended court, 33.9% (n=20) had been convicted, and 10.2% (n=6) had been imprisoned. In 38 cases (64.4%) the reason was for a criminal offence (eg. drink driving, assault, fraud, other drug offence) and in the remainder (n=21, 35.6%) it was for a non-criminal offence (eg. speeding, fare evasion, drunk and disorderly).

Table 68: Nature of non-cannabis police contact

Nature of non-cannabis police contact	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Apprehended	59	27.1	100.0
Informal warning	8	3.7	13.6
Formally caution	6	2.8	10.2
Infringement notice	26	11.9	44.1
Charged	25	11.5	44.2
Arrested	27	12.4	45.8
Attended court	27	12.4	45.8
Convicted	20	9.2	33.9
Fined	14	6.4	23.7
Imprisoned	6	2.8	10.2
Total	218	100.0	369.5

*Respondents could choose more than one response
59 valid cases, 1 missing case*

FRIENDS CONTACT WITH POLICE FOR CANNABIS RELATED OFFENCES

Proportion of friends or acquaintances who have been apprehended for cannabis

Some 51.5% (n=50) of respondents said that 'a few' of their friends or acquaintances had been caught by police in relation to cannabis, whereas 30.9% (n=30) said that none of their friends or acquaintances had been. These results are shown in Figure 28.

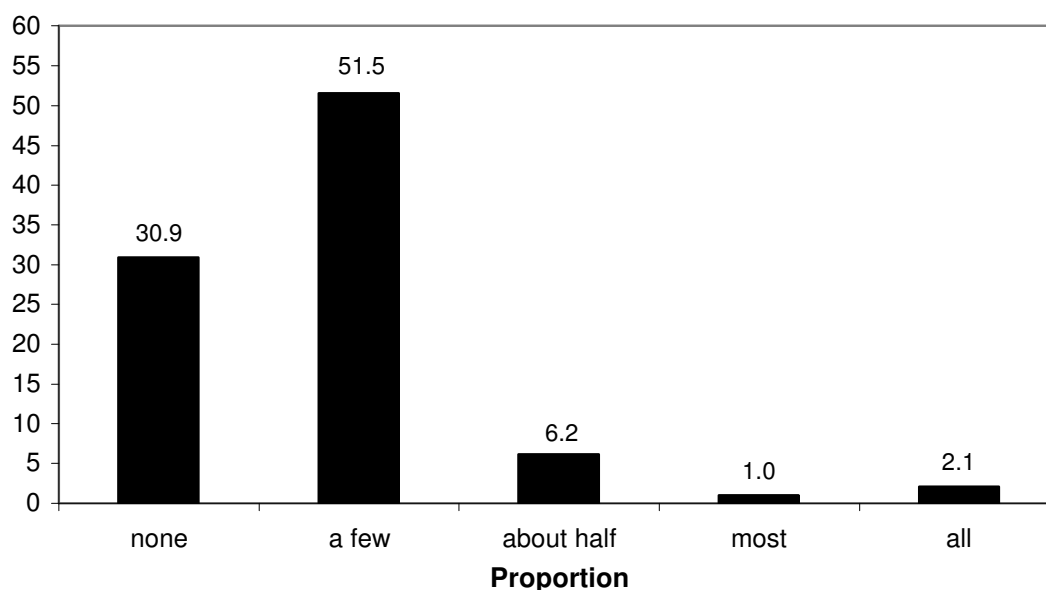


Figure 28: Proportion of friends and acquaintances who have been apprehended for cannabis offences

Nature of friends' contact with police regarding cannabis

Almost all (93.9%) of those whose friends or acquaintances had been apprehended for cannabis knew someone who had been apprehended for possession of cannabis, with 53.0% knowing someone apprehended for possession of a smoking implement. These results are shown in Table 69.

Table 69: Nature of friend's contact with police regarding cannabis

Friend's contact with police for cannabis was regarding	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Possession of cannabis	62	44.6	93.9
Possession of implement	35	25.2	53.0
Cultivation of cannabis	22	15.8	33.3
Sell/supply cannabis	20	14.4	30.3
Total	139	100.0	210.6

*Respondents could give more than one response
66 valid cases, 0 missing cases*

Impact of friends' contact with police regarding cannabis

The vast majority (86.4%) those whose friends or acquaintances had been apprehended for cannabis said that this had no impact on their own cannabis use, while 13.2% said they became more careful about how and where they used as a result. These results are presented in Table 70.

Table 70: Impact of friends' contact with police on own cannabis use

Impact of friends' contact with police on own cannabis use	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Made no difference	57	83.8	86.4
Used less	1	1.5	1.5
Reduced consumption initially	1	1.5	1.5
More careful about where/how used	9	13.2	13.6
Stopped for a while	0	0.0	0.0
Changed to/increased use of other drugs instead	0	0.0	0.0
Gave up completely	0	0.0	0.0
Total	139	100.0	210.6

*Respondents could give more than one response
66 valid cases, 0 missing cases*

CANNABIS LAW: KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

Figure 29 shows that 60.0% of respondents agreed that there had been a lot in the media recently about cannabis, while 36.0% disagreed.

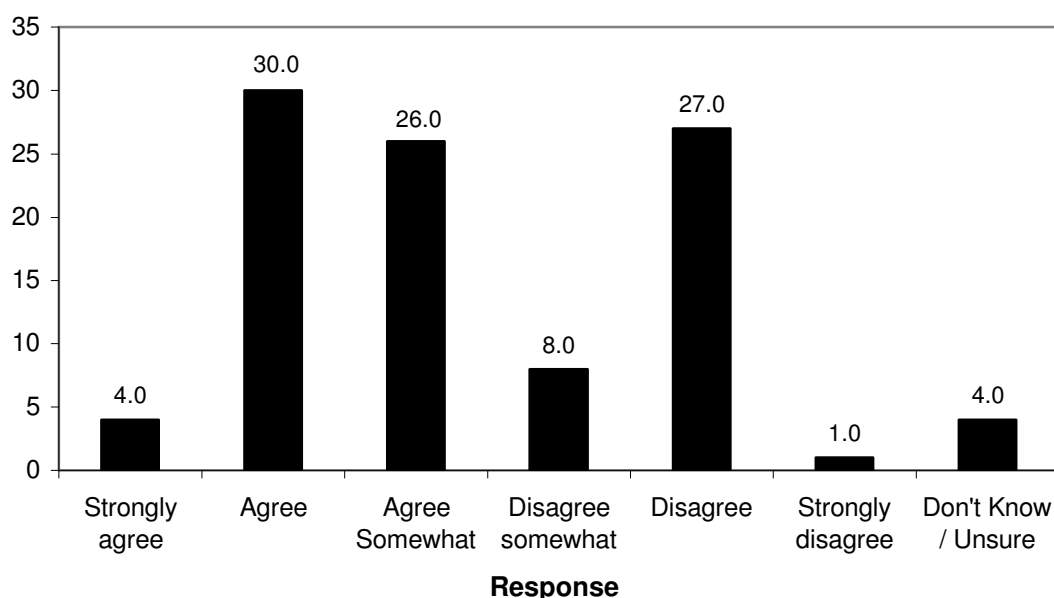


Figure 29: 'There has been a lot in the media lately about cannabis law' – percent of respondents

MEANING OF PROHIBITION WITH CIVIL PENALTIES

Table 71 shows that the vast majority of respondents (83.0%) understood that 'prohibition with civil penalties' means, still illegal, a fine, but no criminal penalty applies. Only 5.0% of the sample thought it meant that cannabis use would be legal.

Table 71: Understand meaning of 'Prohibition with civil penalties' – percent of respondents

Meaning	Frequency	% Respondents
It would be legal	5	5.0
It would be illegal, a fine but no criminal conviction recorded	83	83.0
It would be illegal and a criminal conviction recorded	12	12.0
Unsure	0	0.0
Total	100	100.0

100 valid cases, 0 missing cases

CURRENT LAWS – UNDERSTANDING, ATTITUDES, LIKELIHOOD OF APPREHENSION AND IMPACT OF PENALTIES

Respondents were asked about their knowledge of the current laws applying to cannabis and their attitude to the same laws.

Possession

Some 85.9% (n=85, missing = 1) of the sample were aware that it was currently illegal in WA to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use, but 96.0% of the sample thought it should be legal. These results are shown in Figure 30.

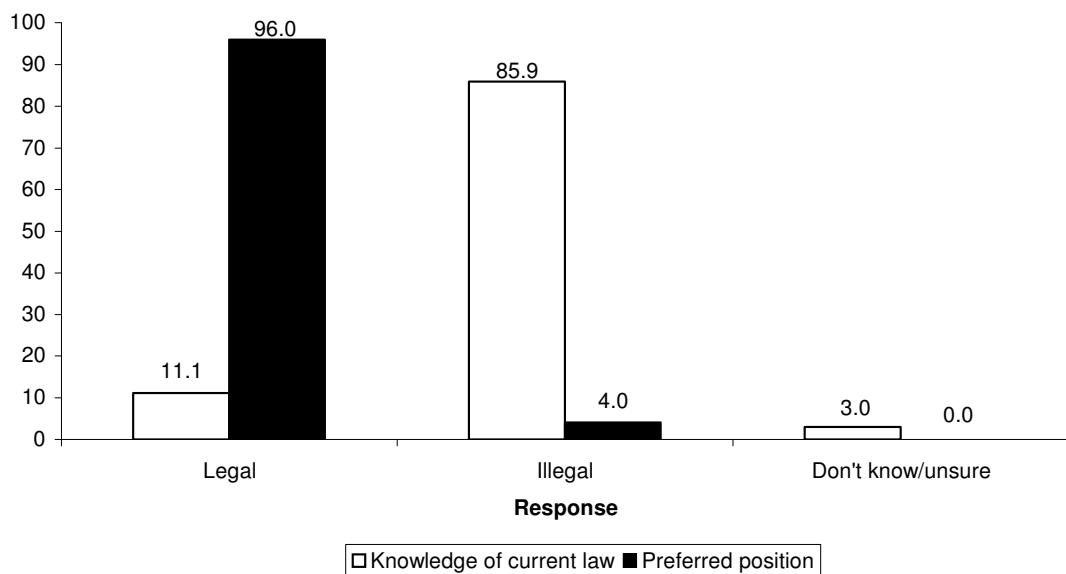


Figure 30: Knowledge of legality of cannabis possession for personal use under current law and preferred position current law for possession

Respondents were explained that *criminal offences result in a criminal record. Non-criminal offences are like speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal, but result in a fine rather than a criminal record.* They were then asked whether criminal or non criminal penalties applied to cannabis possession for personal use and if illegal, whether they thought that criminal or non-criminal penalties should apply. Figure 31 shows that while 23.0% did not know that possession of cannabis for personal use was a criminal, rather than a civil offence, the whole sample (100.0%) believed that if cannabis use was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

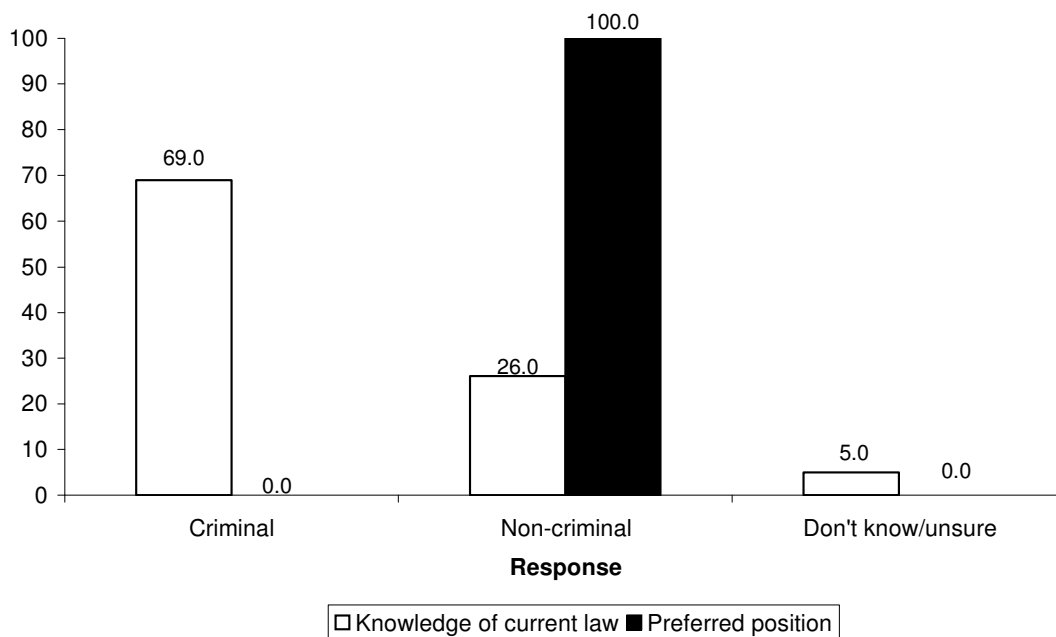


Figure 31: Knowledge of criminality of cannabis possession for personal use under current law and preferred position

Respondents were asked what the likely consequences were for a person caught for the first, and for the second time, in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use. These results are presented in Tables 72 and 73. Correct responses are given in bold. Responses were deemed 'correct' or 'incorrect' based on the judgements of a group of key informants from the Ministry of Justice who regularly attend court and witness such cases.

Of note is that among this sample of regular cannabis users most (65.0%) recognised that a caution was possible for first offenders under the WA Cannabis Cautioning System, but that few (31.0%) believed one could get a criminal conviction. Despite the cautioning system, convictions would apply to those who had a previous criminal record, or were in possession of more than 25 grams of cannabis, an amount still deemed personal use (up to 100 grams in law). It was also interesting that 32.0% believed a first time offender could get an infringement notice, not possible under current WA law.

The result that only 19.0% believed a formal caution could be applied for a second offence suggests that about 4 in 5 understood that under the current system such cautions only applied to first offenders. Despite this, only 47.0% said that a criminal conviction would be recorded for a second offence, where this is in fact happens more than 95% of the time.

Table 72: Consequences for an adult caught for the FIRST time in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use

Possible consequences for first offence for cannabis possession for personal use	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Formal caution by police officer	65	19.0	65.0
A fine	57	16.7	57.0
Attendance at a cannabis education session	51	14.9	51.0
Appearance at drug court	27	7.9	27.0
Criminal conviction recorded	31	9.1	31.0
Receive an infringement notice similar to a speeding fine	32	9.4	32.0
Summons to appear in court	38	11.1	38.0
No penalty	20	5.8	20.0
Six months jail sentence	8	2.3	8.0
Two years jail sentence	4	1.2	4.0
Compulsory drug treatment	9	2.6	9.0
Total	342	100.0	342.0

N.B. Correct responses are shown in bold

Table 73: Consequences for an adult caught for the SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT time in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use

Possible consequences for second or subsequent offence for cannabis possession for personal use	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Formal caution by police officer	19	5.7	19.0
A fine	63	19.0	63.0
Attendance at a cannabis education session	41	12.4	41.0
Appearance at drug court	38	11.5	38.0
Criminal conviction recorded	47	14.2	47.0
Receive an infringement notice similar to a speeding fine	20	6.0	20.0
Summons to appear in court	50	15.1	50.0
No penalty	4	1.2	4.0
Six months jail sentence	19	5.7	19.0
Two years jail sentence	4	1.2	4.0
Compulsory drug treatment	24	7.3	24.0
Don't Know	2	0.6	2.0
Total	331	100.0	331.0

N.B. Correct responses are shown in bold

Respondents were asked if they, or if 'a friend', were in possession of a small amount of cannabis, how likely they thought they would be caught. Figure 32 shows that 69.0% thought it was 'very unlikely' and 27.0% thought it 'unlikely' that they would be caught. However, somewhat fewer thought it was 'very unlikely' (54.0%) and more thought it was 'unlikely' (34.0%) that a friend would be caught. This comparison was significant ($\chi^2 = 55.00$, $df=12$, $p=.000$).

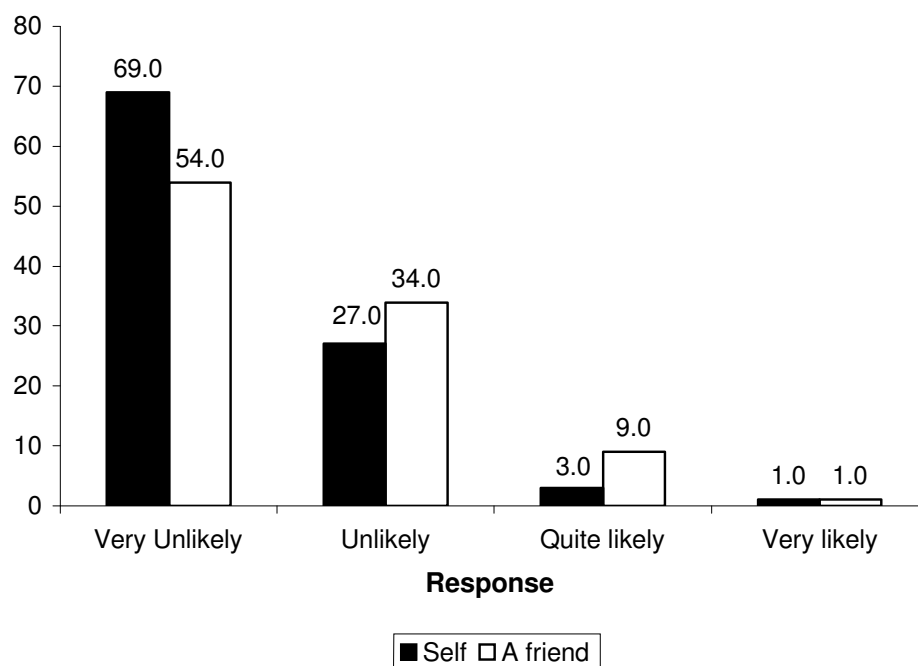


Figure 32: Likelihood of apprehension for possession of a small amount by self Vs a friend

Respondents were then asked overall how big a problem these penalties would create in their life. Responses are shown in Table 74. Some 53.0% said the penalties for possession would be 'no problem at all' or 'a small problem'.

Table 74: How big a problem the penalties for possession would create for their life overall

	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
No Problem at all	22	22.0	22.0
A small problem	31	31.0	53.0
A moderate problem	20	20.0	73.0
A big problem	15	15.0	88.0
A very big problem	12	12.0	100.0
Don't know/Not sure	0	0.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Growing

Some 96.0% (missing = 0) of the sample were aware that it was currently illegal in WA for an adult to grow a cannabis plant, but 94.0% of the sample thought it should be legal. These results are shown in Figure 33.

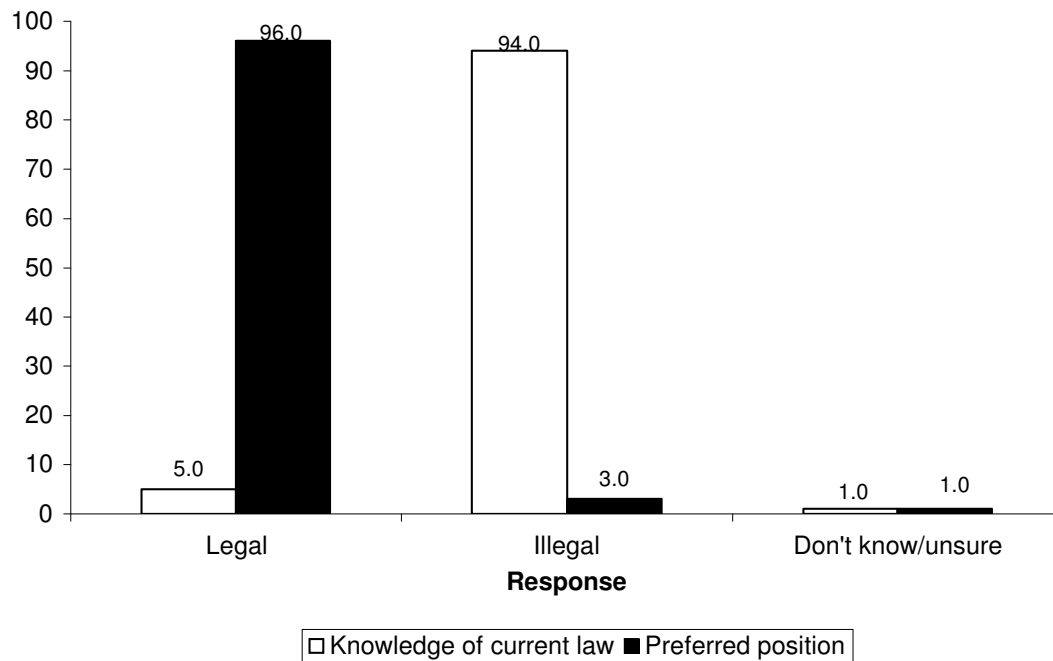


Figure 33: Knowledge of legality of an adult growing a cannabis plant use under current law and preferred position

Respondents were then asked whether criminal or non-criminal penalties applied to cultivation of a cannabis plant and if illegal, whether they thought that criminal or non-criminal penalties should apply. Figure 34 shows that while 15.0% did not know that cultivation of a cannabis plant by an adult was a criminal, rather than a civil offence. Some 94.0% of the sample believed that if cultivation of a cannabis plant was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

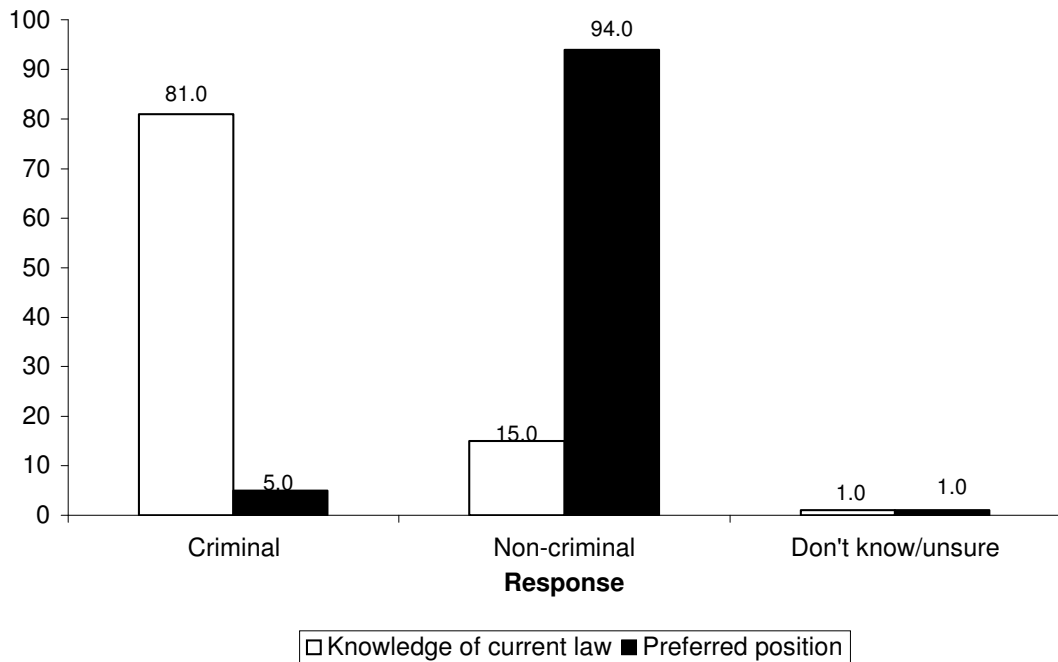


Figure 34: Knowledge of criminality of cultivation of a cannabis plant under current law and preferred position

Respondents were asked what the likely consequences were for an adult caught for growing a small number of cannabis plants. These results are presented in Table 75. Correct responses are given in bold. Responses were deemed 'correct' or 'incorrect' based on the judgements of a group of key informants from the Ministry of Justice who regularly attend court and witness such cases.

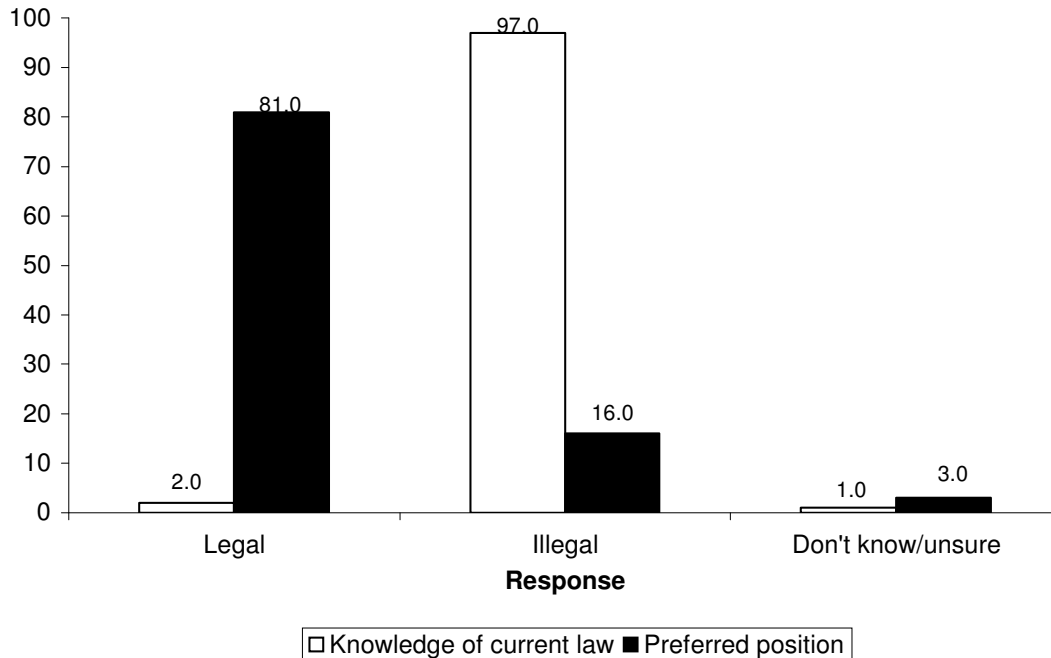
Of note is that among this sample of regular cannabis some 28.0% incorrectly thought that a caution was possible for cultivation of cannabis plants under the WA Cannabis Cautioning System, and only 50.0% believed one could get a criminal conviction for cultivation of a small number of plants.

Some 97.0% (missing = 0) of the sample were aware that it was currently illegal in WA for an adult to grow a cannabis plant using hydroponic equipment, but 81.0% of the sample thought it should be legal and 16.0% thought it should remain illegal. These results are shown in Figure 35.

Table 75: Consequences for an adult caught for growing a small number of cannabis plants

Possible consequences for adult growing a small number of plants	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Formal caution by police officer	28	7.7	28.0
A fine	73	20.2	73.0
Attendance at a cannabis education session	31	8.6	31.0
Appearance at drug court	40	11.0	40.0
Criminal conviction recorded	50	13.8	50.0
Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)	17	4.7	17.0
Summons to appear in court	64	17.7	64.0
No penalty	9	2.5	9.0
Six months jail sentence	27	7.5	27.0
Two years jail sentence	11	3.0	11.0
Compulsory drug treatment	12	3.3	12.0
Total	362	100.0	362.0

N.B. Correct responses are shown in bold

**Figure 35: Knowledge of legality of an adult growing cannabis hydroponically under current law and preferred position**

Respondents were then asked whether criminal or non-criminal penalties applied to hydroponic cultivation of a cannabis plant by an adult and if illegal, whether they

thought that criminal or non-criminal penalties should apply. Figure 36 shows that while 6.0% did not know that hydroponic cultivation of a cannabis plant by an adult was a criminal, rather than a civil offence. Some 87.0% of the sample believed that if hydroponic cultivation of a cannabis plant was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

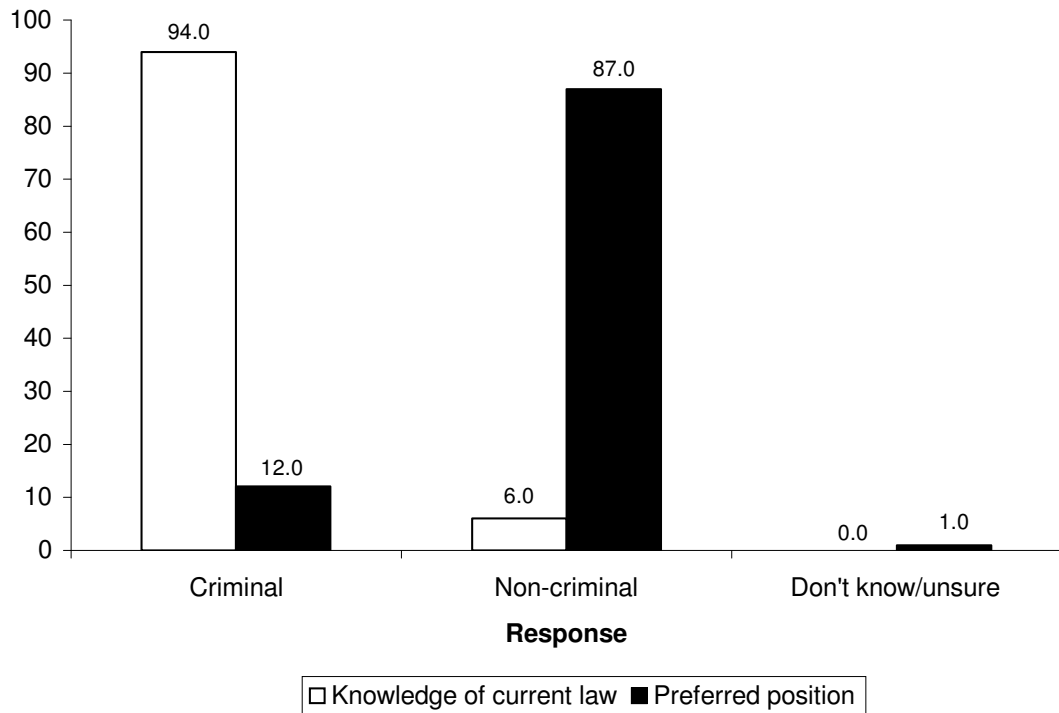


Figure 36: Knowledge of criminality of hydroponic cultivation of a cannabis plant under current law and preferred position

Almost half (49.0%) this sample of regular cannabis users agreed 'strongly' or at least 'somewhat' that police should have the power to remove people from the hydroponic equipment industry who police have evidence are engaging in criminal activities such as commercial cannabis production.

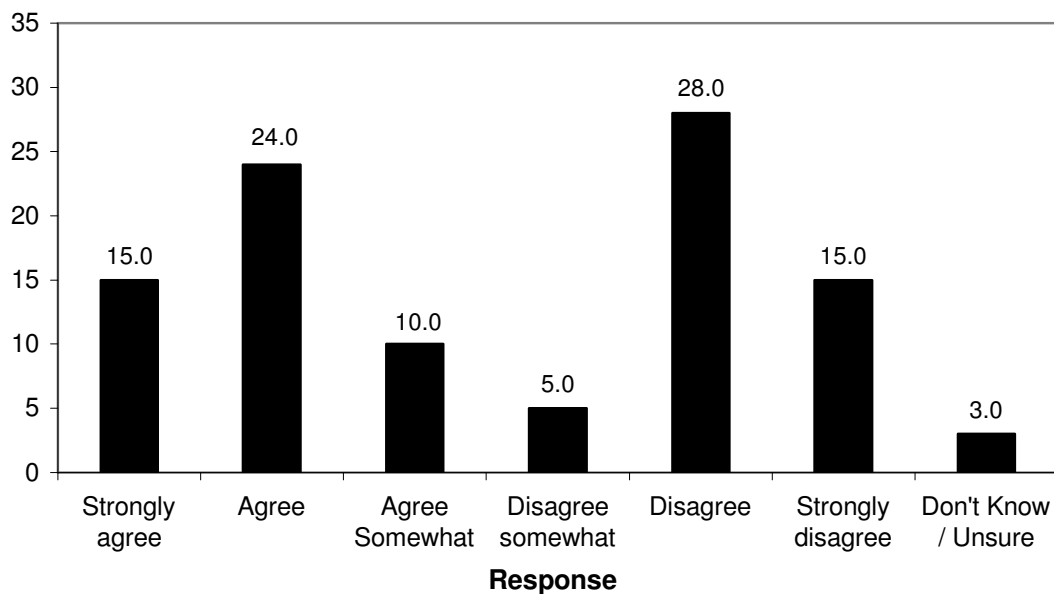


Figure 37: Attitudes towards police having power to remove people from the hydroponic equipment industry who engage in criminal activities

Respondents were asked if they, or if 'a friend', were growing a small number of cannabis plants, how likely they thought they would be caught. Figure 38 shows that 37.0% thought it was 'very unlikely' and 41.0% thought it 'unlikely' that they would be caught. However, somewhat fewer thought it was 'very unlikely' (31.0%) and more thought it was 'unlikely' (53.0%) that a friend would be caught. This comparison was significant ($\chi^2 = 134.54$, $df=12$, $p=.000$).

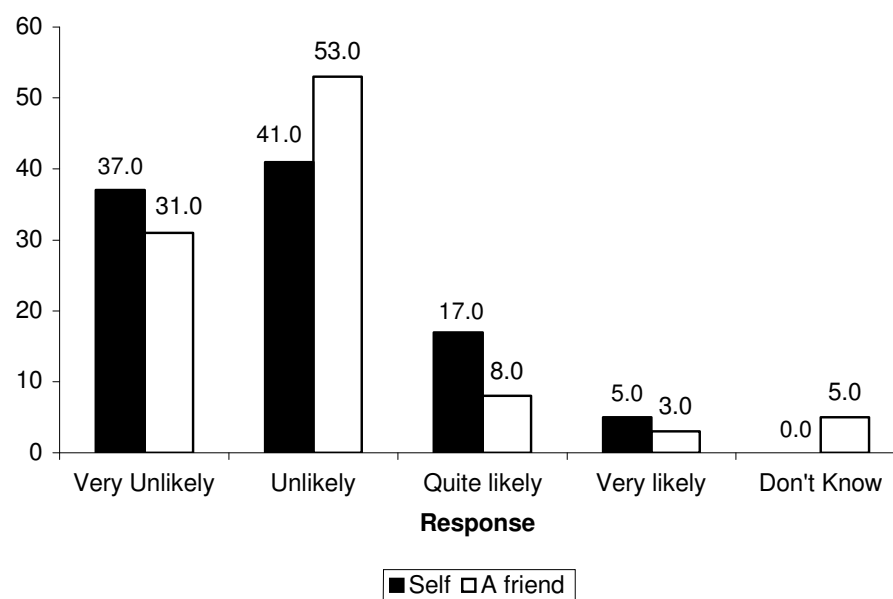


Figure 38: Likelihood of apprehension for growing a small number of cannabis plants by self Vs a friend

Respondents were then asked overall how big a problem these penalties would create in their life. Responses are shown in Table 76. Some 29.0% said the penalties for possession would be 'no problem at all' or 'a small problem'.

Table 76: How big a problem the penalties for growing a small number of cannabis plants would create for their life overall

	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
No Problem at all	16	16.0	16.0
A small problem	13	13.0	29.0
A moderate problem	22	22.0	51.0
A big problem	25	25.0	76.0
A very big problem	24	24.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Selling

Some 99.0% (missing = 0) of the sample were aware that it was currently illegal in WA for an adult sell cannabis to another adult, but 71.0% of the sample thought it should be legal and 16.0% thought it should remain illegal. These results are shown in Figure 39.

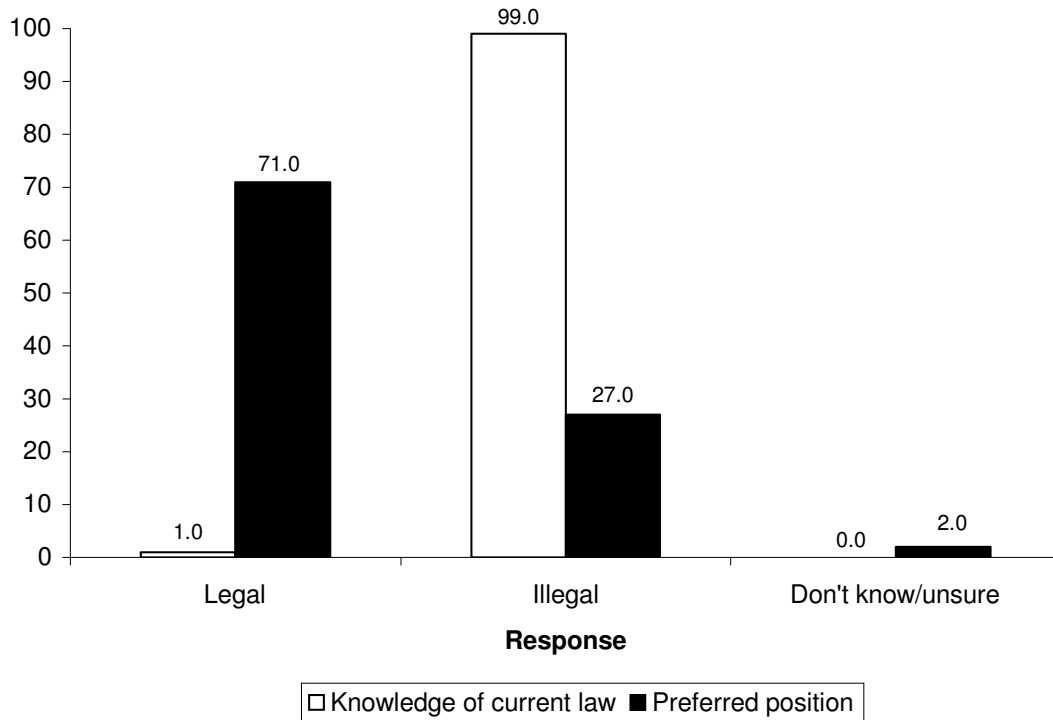


Figure 39: Knowledge of legality of an adult selling to another adult under current law and preferred position

Respondents were then asked whether criminal or non-criminal penalties applied to sale of cannabis from one adult to another and if illegal, whether they thought that criminal or non-criminal penalties should apply. Figure 40 shows that while 6.0% did not know that sale of cannabis to an adult was a criminal, rather than a civil offence. Some 88.0% of the sample believed that if sale of cannabis from one adult to another was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

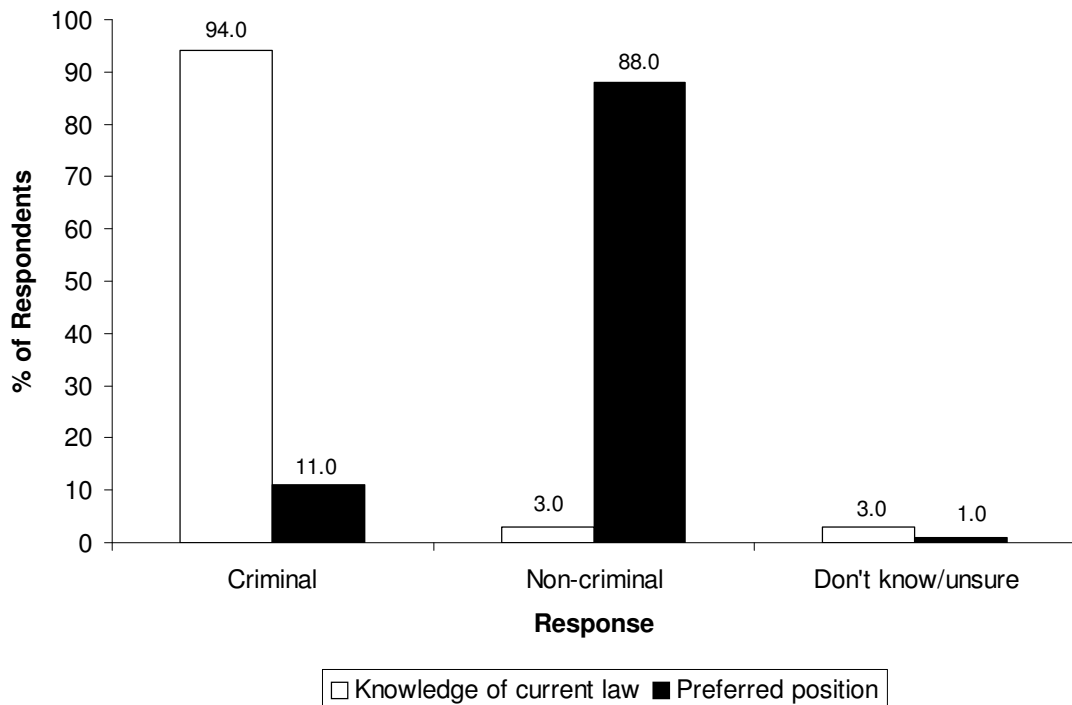


Figure 40: Knowledge of criminality of sale of cannabis to an adult under current law and preferred position

Respondents were asked whether it should be legal or illegal for an adult to sell a small amount of cannabis to a person under the age of 18 years. Some 13.0% thought it should be legal while 85.0% said it should be illegal and 2.0% were unsure. Respondents were then asked whether, if illegal, they thought that criminal or non-criminal penalties should apply. Some 75.0% said criminal penalties should apply, and 25.0% said that non-criminal penalties should apply.

Respondents were asked what the likely consequences were for an adult caught for selling a small amount of cannabis. These results are presented in Table 77. Correct responses are given in bold. Responses were deemed 'correct' or 'incorrect' based on the judgements of a group of key informants from the Ministry of Justice who regularly attend court and witness such cases.

Of note is that among this sample of regular cannabis some 20.0% incorrectly thought that a caution was possible for selling cannabis to qualify for a formal caution under the WA Cannabis Cautioning System, and only 63.0% believed one could get a criminal conviction for selling cannabis.

Table 77: Consequences for an adult caught selling a small amount of cannabis

Possible consequences for an adult selling a small amount of cannabis	Frequency	% Responses	% Respondents
Formal caution by police officer	20	5.4	20.0
A fine	78	21.0	78.0
Attendance at a cannabis education session	32	8.6	32.0
Appearance at drug court	51	13.7	51.0
Criminal conviction recorded	63	16.9	63.0
Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)	11	3.0	11.0
Summons to appear in court	66	17.7	66.0
No penalty	1	0.3	1.0
Six months jail sentence	29	7.8	29.0
Two years jail sentence	13	3.5	13.0
Compulsory drug treatment	8	2.2	8.0
Total	372	100.0	372

N.B. Correct responses are shown in bold

Respondents were asked if they, or if 'a friend', were selling a small amount of cannabis, how likely they thought they would be caught. Figure 41 shows that 53.0% thought it was 'very unlikely' and 35.0% thought it 'unlikely' that they would be caught. However, somewhat fewer thought it was 'very unlikely' (38.0%) and more thought it was 'unlikely' (42.0%) that a friend would be caught. This comparison was significant ($\chi^2 = 155.41$, $df=16$, $p=.000$).

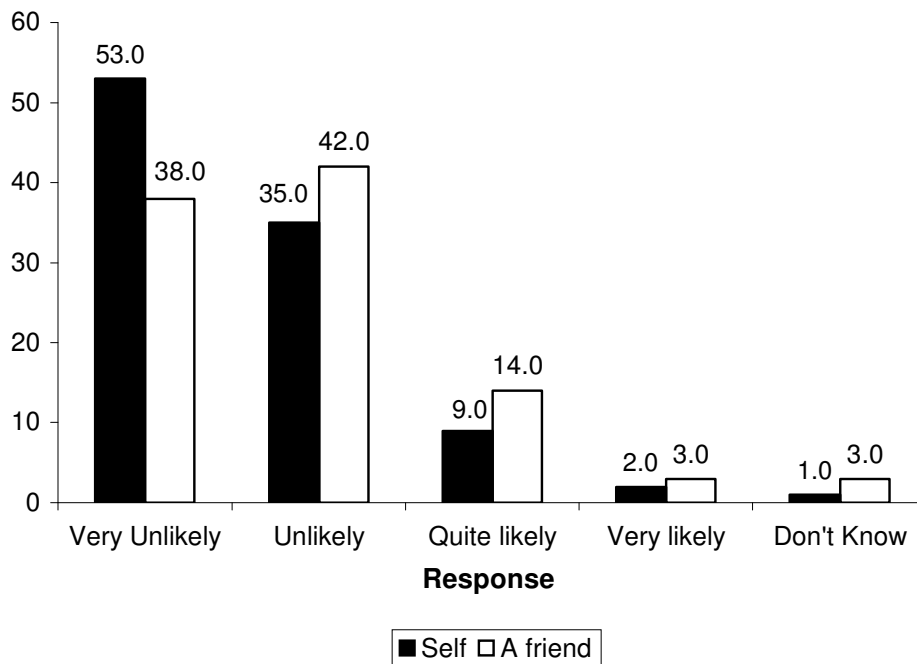


Figure 41: Likelihood of apprehension for selling a small amount of cannabis by self Vs a friend

Respondents were then asked overall how big a problem these penalties would create in their life. Responses are shown in Table 78. Some 28.0% said the penalties for possession would be 'no problem at all' or 'a small problem'.

Table 78: How big a problem the penalties for selling a small amount of cannabis would create for their life overall

	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
No problem at all	15	15.0	15.0
A small problem	13	13.0	28.0
A moderate problem	21	21.0	49.0
A big problem	23	23.0	72.0
A very big problem	26	26.0	98.0
Don't know/Not sure	2	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Driving

Some 99.0% (missing = 0) of the sample were aware that it was currently illegal in WA to drive while affected by cannabis, but 71.0% of the sample thought it should be legal and 27.0% thought it should remain illegal. These results are shown in Figure 42.

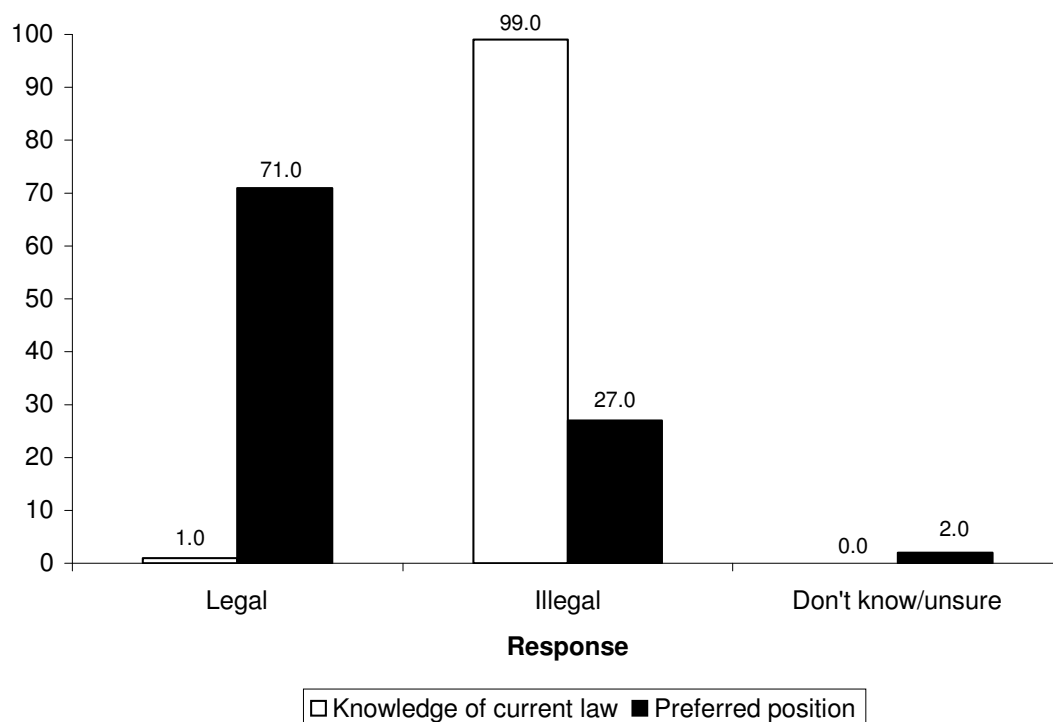


Figure 42: Knowledge of legality of driving while affected by cannabis under current law and preferred position

Respondents were then asked whether criminal or non-criminal penalties applied to driving whilst affected by cannabis and if illegal, whether they thought that criminal or non-criminal penalties should apply. Figure 43 shows that while 29.3% did not know that driving whilst affected by cannabis was a criminal, rather than a civil offence, some 63.0% of the sample believed that if it were to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

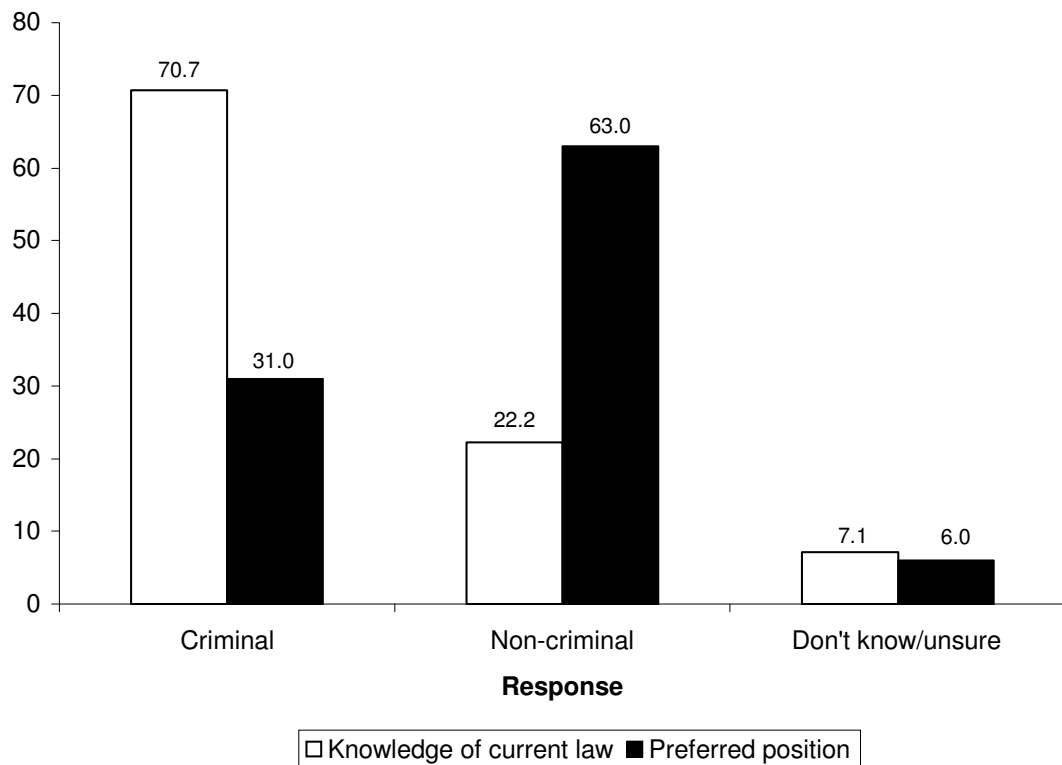


Figure 43: Knowledge of criminality of driving whilst affected by cannabis under current law and preferred position

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that police should test drivers for cannabis like they do for alcohol. Figure 44 shows that 65.0% agreed at least somewhat that police should do this.

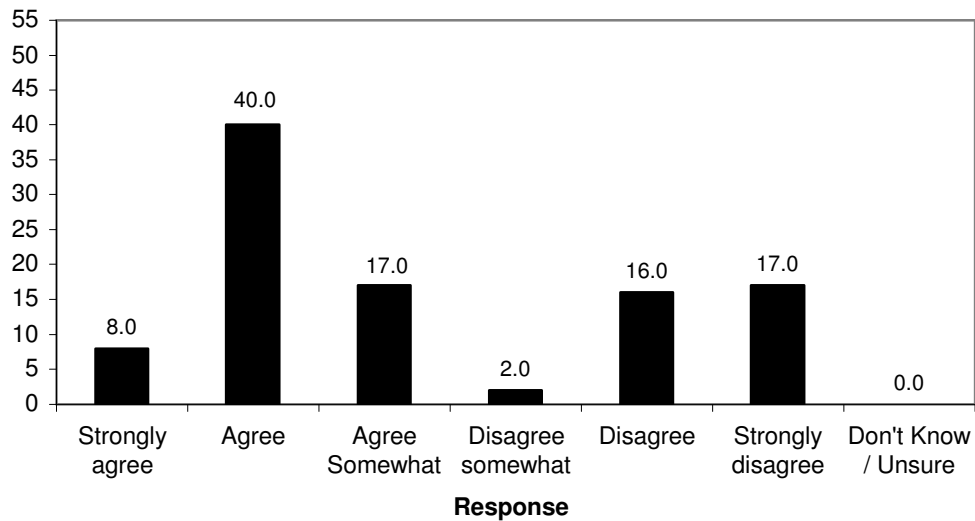


Figure 44: Attitudes to whether police should test drivers for cannabis like they do for alcohol

GENERAL ATTITUDES ABOUT POLICE AND THE LAW

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their attitudes to police and the law in general.

ATTITUDES TO THE LAW IN GENERAL

Figure 45 shows that 84.0% of the sample agreed at least somewhat that most laws are worth obeying.

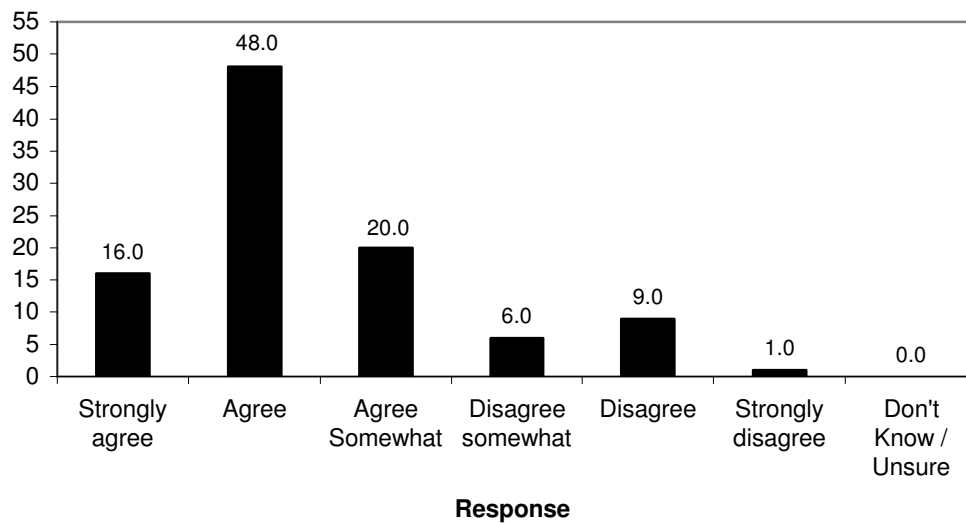


Figure 45: Most laws are worth obeying – Agree/Disagree

Figure 46 shows that 78.0% of the sample saw themselves as law abiding, at least to some extent.

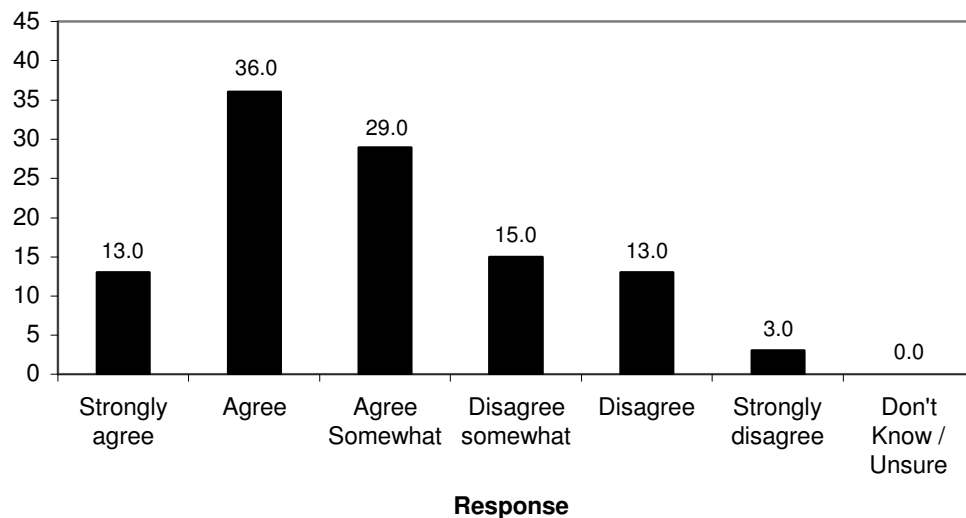


Figure 46: I am a law abiding citizen – Agree/Disagree

Figure 47 shows that 69.0% of the sample to some extent believed that most laws are fair.

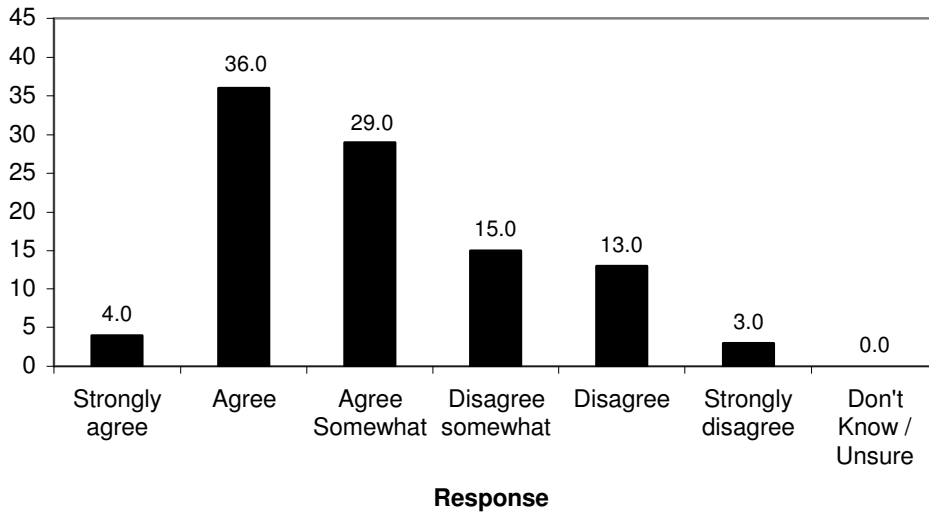


Figure 47: Most laws are fair – Agree/Disagree

Figure 48 shows that 95.0% of the sample to some extent believed it was important that people in a society respect most of its laws.

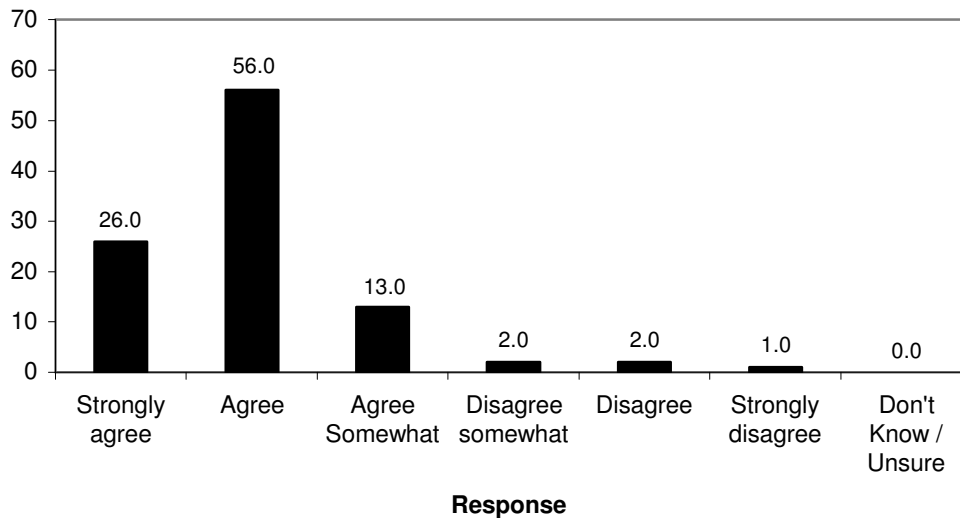


Figure 48: It is important that people in a society respect most of its laws – Agree/Disagree

Figure 49 shows that 37.0% of the sample agreed to some extent that it is all right to break the law if you can get away with it.

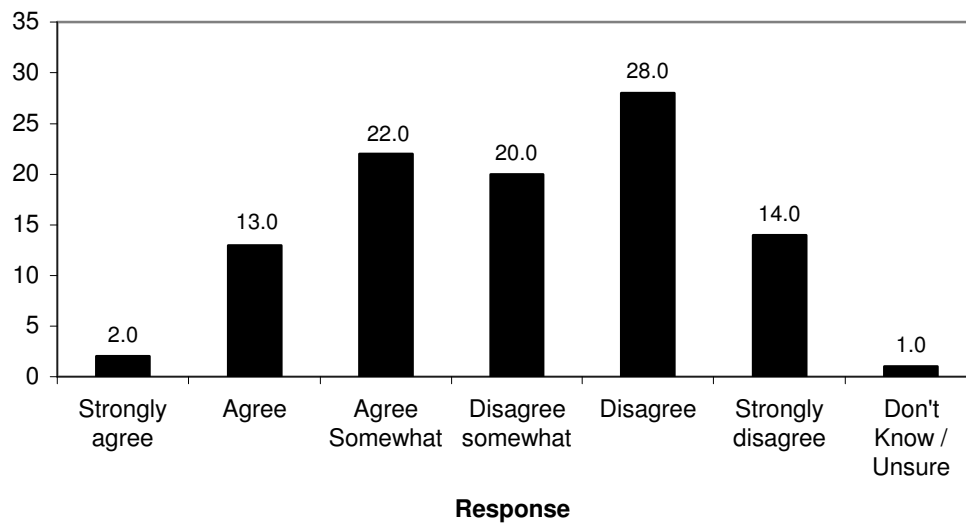


Figure 49: It is all right to break the law if you can get away with it – Agree/Disagree

Figure 50 shows that only 28.0% of the sample agreed to some extent that people should break laws they disagree with.

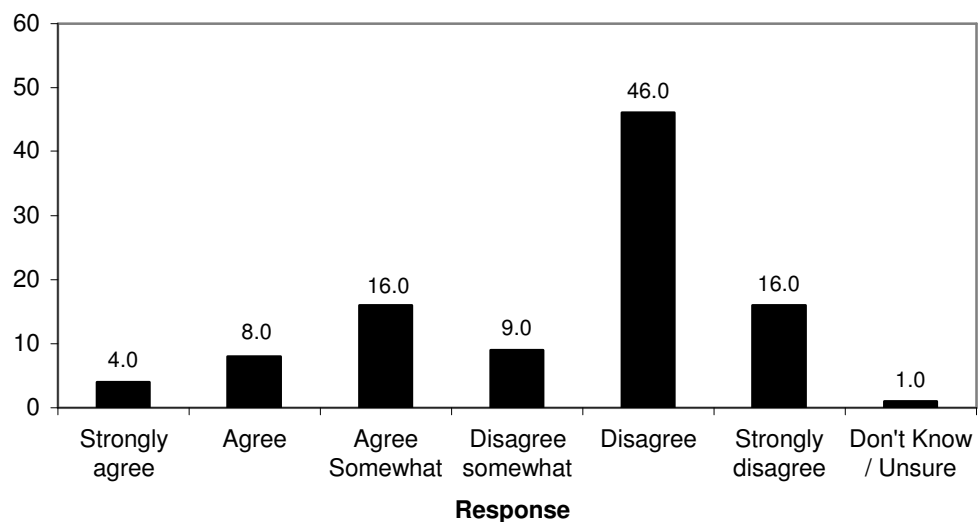


Figure 50: People should break laws they disagree with – Agree/Disagree

ATTITUDES TO THE POLICE

Figure 51 shows that 82.0% of the sample agreed to some extent that police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order.

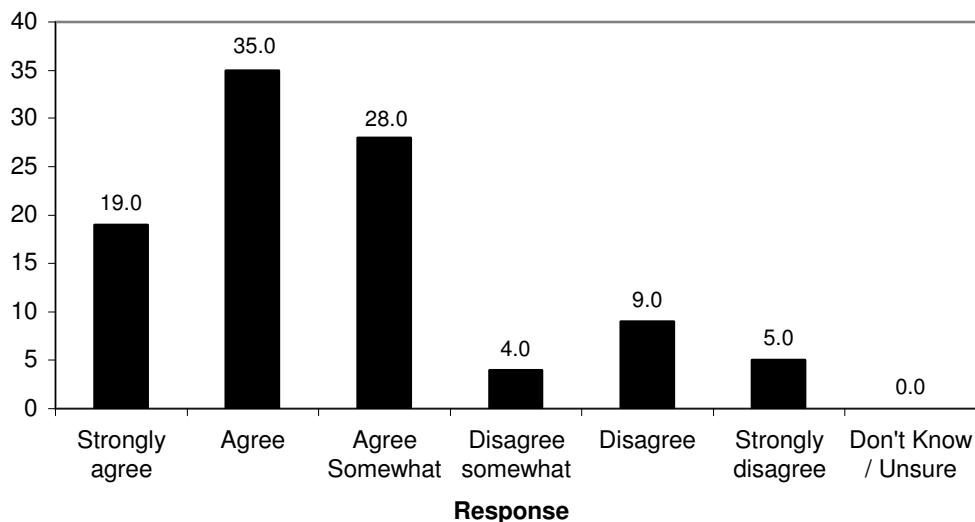


Figure 51: Police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order – Agree/Disagree

Figure 52 shows that 97.0% of the sample agreed to some extent that some police abuse their authority over people they suspect have broken the law.

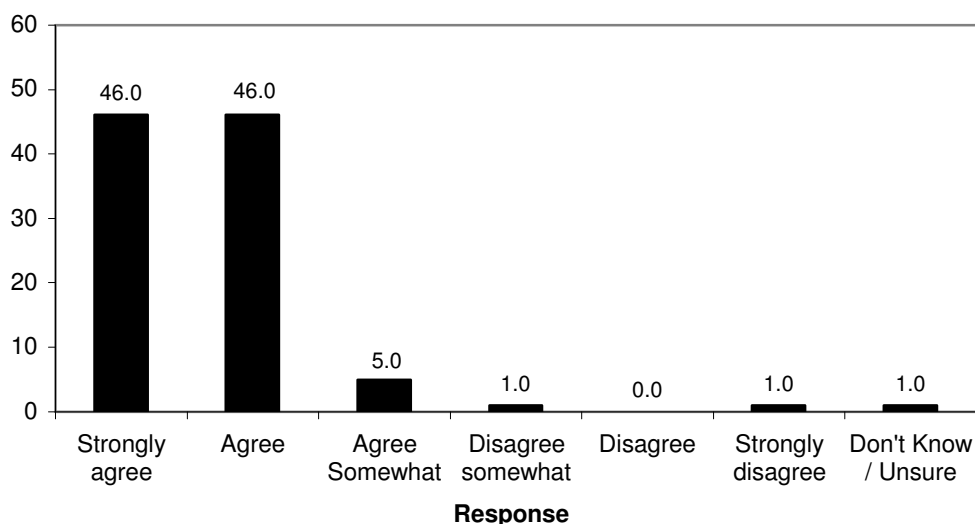


Figure 52: Some police abuse their authority over people they suspect have broken the law – Agree/Disagree

Figure 53 shows that only 25.0% of the sample agreed to some extent that police generally treat cannabis users with respect.

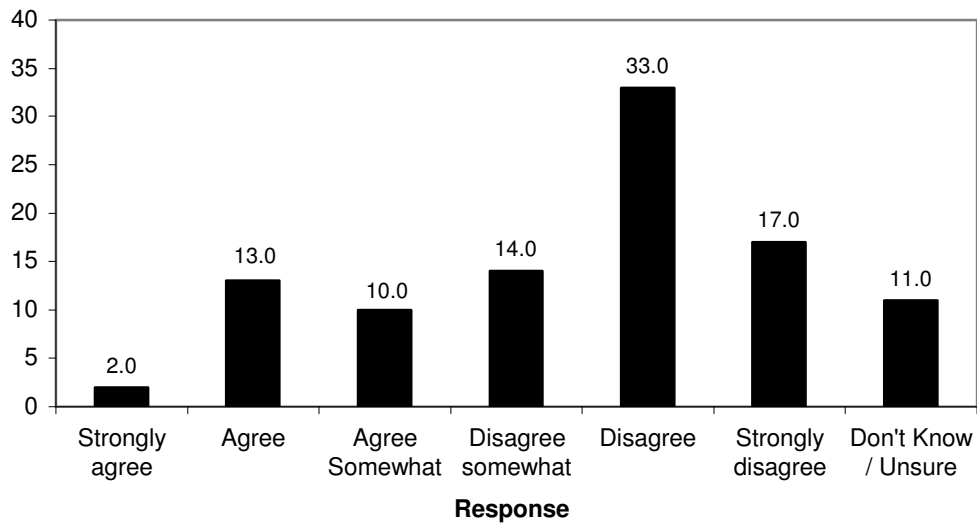


Figure 53: Police generally treat cannabis users with respect – Agree/Disagree

Figure 54 shows that 94.0% of the sample disagreed to some extent that police should be given more power to crack down on cannabis in the community.

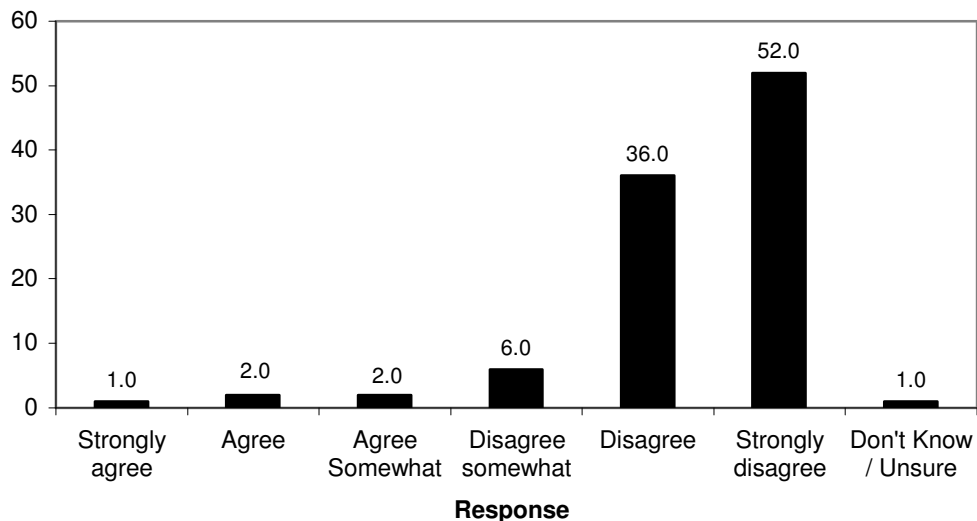


Figure 54: Police should be given more power to crack down on cannabis in the community – Agree/Disagree

Figure 55 shows that 99.0% of the sample agreed to some extent that police time could be better spent than in pursuing minor cannabis offenders.

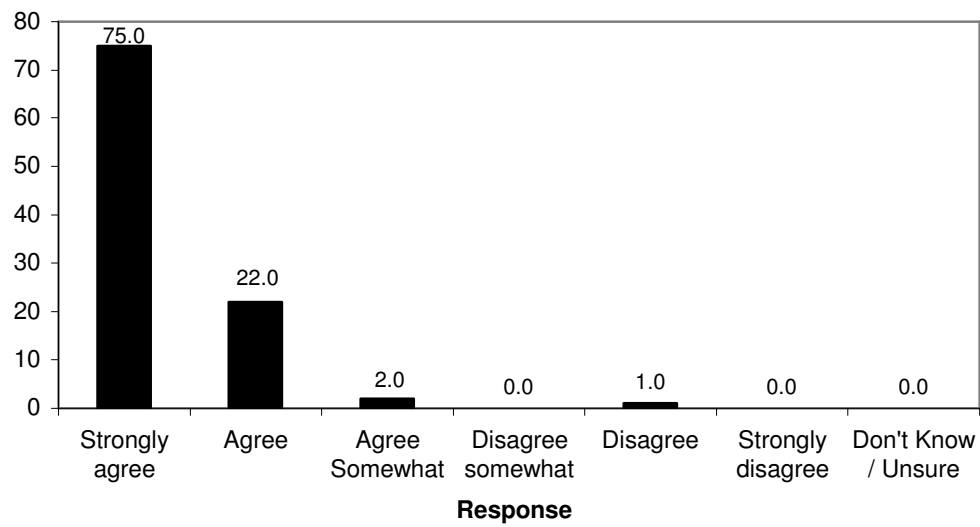


Figure 55: Police time could be better spent than in pursuing minor cannabis offenders – Agree/Disagree

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEW SYSTEM

Respondents were given a standardised verbal description of the proposed legislative changes for cannabis in WA and were then asked questions about their understanding of the scheme and their attitudes toward it.

Knowledge of criminal and civil offences under the proposed scheme

Table 79 shows that most people understood which of the possession and cultivation offences attracted civil and criminal penalties. Some 82.7% of responses were correct.

Table 79: Whether offences would attract civil or criminal penalties under the new system

Offence	Criminal	Non-criminal	Not Sure
Possessing not more than 15 g of cannabis	1.0	99.0	0.0
Possessing over 15 but not more than 30 g of cannabis	5.1	94.9	0.0
Possessing over 30 but not more than 100 g of cannabis	91.8	6.1	2.0
Growing not more than 2 non-hydroponic cannabis plants	3.1	96.9	0.0
Growing 3 but not more than 10 non-hydroponic cannabis plants	94.9	5.1	0.0
Growing not more than 2 hydroponic cannabis plants	91.8	6.1	2.0

Correct responses are shown in bold.

Likelihood of apprehension under the proposed scheme

Respondents were asked how likely they thought it would be that they would be caught under this new system. For most of these offences the overwhelming majority (from 82.7% for *possessing more than 30 but not more than 100 grams*, to 96.9% for *possessing 15 grams or less*) said it would be ‘very unlikely’ or ‘quite unlikely’ they would be apprehended. The exception was growing 3 to 10 hydroponic plants where 54.1% thought it was ‘very unlikely’ or ‘quite unlikely’ they would be apprehended. These results are presented in Table 80.

Table 80: Likelihood of being apprehended for various possession and cultivation offences under the new system

Offence	Very unlikely	Quite Unlikely	Quite likely	Very likely	Not sure
Possessing 15g or less	79.6	17.3	2.0	0.0	1.0
Possessing >15 to 30g	69.4	24.5	5.1	0.0	1.0
Possessing >30 to 100g	58.2	24.5	8.2	8.2	1.0
Growing 2 or less non-hydro	48.0	35.7	8.2	5.1	3.1
Growing 3 to 10 non-hydro	28.6	25.5	31.6	10.2	4.1
Growing 2 or less hydro	49.0	34.7	8.2	5.1	3.1

Extent to which penalties are a problem

Respondents were asked the extent to which a range of possible penalties would be a problem for them if they received them. In general the potential penalties associated with the proposed scheme (fines of \$100 to \$200, an education session, no criminal charge) were rated as far less a problem than potential penalties under the existing model (criminal conviction, 2 year prison sentence). For example an education session was seen as 'no problem at all' or 'a small problem' by 80.6% of the sample, whereas a \$200 fine was seen as 'a big problem' or 'a very big problem' by 81.6% of the sample. These results are shown in Table 89. It should be noted that it is extremely rare for anyone in WA to get a prison sentence for a minor cannabis offence.

Table 89: How big a problem the penalties for selling a small amount of cannabis would create for their life overall

Penalty	No problem at all	A small problem	A moderate problem	A big problem	A very big problem	Don't know/Not sure
\$100 fine	35.7	31.6	17.3	13.3	2.0	0.0
\$150 fine	31.6	28.6	23.5	8.2	8.2	0.0
\$200 fine	28.6	16.3	21.4	21.4	12.2	0.0
Education session	65.3	15.3	10.2	6.1	2.0	1.0
\$2000 fine	4.1	5.1	9.2	19.4	62.2	0.0
2yr prison sentence	0.0	2.0	1.0	5.1	91.8	0.0
Criminal conviction	16.3	6.1	11.2	23.5	42.9	0.0
Non-criminal penalties	50.5	28.9	17.5	1.0	0.0	2.1

Fairness of proposed penalties under new scheme

Whereas 78.6% of the sample agreed either 'strongly' or 'somewhat' that possession of less than 15 grams of cannabis and up to 30 grams should be a non-criminal offence, fines for these offences were less likely to be rated as fair. For example, only 43.3% of the sample agreed that it was fair for possession of not more than 30 grams of cannabis to attract a \$100 fine. Only 29.9% agreed that it

was fair for possession of more than 30 grams of cannabis to attract a criminal charge. Whereas 86.6% of the sample agreed that it was fair that growing less than 2 non-hydro plants should be a non-criminal offence, only 11.3% agreed that it was fair that criminal penalties applied to the cultivation of 2 hydroponic plants. These results are shown in Table 90.

Table 90: Fairness of proposed penalties under the new system

Offence	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Possession offences					
15g or less attracts a \$100 fine	5.2	38.1	30.9	24.7	1.0
15g or less is a non-criminal offence	33.0	54.6	3.1	8.2	1.0
>15 to 30g attracts a \$150 fine	4.1	47.4	24.7	22.7	1.0
>15 to 30g is a non-criminal offence	27.8	59.8	3.1	8.2	1.0
>30 to 100g is a criminal offence	4.1	25.8	41.2	26.8	2.1
Cultivation offences					
Growing 2 or less non-hydro plants is a non-criminal offence	26.8	59.8	5.2	7.2	1.0
Growing 3 to 10 non-hydro plants is a criminal offence	3.1	32.0	37.1	24.7	3.1
Growing 2 or less hydro plants is a criminal offence	3.1	8.2	42.3	45.4	1.0

Qualitative accounts of overall fairness of the proposed scheme

Having been given a verbal description of the proposed scheme for cannabis in WA respondents were asked whether they thought the proposal was fair?

Belief that overall, the proposed scheme was fair

Twenty respondents discussed feeling that overall the proposed system was fair.

All of it's fair?

Yeah I believe all of it's fair. Definitely, it will, it's going to, if they want people to continue, if they are going to grow it, to grow it naturally not hydroponically. Yeah that's more than fair.

[ID60, male aged 21]

Actually I agree with most things, I agree with the possession above that, but I don't, even though I don't think hydro is necessarily the thing... I really don't know the differences between weed and ... I mean I know if I've got hydro and I know it's great. And so it's great spending that much money on it, but, if it's illegal, then we're just not going to be able to get that, which is fine, because people will just have to get used to normal weed. Nup, you know what, I think everything's fine!

[ID79, female aged 22]

More fair than existing system

It is also the case, however, that more respondents when queried about the fairness of the proposed system, believed that it was more fair than the existing system. Specifically, among some fifty nine respondents, the issue of the changes being more fair was noted. The following responses were typical.

I guess from a WA perspective this is probably an improvement [ID1, male aged 28]

Its fairer than what they've got now. [ID98, female aged 30]

Well it's fairer than what it has been. A change is better than no change at all.
[ID96, female aged 32]

Overall, the scheme is unfair – cannabis use should be legalised

While it is difficult to characterise respondents' views as strictly fair or unfair, it was the case that a number of respondents had serious problems with the changes based on and underlying view that cannabis should be legalised. Twenty six respondents discussed their desire to see cannabis legalised. The following examples are typical:

Cause its still criminal. There are still fines involved. [ID5, male aged 39]

Well I still say it should be legal.

So in that sense it's not quite fitting in with what you want?

No. I don't think there should be any punishment. [ID59, female aged 34]

No of course not. I still can't see the crime! You show me the victim and we'll start talking crime! [ID99, male aged 50]

Qualitative comments regarding fairness of specific components of proposed scheme

During the interview respondents were asked to consider whether aspects of the proposed system were more fair than others. As a result of this, a number of themes emerged.

Hydroponic growing

Hydroponic growing appeared to be the aspect of the proposed changes that provoked a significant reaction when discussing issues of fairness concerning the proposed changes. Thirty eight respondents discussed their disagreement with making hydroponic growing subject to criminal penalties. For example:

The growing, I totally disagree with that. You should be allowed to grow hydroponically.
[ID70, male aged 22]

The... distinction between hydroponic growth and conventional growing - there shouldn't be any. [ID92, male aged 30]

Some respondents believed that space considerations were neglected when excluding hydroponic growing. For example, one respondent noted:

The essential problem, the biggest drawback, is that the vast majority of home growers considering the current yearn for urban infill, the majority of home growers are inevitably in 5 or 10 years time going to be hydroponic growers. For sheer space concerns they are not going to be able to grow in their backyards, because loads of them are not going to have backyards. [ID53, male aged 31]

Other respondents seemed to suggest decisions to criminalise hydroponic growing were based on misinformation. For example:

No. I don't see why they should make the distinction between hydroponic and non-hydroponic plants. In my opinion they are basically making the assumption that if you were growing hydroponically that you were purely doing it for distribution. I don't think that's necessarily the case. I think there are a lot of people, myself included, that if growing hydroponically was legal, would do it because ... just taking the entire middle man aspect out of it. [ID32, female aged 32]

Still others voiced objections in terms of personal preference, or a perceived superior product:

Yeah I think it's fair but they could allow hydroponics in I think. [Be]cause hydroponics is like better. I find it better. It doesn't hurt your lungs, doesn't hurt your throat. You don't need as much to smoke so therefore you cut down on your smoking. The only reason I don't like it is [be]cause there's too many chemicals in it but you can grow it without chemicals just with lighting. Lighting and temperature. [ID39, male aged 19]

Although fewer in number, those who believed that hydroponic growing should be excluded included:

It's probably warranted just for the fact of the mental health aspect, and the burden, from the government point of view, the burden that it puts on society. [ID50, male aged 24]

Any hydroponic growing. So do you agree with that?

Yeah, yeah. Cos you're not actually just putting a seed in the ground to grow it that's - well I reckon a herb - you're actually mixing chemical, you're getting set up, you're putting it in the room, you're trying to hide something. [ID76, female aged 37]

Plant limit

Among some twenty-two respondents the proposed plant limit was commented upon. Responses were quite varied. Some simply expressed satisfaction with the 2 plant limit. For example:

I think 2 plants outside would be a good thing. [ID89, male aged 28]

Others identified specific concerns relating to the possible amounts harvestable from each plant. Note below:

If you were growing for your own personal use, you would have more than an ounce around. You can't possibly say I'm gonna grow a one ounce plant, exactly one ounce and have just one ounce on you. So penalties for one ounce above anything above one ounce is, as far as I'm concerned, you can't possibly grow a one ounce plant. Well you can, but you can't guarantee that everyone will turn out a one ounce plant. [ID93, male aged 53]

Because they say possession of 15-30 grams and growing 1 to 2 non-hydro plants, so while that plant is in the ground you are within legal limits; as soon as you harvest that plant you're outside the legal limit. It's a huge trap that a lot of people are going to get caught in and I believe that whoever formulated this plan did it on purpose. [ID11, female aged 50]

Other respondents believed that the complexities in the growing process needed to be taken into consideration. For example:

I don't think they can be governed as simple as 1 to 2 because of course if you grow 10 plants and 3 of them could be males and you have to cut them out, until they're a certain age you're not going to know that. You also might find that out of 8 plants that, out of 20 seeds that you plant, only 5 come up, out of those 5 only 3 of them would make it to maturity and out of those 3, one turns out to be a male. So those factors need to be considered. You can't just have 2 small seedlings and expect to have 2 plants at the end of the year and remain within the law. It's necessary to have larger amounts. [ID64, male aged 34]

Education session

The education session was commented upon by some seventeen respondents. In fifteen cases some level of approval was identified. For example:

Giving a choice of an education session is pretty cool. I mean, it depends what it's going to be, I mean, most people who smoke know what the dangers are. [ID72, male aged 18]

What do you think is fair about it?

Well they are going to an education session, but at least its keeping the little people that aren't having much in possession and growing 1 or 2 hydro plants to a fine and keeping them out of the courts.

So you think the fine system, as well as the option of...going to an education session is fair?

Yes I do. [ID15, female aged 35]

Other respondents were not certain if the educational aspect would have much of an impact. For example, one respondent who believed there might be an underlying motive to encourage people to cease using cannabis commented:

No I don't think you should even get a warning cause your going to keep, I mean, having a \$100 fine or an education session isn't going to make the person quit I don't think, if that's what they are trying to do. [ID12, male aged 21]

One respondent expressed opposition to the education session as an alternative to paying a fine:

No I think you should pay the fine. You should still have to pay the fine. [Be]cause if you're in possession of 15 grams of marijuana you've got a bit of money. You can afford to pay the fine. [ID7, male aged 33]

Personal use amounts

Among some seventeen respondents the perceived fairness of amounts of cannabis eligible for an infringement personal notice were discussed. Views were varied and the following excerpts are illustrative:

Totally stupid, there's no point, I mean people might, might not enjoy purchasing marijuana often so they might buy an ounce, they might have to sitting there for quite a long time and might not be heavy users and just because they have that in their house they going to get this massive fine, you know. [ID1, male aged 28]

I don't believe that the amounts they have quoted are fair. 2 plants or what is it? 30 grams? An ounce? That's not really fair. I think you should be allowed to have more than an ounce for yourself. [ID90, male aged 28]

In general, the amounts are more than enough for any one person. [ID58, male aged 58]

I believe they should increase the amount, before they go and make a criminal conviction and fine, they should increase the amount you can possess. [ID51, female aged 30]

Revenue raising

Some nine respondents suggested that the proposed changes in legislation had more to do with revenue raising than issues concerning cannabis users. For example:

This is all just for self gain and for [the] economy. [ID4, male aged 20]

I think it's stupid. On one hand they are saying it's not an offence worthy enough to be a criminal offence, but we still want to get a dollar out of it somewhere. [ID99, male aged 50]

Community impact of legislative changes

During the interviews respondents were queried about whether they believed the proposed legislative changes would have any impact on aspects of the community.

Impact on use of cannabis generally

Some 50 of the 57 respondents who commented suggested that there would be no impact on cannabis use generally. In many cases cannabis use, or lack thereof, was understood to occur for reasons separate from any legislative framework in place. For example:

Don't think it would have any bearing at all. [ID5, male aged 39]

None.

And why not?

Because people don't - it doesn't make a difference. It's not gonna change. [ID48, female aged 42]

Nothing, nothing at all, I don't think people give a toss about the law to be honest with you. [ID79, female aged 22]

Because most people who smoke it now aren't going to suddenly smoke more just because it's not illegal. And you will always get people who don't want it, and they don't want it because they don't like the way it makes them feel. And they are not going to take it up because it's legal. [ID80 female aged 28]

I think that the use in the community may increase slightly, but I don't think there will be a huge difference. [ID83, female aged 26]

I think the market for cannabis users - population of cannabis users would not be altered by the fact that it would be slightly, technically less of a criminal offence. What I'm trying to say is, people who smoke mull smoke mull and people who get drunk get drunk.

[ID86, male aged 56]

Others suggested similar levels of caution would exist thus translating into a lack of change in behaviour with the proposed changes:

Everyone would still have to be on their toes, obviously, of they didn't want to get into trouble. [ID3, male aged 47]

I think there would be more that would take a bit more caution.

Why do you think that?

Well because like people don't want to be paying fines all the time I don't think. And people don't want to go to jail. [ID10, male aged 42]

There's still fines, I mean the only thing is it's become decriminalised so people will keep their same routines of keeping it sort of secret, we don't want to go to these court session things, the actual discretion will remain the same. [ID29, male aged 23]

In addition to exploring the way in which such changes might impact cannabis use on a general level, respondents were also asked to consider the way in which it might affect use in other ways. Two important themes were the potential impact on young people and cannabis use in public spaces.

Impact on the young

Some 43 respondents commented on whether the proposed changes would impact on young people in a negative manner.

Twenty-six people did not believe that the proposed changes would have an adverse impact on cannabis use by young people. Specifically, they did not feel such changes would encourage use among young people.

What about more use among young people?

Not if it remains against the law for people under 18 [years]. Which it should. [ID38, female aged 19]

A small number of respondents suggested that cannabis use was related to factors other than legislation. For example:

No more use. I mean kids are going to use it anyway ... People use it anyway and they know that you go to court. [ID28, female aged 27]

I think its gonna be the same as other kids grow up, you know, all the children these days know about pot. If their parents don't smoke it their parents tell them about it. So most kids make their own decision as to whether they're going to or not. [ID19, male aged 22]

Other respondents suggested that such changes might discourage use among young people. For example:

I think all in all it will reduce the amount of use amongst young people, I'd like to think through education. [ID27, female aged 20]

Another believed the proposed changes would remove the rebellious element of cannabis smoking thus acting as a disincentive:

It's going to make less people be trying it because a lot of people only get into smoking pot because it is illegal and ... shit – 'Can't let my mum find out I'm smoking pot'. Oh sweet. [ID18, male aged 16]

Eleven of the 43 respondents who commented on whether the laws would have an impact on the young believed that there might be an impact in terms of encouraging young people to use cannabis. For example, one respondent believed that more young people might try to grow cannabis plants thus increasing their use:

I think so [be]cause they will have more opportunity to get their hands on more of the bush weed than the hydro. I feel that young teenagers will be growing [ID30, female aged 28]

Another respondent commented that the changes might promote a more open environment in terms of experimenting among young people. However, he did not appear to suggest that this would translate into more use among young people:

I think it might just make it a bit more open for first timers, stuff like that, you know, maybe young schoolies and stuff like that. It might... but besides that, I don't think it will affect it. [ID73, male aged 20]

One respondent believed cannabis might be easier to obtain as a result of the proposed changes thus translating into people beginning to use cannabis at a younger age:

If it's becoming more easy to get obviously this is going to change some people's perspective toward it. If they go from being small time dealers they're going to be like well, 'I've got this much on me I'll start selling it to these people', and then they'll start, its just going to make people start smoking weed younger. [ID41, male aged 18]

Others were less certain of the potential impact, specifically whether the laws would encourage use among young people. For example,

I'm very anti children using any drugs. Yeah, they might, I'm not sure on that one. [ID58, male aged 38]

Another respondent suggest that young people might experiment with cannabis, but at the same time believed the proposed changes might also remove some of the rebellious aspect of using cannabis:

Well it might take a little bit of the stigma out of it if it's not deemed such an illegal drug. Especially younger people, where if it's legal they might - well they possibly will try it but it won't have that stigma attached to it of being illegal so they won't do it for a buzz of breaking the law. [ID87, male aged 40]

Impact on public use of cannabis

Among some 44 respondents the issue of whether the proposed changes would impact on the public use of cannabis was discussed.

Twenty-four of these expressed the view that the changes in legislation would not encourage more use of cannabis in public places. For example:

It's not publicly acceptable really. [ID4, male aged 20]

I don't think so. I think with people who do smoke it's become so ingrained to be private about your use that I don't think that will make a great deal of difference. It's not like they're legalising it. [ID32, female aged 32]

Some 20 of the 44 who expressed a view regarding impact of the proposed changes on public use believed that there could be somewhat more use of cannabis in public. In many cases it was believed that people might become more relaxed about their use which could result in somewhat more use in public places. For example:

Do you think there might be more use in public places?

Yeah, possibly. [ID77, male aged 46]

Yes, I do. But that's about it. People that are currently using can be a little bit more relaxed using it in public. But people that don't use it now, I don't think that's gonna promote, you know, 'everybody gets stoned'. [ID27, female aged 20]

Impact on personal cannabis use

No Impact on Personal Use

Some seventy-nine respondents identified the proposed changes as having little impact on their cannabis use. Those who discussed the reasons for an anticipated lack of impact identified various reasons.

The current system is not having any impact so the new system is not going to change it very much. I still don't want to get caught. [ID85, male aged 32]

In many cases it was suggested that their use occurred for reasons that were distinct from any legislative system. For example:

Just because [if] it was legalised, that it's alright for me to do it in society, I'm happy with how often I'm doing it now. It wouldn't make me do it anymore. If speeding was legalised I wouldn't go around speeding if it was unsafe. You know what I mean?

[ID43, male aged 26]

No, that wouldn't really change. It depends on the price, if the price did really go down then I probably would smoke a little bit more, but then you can only smoke as much as... there is no point having bongs and bongs, it's a waste. [ID57, male aged 33]

No it won't affect me.

So why would it not affect you?

Basically because I'm aware there is a law present now but I don't really consider cannabis that much of a problem. [ID67, male aged 21]

To tell you the truth, not much. I think my use pattern is fairly established and if I could break it, I'd do it for myself, not for that. [ID97, male aged 23]

No. No the law has very rarely been a consideration in my pattern of use and my pattern of use is stable. [ID90, male aged 28]

In a few cases it was believed there might be an impact. For example, one respondent suggested his use might increase:

Well if I grew 2 plants I'd probably end up smoking more.

Because it's more available?

Because the penalties are more lenient. You're more susceptible to, you know, growing a couple of plants for instance. [ID59, female aged 34]

Another respondent believed that his overall use might decrease as a result of the changes:

And that may actually, well it may actually reduce my use. Because if I've got the two plants, and I'm relying on those two plants to maybe get me through until harvest, I may smoke a bit of leaf here and there, it would probably reduce my overall usage.

[ID95, male aged 30]

Location of Use

Twenty-two respondents commented on whether they might use cannabis in public settings more often. For 20 respondents the proposed changes would have no impact on where they smoked. According to two respondents the fact of cannabis remaining illegal meant that their location of use would not change:

Because you can still get fined, so I'm not going to exactly smoke it willy-nilly everywhere. [ID80, female aged 28]

Because it still is illegal, it's just not as illegal [ID39, male aged 19]

Another respondent suggested that where she chose to use cannabis was based on personal factors as opposed to cannabis laws:

No I don't think so, I feel comfortable using at home, and in an evening, end of the day sort of thing, and that's not going to change you know, no matter what. I'm not going to go out and smoke in public and do it all the time, sort of thing, so I don't think it will change anything.

[ID62, female aged 41]

Very few respondents commented that their location of use might change. For example, one respondent commented that he might be more likely to use cannabis at parties. Note below:

It might affect where. So, like, parties and stuff, because if it's more socially acceptable, then you might be alright to sit down and smoke a bong. [ID50, male aged 24]

Reduce stress associated with using

One of the themes which emerged in discussions focussing on the community and individual was the issue of how cannabis users felt about their use. In particular, this referred to the stigma associated with using cannabis and the worry associated with the prospect of being caught. Thirty-two respondents suggested that the proposed legislative changes would impact this issue in a positive manner.

People who smoke will be less worried. [ID35, female aged 25]

I don't think it will encourage anybody to increase their use whatsoever. I think it may make you less paranoid when you are going to score a little baggy or even up to an ounce. [ID55, female aged 39]

I'm not necessarily suggesting they will use more but they'd [be] more be more open about it, [a] bit more relaxed about it. [ID63, male aged 58]

I don't think it will have a major effect whatsoever on the use, really. I don't see that there will be much of a difference. It's just the people would feel easier knowing that they are not going to be arrested, or lose their job, that sort of thing. That's the only benefit that I can see. [ID99, male aged 50]

Intent to grow cannabis under the proposed scheme

Respondents were asked whether they would grow cannabis under the proposed legal changes. Overall, 72.0% (n=70, missing = 3) said they intended to. A larger proportion of those who had ever grown the drug (82.6%, n=57) compared to those who had not (46.4%, n=13) said that they intended to grow cannabis under the proposed changes ($\chi^2_{\text{continuity}} = 11.241$, df=1, p=.001). However, there were no significant differences between the respondents who had ever grown hydroponic cannabis and those who had not with regards to the proportion that intended to grow cannabis under the proposed scheme (73.7% Vs 71.8%) ($\chi^2_{\text{continuity}} = 0.000$, df=1, p=1.00).

Overall, 84.1% of the 69 (missing = 1) respondents who said that they intended to grow cannabis under the proposed laws said that they would grow under the 2 plant limit. All of the 13 who had never grown cannabis said this was the case, as opposed to 80.4% of those who had previously grown the drug. Among those who had ever grown, nine (16.1%) respondents said they intended to grow 3-9 plants, and 2 said they would grow 10 or more plants.

Overall, 81.2% (n=50) of those who said they intended to grow cannabis under the proposed scheme said that they would only be growing non-hydro cannabis. Among those who had never grown cannabis 100.0% (n=13) said that they would only be growing non-hydroponic cannabis under the proposed scheme, as opposed to 75.4% of those who had ever grown the drug, however, this difference failed to reach significance ($\chi^2_{\text{continuity}} = 2.604$, df=1, p=.107). Among those who had never grown hydro cannabis 94.9% (n=74) said that they would only be growing non-hydroponic cannabis under the proposed scheme, as opposed to 47.4% (n=10) of those who had ever grown the drug hydroponically. This difference was significant ($\chi^2_{\text{continuity}} = 24.203$, df=1, p=.000). There was a significant difference between those who only

intended to grow non-hydro plants and those who intended to grow at least some hydro plants in terms of the number of plants they intended to grow ($\chi^2 = 6.095$, $df=2$, $p=.047$). A higher proportion (89.3%) of those who only intended to grow non-hydro cannabis said they would be growing under the 2 plant limit compared to those who were intending to grow at least some hydro (61.5%). These results are presented in Figure 56. Overall 72.5% ($n=50$) of those ($n=69$, missing = 1) who intended to grow cannabis under the proposed scheme said they were only intending to grow 1-2 non-hydro plants, that is they would grow within the limits eligible for an infringement notice.

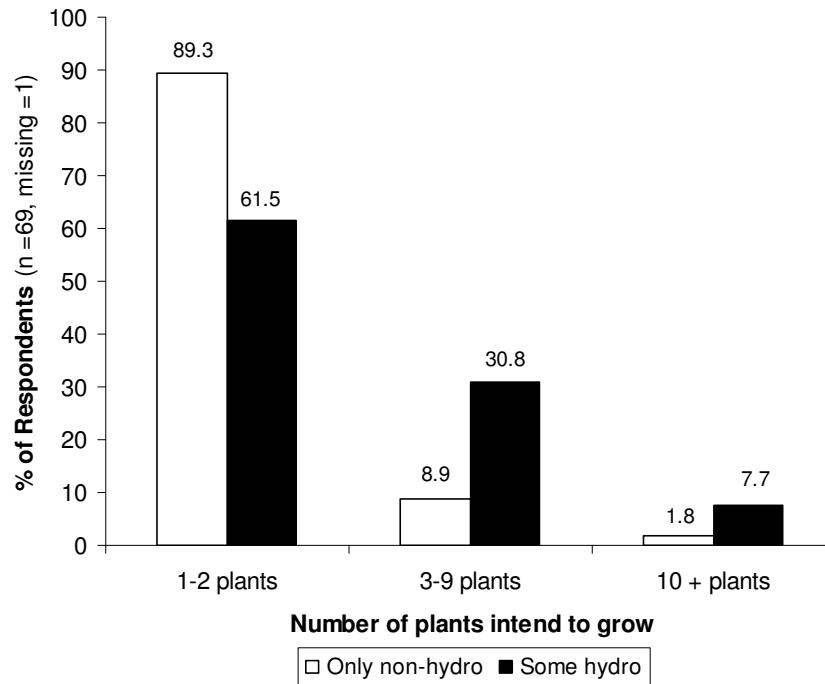


Figure 56: Number of plants intend to grow under proposed scheme by type of cannabis intend to grow

Impact on personal growing by current non-growers

Sixty-seven respondents who currently did not grow cannabis commented on whether they might grow cannabis as a result of the legislative changes.

Forty-three respondents discussed intending to grow cannabis for personal use. The following quotes are typical:

Would you reconsider growing it under this new system, if you had the place to do it?

Yeah, I would.

What method and how many would you grow?

I'd probably grow ... two non-hydro plants.

[ID50, male aged 24]

Definitely. I would do it.

Okay, so how much would you grow and what method would you use?

Two in the backyard. [ID72, male age 18]

I haven't got a green thumb for a start so I'm not capable of cultivation. And I don't know where to get any seeds, that sort of thing. I don't know enough about growing, but maybe I might. My girlfriend will probably grow it...

How many plants would you grow?

Probably one, maybe two, certainly no more. [ID63, male age 58]

Oh probably. Cos it means you can put it in a decent spot and watch it grow.

So would you consider growing within the limit?

I'd grow within the limit. I always do everything within the law. [ID85, male age 32]

According to some twenty-one people the proposed changes would not result in attempting to grow cannabis. Some respondents discussed the level of risk as being too great to consider growing cannabis in any context. For example:

With my mum hanging around I would just be constantly worried that she'd find it and, I also have teenage boys and I you know, you just don't know how much they know and if they start talking then it would get through the school.

Okay, so too much of a risk for you?

Too much of a risk yeah.

With these changes would you reconsider growing?

No. [ID30, female aged 29]

Other respondents identified various reasons including a lack of space or interest. Note below:

Personally I wouldn't want to get busted with a plant. If it was... completely legal, like for me to grow hydroponic plants and stuff, I probably would, but it's just easier [not to bother]; I don't have the space; I'm not much of a green thumb. I prefer people that are best at it to do it. [ID96, female age 32]

Do you think the new system will affect whether or not you grow?

I don't grow. I never have.

Do you think that will change?

No, I can't see myself bothering. [ID82, female age 24]

Impact on personal growing by current cannabis growers

Some twelve respondents identified that the laws would not result in them changing their current cannabis growing practices. The following excerpts are illustrative:

I'm not phased whatsoever. It's illegal to grow now, even if it isn't hydroponics, you know, what's the difference? Outdoor growing is legal and indoor growing is illegal, it's still illegal whether you like it or not.

So you will continue to use hydroponic equipment?

Yep.

So at any one time, currently, you've got three plants growing?

Yes. [ID70, male aged 22]

Not really.

And why do you think it won't change?

Because I'm not a serious grower. Good luck finding any THC in any of my plants.
[ID52, male age 30]

But you would grow within the limits?

That's right.

So there wouldn't be any changes for you as a grower?

No. [ID46, male aged 29]

Some eight respondents suggested there would be an impact in terms of making an effort to conform to the two plant limit specified in the legislation. For example, one respondent who currently grew one plant suggested he might increase the number of plants he grew but would strive to remain within the upper limit permitted:

I might grow one more, or something, I mean one more is not going to make a difference, I mean it's only one more plant.

So what is the total that you would grow, over two? Or would you keep within the limits.

I'd rather keep it as two. [ID65, male aged 18]

Another respondent who currently grew cannabis plants commented that he intended to reduce the number of plants he currently grew in response to the proposed plant limit:

You would try to grow within the civil penalty limit?

I will go home and kill one plant. [ID17, male aged 32, current grower]

Six respondents who already grew cannabis hydroponically commented on their reasons for continuing to grow by this method. Their reasons for doing so were varied and included factors such as control over the growing process, ease of concealment, and a preference for hydroponically grown cannabis. Note below:

I'm still not going to stop growing hydroponically, because I have more success hydroponically, and for me to stick two plants in my front or back yard and take care of them

for 3 months for somebody else to rip them off, I'm back at what? I'm back at nothing. So I know that if I grow it hydroponically, they are going to be safe, I can take measures to make it safe by locking my doors. And that's the only reason why I grow indoors. There is no other reason why anybody else grows indoors!

[ID74, male age 53, current hydroponic grower]

Another respondent who preferred hydroponically grown cannabis did intend to continue growing by that method but did nevertheless comment that she would strive to grow small numbers due to the associated penalties.

Do you think these changes will have any impact in terms of your growing?

No. Because we like hydro, costs too much to buy it elsewhere.

So do you think you will grow the same amount of plants that you already do or will that change at all?

I think it would decrease and wouldn't increase.

Why might it decrease?

Because of the penalties.

And you would continue with hydro because that's what you prefer?

Yeah.

[ID44, female age 33 current hydroponic grower]

Impact on cannabis market

A number of interesting themes emerged from discussion with respondents concerning the impact of the proposed legislative changes upon aspects of the cannabis market. However, because this was qualitative data and not all participants engaged in this topic in a similar fashion, discussion here is limited to the themes which emerged, rather than the proportion of respondents who discussed each theme.

Distinct Markets for Cannabis and Other drugs

One of the possible impacts commented on by many respondents was the possible creation of distinct markets between cannabis and other drugs.

For thirty-four respondents the cannabis and other drug markets were already distinct. For example:

There's already distinct markets. You buy what you want. [ID28, female aged 27]

I think it's separate anyway. [ID48, female aged 42]

Yeah, you don't usually get them from the same place. No. Usually cannabis sellers only sell cannabis and that's all. [ID66, male aged 24]

Fourteen respondents commented that the proposed changes might work to create distinct markets between cannabis and other drugs. The following excerpts are illustrative:

I think it will stop a lot of the association with guys who sell cannabis to support their amphetamine habit. [ID49, male aged 46]

If Joe-average can grow their own two plants in the backyard, and two plants at a time, there should be no need to associate with the bigger growers. And it seems normally that the bigger growers are attached with other drugs, so then you don't have to associate with that. [ID55, female aged 39]

Twelve respondents stated that in their opinion there would be no impact on the issue of creating distinct markets as a result of such changes. Discussions concerning this issue varied a great deal. For example, one respondent remarked that the proposed changes would have little impact overall. Note below:

It's a pretty piss weak change. It's not anything major. [ID96, female aged 32]

Another participant responded by arguing against the assumption that cannabis use results in other drug use:

Well that's not going to be affected at all by any of these law changes in relation to prohibition, they are two separate issues. I get angry with the fact that people say that marijuana use leads onto harder drugs. It stopped me going onto harder drugs, because it works on me. If it didn't work, I probably would have gone onto heroin or something like that. It's because cannabis did work for me that I stopped using. [ID68, male aged 27]

Changes in violence and rip offs

Fifty-six respondents commented on whether the proposed changes would impact the levels of violence and rip offs associated with the drug market.

In twenty-five cases it was believed that there would be no impact. In some cases this was attributed to a perceived absence of violence associated with the cannabis market generally.

And you think the violence aspect will remain the same?

[T]here's not really much violence actually. I don't know if there's actually any violence at all. [ID8, male aged 22]

Do you think it would have an effect on the level of violence and rip offs associated with the drug market?

I don't think there is really much violence. [ID67, male aged 21]

Others suggested that issues of violence were related to factors other than drug use. According to one respondent,

I mean they're entrenched in some poverty issue and they need money...

So they will be doing it [violence and rip offs] for other reasons?

Yep.

[ID22, female age 32]

Impact on large scale supply of cannabis

Among fourteen people it was believed that such changes would impact in some way the organised distribution of cannabis. For example:

Yeah the big guys aren't gonna get as much of the deal.

[ID59, female aged 34]

Yeah it would probably collapse it [the market] quite a bit because it's so easy to grow.

[ID89, male aged 28]

Four respondents believed there would be minimal impact on the organised distribution of cannabis as a result of these changes. For example:

No, not for the big dealers, the big growers it won't.

[ID10, male aged 42]

Impact on personal market participation

Respondents were asked to consider the way in which the proposed changes might impact their involvement in the cannabis market.

No impact

Among those 93 who discussed the issue, thirty respondents believed that there would be no impact on their personal involvement with the market. Although many did not discuss why they thought there would be no change, some respondents highlighted underlying economic factors. Note below:

Not a lot.

And why do you believe it will be the same?

I haven't got the money to buy any more. Haven't money to grow.

[ID84, male aged 19]

Nah. I grow my own or buy what I can afford. It's just what is. That's not going to change anything.

[ID99, male aged 50]

Sharing within small peer group

Eighteen respondents suggested they might share cannabis with a small peer group. The following excerpts are typical in the sense that any sharing or distributing would occur only within the context of friends.

The only reason why I'd sell it to best friends. You know, if he wanted to buy a bit of [cannabis] off me, I'd give him a bit of [cannabis].

Okay, but you wouldn't go into business?

That's what I mean I wouldn't go into business. No way. It's not a business.

[ID4, male aged 20]

Yeah personally I think my mates would have their own in their back yards as well. So I wouldn't have to supply them and they wouldn't have to supply me. If anything it would be my crops out is yours in? Yep, okay, trade off give me an ounce now and I'll give you one when mine is ready. That sort of thing. [ID19, male aged 22]

I'll find some for a friend of mine, you know, helping a friend out. It's a subtle difference. [ID68, male aged 27]

Buy less often

Fourteen respondents believed they might purchase cannabis less often as a result of the proposed changes. For example:

Possibly. Well if I was growing it when I could, I would grow it. But I'd like to still buy some hydro stuff, because it's a lot stronger. [ID80, female aged 28]

You would grow your own more than you do now?

I would probably be more inclined to make a conscious effort to grow my own.

So more growing and less buying?

Yeah.

And if you did buy under this new system, what amounts do you think you would buy?

It would change. My maximum would be an ounce. You would stay under that?

Yeah. I've done with [pounds]! [ID69, female aged 40]

Selling for profit

There were 73 respondents who commented on whether they would consider selling for profit under the proposed scheme. Of these, 20 (27%) said they would consider selling cannabis under the proposed scheme.

Twelve of these were current sellers and would continue to so do despite the proposed changes. For example:

I don't know. The supplying and selling, well it wouldn't make much difference [be]cause you still get in trouble over that.

So you'd be less scared?

Yeah. [ID56, female aged 19]

Another respondent who supplies noted that he would continue to do so despite any changes in the legislation although his selling might be affected:

Well I'd have less customers. Cos they'd be growing their own. Which everybody should be anyway. As far as I'm concerned. [Be]cause if you grow your own, you know what's gone into it.

Do you think it might affect your business in regard to the weights that you sell, in the ranges that you sell?

No. I would sell it in little bags. Never change that method. I never want to go into selling big bags of it.
[ID93, male aged 53]

Four respondents who have sold cannabis in the past, but were not current sellers, discussed their intentions to consider selling again under the new system. For example, one respondent discussed selling cannabis in response to a perceived increase in demand for high quality cannabis:

I'd probably start selling again.

So you'd sell more under this new system?

Yeah. I could sell it real cheap, at high quality, flood the market and bring the prices down. Would make me some extra cash in the process.

Would that decision be related to the changes here?

I don't know, it might do, it probably would, because there would be a lot of shit [cannabis] around.

So there would be a demand?

A demand for good mull [cannabis].
[ID70, male aged 22]

Another respondent suggested he would supply cannabis regardless of the system. In particular, his decision to do so would be based on personal circumstances. Note below:

Would you reconsider supplying under this new system?

Well, the system doesn't affect it, but if I became short on cash, I would do it.
[ID73, male aged 20]

Four respondents discussed their interest in beginning to sell in relation to the proposed changes, that is these were people who had never sold cannabis, but said they would consider doing so under the proposed scheme. For example, one respondent would consider selling hydroponically grown cannabis based on her belief that it is of a better quality than non-hydroponically grown. Note below:

Yeah it would definitely be more beneficial...to me because they'd know that you've got the hydro they'll come to you...before they go to the bush people.

So they would know that you have good quality stuff?

Yeah, they just shop around till they find where they can get the best deals...
So there will be a lot of poor quality stuff out there?

Yeah I think so.

Do you think that you might try to...sell amounts within the civil penalty ranges?

...I don't think that I would go more than an ounce at a time anyway...I think if I had more than an ounce it would look too obvious that you're going to sell it.
[ID30, female aged 28]

Another respondent expressed an interest in growing within the civil penalty limits, but also using his personal source to sell for profit:

I mean if I grew ... I would probably grow a plant and then I'd supply that, but other than that, no.

Why would you decide to supply?

So I can make some money.

And if you were staying within the limits, you'd feel better about that?

Exactly. [ID24, female age 17]

There were 53 respondents who indicated they would not consider selling cannabis under the proposed scheme.

Twenty respondents suggested that would not supply simply because they had no interest in doing so. For example:

Why don't you supply cannabis now?

I haven't really thought about it.

Just not something you are interested in?

No.

So with this new system would that have any affect on your decision to supply?

No I don't think so. I suppose it would get me out of my financial bind but that's about all. If I looked at it that's the only reason why.

Do you think that there is a possibility that you would reconsider under this new system?

No. [ID13, female age 47]

I have no interest in it whatsoever. Just as long as I'm able to have a little bit from time to time. [ID20, male age 50]

Do you think you might reconsider with these changes? Why not?

[Be]cause I'm happy going to work and earning an honest living. [ID43, male age 26]

Another respondent who had sold in the past explained his lack of interest in supplying under the proposed system as follows:

Why don't you actually supply cannabis at present?

I have no need to. The only reason I ever did it was for monetary gain.

Would you reconsider supplying cannabis under this new system?

No. I'm more likely to now if I was going to. [ID97, male age 23]

For 17 respondents an avoidance of the lifestyle associated with selling cannabis emerged as a reason for not supplying.

It's too much of a hassle dealing with people and people phoning and coming to your house, it's not something I want to get involved with. [ID7, male aged 33]

The hassle of dealing in marijuana is too great and it's not a regulated business so there is no protection.

Would the new system have any effect on you?

No. [ID92, male aged 30]

Dealing in drugs doesn't really appeal to me. I'd like to have the money but I think of all the other stuff that comes with it. Not so much the threat of getting caught but just people constantly ringing you up for things and that sort of thing. [ID67, male age 21]

The fact that cannabis is illegal was discussed in the context of supply by fourteen respondents.

Why don't you currently sell it?

Well, basically because I'm not growing, but basically because if you are selling, it's dealing. But yeah, it's criminal penalties basically.

You wouldn't reconsider supplying cannabis under this new system?

Oh no, no. [ID23, male aged 31]

And you wouldn't reconsider supplying?

No. To me it's a narcotic and I would get time. [ID34, male aged 52]

Eight respondents suggested the issue of risk as a reason for not becoming involved in the supply of cannabis. The following excerpts are illustrative:

Why don't you supply cannabis at the present?

Because the laws scare me. I wanna keep my house.

Would that change under the new system?

No. [ID87, male aged 40]

Why do you not supply?

Because of my career.

And would this have any impact on your decision to supply?

No. Can't be bothered any more. [ID71, female aged 24]

Seven respondents suggested that ethical or moral issues were underlying their non-involvement in the supply of cannabis.

Number one, I'm not in it for the money, and number two, I wouldn't know where the end product was going and I just don't feel right about that. [ID14, male aged 52]

...[T]hat's my responsibility if I'm gonna harm my body. I don't want to hurt other people. [ID41, male aged 18]

Impact of changes on willingness to seek treatment

A total of 93 respondents discussed whether or not there might be an enhanced willingness to seek treatment in the context of the proposed legislative changes. Of these, 75 (81%) respondents said that either they, or cannabis users in general, would be more willing to seek treatment as a result of the proposed changes. Twenty-nine respondents stated they would not be more willing to seek treatment in the context of such changes. It should be noted at this point that the numbers in the two cases do not add up to the stated total of 93. This is due to the fact that in some cases respondents did not see the changes affecting their personal situation, but could nevertheless see that the changes might positively impact the willingness of others to seek treatment.

Criminality as disincentive

Thirty-four respondents suggested an increased willingness due to the removal of some of the criminality associated with cannabis use. The following excerpts are illustrative:

I think that probably the average person maybe slightly more willing because then they wouldn't feel that it's such... you know "I'll get busted, they will bust me for it". [ID2, male aged 48]

More willing.

Why?

Because you are not necessarily seen as criminal, which can have a more negative perspective. Because you want to fight the system at the moment because it is criminal, rather than join it, and say "oh well I am a criminal, I'll come to your drug court, your rehabilitation, education session". [ID9, female aged 33]

Yeah. I suppose I would.

Would that be related to the new system?

Well, I suppose because they are being a bit more lenient here, I suppose that it would probably help me thinking "Ok I can turn to someone for help". [ID60, male aged 21]

Other respondents framed the issue in the context of negative attitudes, or the stigma associated with being a cannabis user. The following excerpts are illustrative:

I suppose I would, yeah. You wouldn't feel, [you'd] get labelled. [ID98, female aged 30]

If I had a really chronic problem, yeah I would say... only because it seems that it's getting treated better in society, if you know what I mean? People are starting to think about it as what it is, not some devil's plant. [ID81, male aged 25]

Educational component of proposed changes

Some twelve respondents discussed their views of the educational aspect of the proposed legislative changes. In all cases an enhanced receptiveness to seeking treatment was identified. For example, one respondent suggested that for those who are apprehended the education session might result in heightened awareness of aspects of their cannabis use:

I think usually if you have a problem with your use you tend to get caught more easily because, you know, people do want to get caught if they're doing something that they don't want to be doing. So the drug education for them, you know. A lot of people who do drugs that don't know about it would probably you know have a good look and say "maybe I do maybe I don't". [ID19, male aged 22]

Other respondents suggested that the changes could work to increase awareness of existing services for cannabis users. Note below:

I think this system would highlight that there is something out there for me to get to if I wanted help. The education session ... I don't know what the current system is but I don't think there's as much ... I think you have to go out and get that counselling whereas the law is saying, okay well we can help you if you need to know about what you're doing. [ID25, male age 37]

Yep, I think that they would know that it's a recognised problem, and they would see that there are avenues for them if they wish to go there. [ID79, female aged 22]

Would seek treatment regardless of legal framework

Among thirty respondents it was suggested that their willingness to seek treatment was unaffected by whatever legal framework existed. Specifically, they would seek treatment should they require it. However, in a small number of cases it was believed that the proposed changes might result in more accessible services. Note below:

I'd still seek help. It would probably be easier to get with this new system. [ID85, male aged 32]

It wouldn't make me more willing, but it would make it easier. [ID50, male aged 24]

Would not seek treatment

Some twenty-nine people responded that they would not be more likely to seek treatment in the context of the proposed legislative changes.

In nineteen cases respondents' discussions suggested a rejection of expert forms of knowledge. For some this was expressed in terms of a lack of confidence in what existing services offered:

As I say, I'd purely do it for myself. And I don't see anything in the new system which would encourage me to go to anywhere. I don't think a lot of the drug education stuff is relevant to drug people anyway. I know the dangers. Just cos I choose to ignore them doesn't mean I don't know them. [ID97, male aged 23]

For others it was more about not seeing their use within a problem framework, or one that would require the intervention of professional services:

Not really I mean its something that I do enjoy doing. [ID1, male aged 28]

I can quit if I want. [ID33, male aged 20]

Willingness to seek treatment and legal system are unrelated

In seven cases the legal system and willingness to seek help were identified as being separate issues. The following excerpts are illustrative:

I don't think treatment is related to conviction. I think it's personal. [ID35, female aged 25]

It's separate. Going and getting help is completely [separate] from what the legal implications are in case you get caught. [ID27, female aged 20]

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like many other studies of hidden behaviours such as illicit drug use, this study employs convenience sampling techniques as it is not possible to randomly sample cannabis users. The illegality of cannabis use means the characteristics of the population of cannabis users cannot be reliably determined. Although this suggests caution in generalizing from the results of this study to cannabis users as a whole, the use of a variety of recruitment approaches reduces the likelihood of sampling bias. The use of similar recruitment strategies in the post-phase of the research will support the validity of the pre-post comparisons made.

THE SAMPLE

The convenience sampling strategy of recruiting through newspaper advertising, flyers and by snowballing was successful at locating 100 regular cannabis users. Although to be eligible for the study respondents only had to be using cannabis on a weekly or more frequent basis for at least the last three months, the majority of the sample were daily users of the drug and most used many times per day.

As noted in the introduction it was the heavy and more regular users of the drug who were the target of this study as they are at a higher risk of developing the adverse effects of cannabis, in particular dependence, were best placed to comment on the effect of the proposed changes on the cannabis market and were best positioned to comment on the proposed changes under the CIN scheme. The sample recruited met all of these aims.

Demographics

The sample comprised 67 males and 33 females with a mean age of 32.2 years. Over half (n=56) of the sample were single, 23 were divorced or separated and the remaining 20 were married or in de facto relationships. Forty-one participants had children and 21 participants indicated that their child(ren) lived with them.

Forty-six participants had completed some post-secondary education: either a trade or certificate/diploma or a degree, including five with post-graduation qualifications. Of the remainder, 50 had completed year 10 and 24 had also completed year 12 education

Sixty-one participants stated that they were currently engaged in paid employment 14 participants were students, 9 were engaged in home duties and 1 had retired. Twenty participants stated they were unemployed and 11 were receiving a sickness benefit/pension.

Some 35% of the sample earned not more than \$12 000, 34% earned between \$12,001 and \$30,000, and the remainder (30%) earned more than \$30,000

DRUG USE

Cannabis use

Some 49% of respondents had already used cannabis on the day of interview, but none were very affected at the time of interview.

The mean age of first use of cannabis was 16 years (range=7 to 30). Seventy-three percent of the sample used cannabis at least once a day, including 28% who usually used cannabis more than three times a day. In a typical day, the sample consumed 7.9 units of cannabis (joints, cones or bongs) on average (sd=8.0, range=0.5 to 40). Most respondents said they were affected by cannabis for 4 hours per day (mean 7.3 hours, range 1-24 hours).

Some 52% mainly smoked cannabis using a bong while 46% mainly smoked cannabis in a joint or pipe. The most common form of cannabis typically used was hydroponic heads (69%) followed by non-hydroponic heads (15%). Curiously 50% of the sample indicated that given the choice they would prefer to use non-hydroponic heads, and only 38% stated that they preferred hydroponically cultivated heads. The preponderance of smoking of hydroponic heads, despite a preference for non-hydroponic heads found in this baseline study will provide a good test of the impact of the Government's exclusion of hydroponic cultivation of cannabis from the CIN scheme. In the post-phase data collection it will be interesting to see whether this results in a shift in the use of hydroponic cannabis and its preference by regular smokers.

At their most recent use prior to the day of interview 70% used in their home and 19% at a friend's home. For most respondents this occurred with friends (50%) or their partner (24%), but 30% used alone. On the most recent use occasion 65% used hydroponically cultivated heads exclusively, and 15% heads cultivated by non-hydroponic means. Some 33% used a bong, 24% used joints or pipes and 16% a bucket bong. Those under 31 were less likely to have used joints or pipes on their last use occasion and were more likely to have used a bucket bong. Changes in patterns of most recent use will likely be the most sensitive measure of changes occurring as a result of the CIN scheme and its related features.

The average score on the Severity of Dependence Scale (Gossop, Darke et al. 1995) was 3.6 (sd=3.7, range=0 to 15). Some 39% of the sample scored 4 or more, which indicates cannabis dependence (Swift, Copeland et al. 1998). Two participants were currently receiving treatment for cannabis-related problems and a further nine had previously received treatment for cannabis-related problems. These findings have relevance for the change in focus in the proposed changes from seeing cannabis use as primarily an issue of criminal law to seeing it primarily a health issue with implications for public education, education of offenders and provision of appropriate treatment for those with cannabis dependence and other cannabis-related problems (Prior, Swensen, Migro, et al., 2002). In this regard the post change study will address the uptake of the education option by those issued a CIN, their level of dependence, and participant feedback on the usefulness of these sessions. The extent to which they are successful at facilitating treatment referral for at least a small proportion of apprehended offenders with cannabis-related health problems will need to be investigated while taking into account the low baseline of treatment participation among this group.

Some 70% of the sample believed it was 'very likely' and 20.0% that it was 'quite likely' that they would use cannabis in the next 12 months and the majority (59%) said the amount they used would remain unchanged. Although questions formally addressing respondent's *readiness to change* (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992) were not asked of these respondents, this result suggests that many of these regular users may be *pre-contemplators*. Given this it is appropriate that interventions with this group have realistic goals of attempting to move individual's decisional balance towards change in use aimed at reducing cannabis-related harm, with use reduction as one strategy to achieve this, rather than overemphasising abstinence as a goal.

Consistent with their status as regular cannabis users, as a group, respondents vastly overestimated the prevalence of cannabis use in the wider Australian community. The mean estimate of the proportion of Australians over the age of 14 who had ever used cannabis, or used in the last 12 months, was 65% and 52% respectively, each significantly higher than the figures from the 2001 National Drug Household Survey of 33% and 12% (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2002). This suggests that challenging the normative beliefs about the prevalence of cannabis use ought to be considered in the education session for those receiving a CIN and probably as part of the public education initiative.

Other drug use

All participants had used alcohol, 82% in the last 4 weeks, and 49% drank two times a week or less. Almost all (96%) had used tobacco, and 63% were current daily smokers. Some 92% of the sample had used an illicit drug other than cannabis, 63% had used in the last 12 months and 43% had used in the last 4 weeks. The most common other drugs used were amphetamines (30%), ecstasy (20%) and benzodiazepines (10%). Some 47% of the sample had injected an illicit drug, 20% had injected in the last 12 months and 12% in the last 4 weeks. Amphetamines were the most common recently injected drug (11%). One-third (33%) indicated that they had attended treatment for alcohol or drug-related problems at some point. Although these frequencies of other drug use and injecting appear high, particularly in comparison to surveys of the general public (e.g. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2002), it should be noted that this sample, many of whom were daily users of cannabis, is likely to have much greater experience with other illicit drugs than the population in general.

CANNABIS-RELATED PROBLEMS AND BENEFITS

Despite being regular smokers of cannabis, 65% of the sample said there were aspects of their cannabis use that bothered them, 96% agreed that there were health problems associated with use of the drug and 73% acknowledged that cannabis use could be associated with social problems. Some 14.0% of the sample believed cannabis was 'very addictive', and 37% thought it 'moderately' addictive. However, 75% of the sample believed cannabis to be 'moderately' or 'very' safe and 85% believed cannabis could deliver health benefits. The relatively high proportion of the sample who said that there were aspects of their cannabis use that bothered them, and the proportion identifying health and social costs of use, provide support for a

motivational interviewing component in the education session for those receiving a CIN.

Some 62% of respondents said that they had personally experienced some health-related problems, most commonly memory impairment (19%) and respiratory problems (15%). There were 43% who said they had experienced some cannabis-related social problems, most commonly anti-social behaviour (9%) and problems associated with the illegality of use (9%). There were 66% of respondents who said they had experienced the benefits of cannabis use, most commonly its ability to reduce stress (57%) followed by its use for pain relief (50%). Again users' personal experiences of cannabis-related health and social problems provides an opportunity for motivational interviewing.

INFLUENCES ON CANNABIS USE

Some 83% of the sample said that they had rules or guidelines about when they would or would not use cannabis and 59% had at some stage attempted to stop using cannabis altogether. There were 43% of the sample who said that 'most' of their friends used cannabis and a further 10% said 'all' their friends used the drug. In contrast 63% said their family disapproved of their cannabis use to some extent. Although 44% said that the prospect of being caught by police for using cannabis worried them, 71% said that such worries did not affect their use of the drug. Asked about the impact on their use if cannabis was made as legal as alcohol, 5% said it would affect their use 'a lot' and 3% said it would have a moderate effect, while 66% said it would have 'no effect at all'. These findings, and those discussed in later sections, point to the importance of 'non-legal' or 'normative' influences on use, such as peer attitudes and behaviour, in contrast to the formal legal factors such as the risk of detection and the legal status of the drug. Such results are consistent with a large body of criminological theory and research, most notably the work of Tyler (1990) and Sherman (1993).

RISKY CANNABIS USE

Respondents were asked to rate the frequency with which they participated in certain risky activities associated with the use of cannabis. Some 36% of the sample said that they used cannabis with other drugs 'often' or 'always'. Mostly this occurred with legal drugs alcohol and tobacco. Indeed 42% said they 'often' or 'always' mixed cannabis with tobacco which is thought to be risky as this mix is thought to be more likely to result in dependence than cannabis alone. Some 64% said that they 'often' or 'always' shared smoking equipment, risky in terms of transmission of disease. Binging on cannabis was not a common occurrence. Although 47% said they had binged with 53% saying they did so rarely, but binging was more common (62%) among those dependent on cannabis. These results suggest there are obvious opportunities for health promotion interventions targeted at cannabis users. Such information will be of interest to the Drug and Alcohol Office of the Department of Health who are responsible for such interventions in WA.

Driving and other hazardous activities

Some 65% of the sample said that over the last 6 months they had driven a vehicle whilst under the influence of cannabis, and 32% had driven whilst smoking the drug. This occurred despite 46% of the sample believing cannabis could affect driving

performance, but only 19% said it could affect *their* driving performance. Some 39% of the sample said had been under the influence while working 26% while studying and 27% while operating machinery. Amongst those who had been under the influence of cannabis whilst studying in the last 6 months on almost every occasion when this occurred the person was smoking cannabis whilst studying.

There are currently new legislative provisions targeted at drug affected driving before the WA Parliament. In part these are aimed at improving detection rates and the capacity of police and the criminal justice system to deal with drug driving offences. One measure of the effectiveness of interventions to target these risky behaviours will be the proportion of regular cannabis users in the post-change phase of the study who report engaging in them.

TREATMENT

Some 33% of the sample had, at some time, sought treatment for drug problems, most commonly heroin (36%), amphetamines (36%) cannabis (30%) and alcohol (15%). At the time of interview only 2% said they were currently in treatment but 68% said that they would seek treatment if they needed it. One possible benefit in the change in legislation coupled with better public education and increased range of treatment options will be a greater willingness of cannabis users to seek treatment. The post-change phase of the study will provide an opportunity to measure the extent to which this has occurred.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS EXISTING LAWS

Consistent with earlier research on apprehended cannabis users in WA and SA (Lenton, Hummeniuk, Heale & Christie, 2000) this sample showed a high level of support for cannabis use being legalised.

Consistent with this, 87% of the 94 respondents who discussed their views of the laws concerning possession of cannabis for personal use believed that personal use of cannabis should not be penalised, that is, it should be legal. Some 83% of the 96 respondents who discussed their views of the laws concerning growing cannabis believed that no penalties should exist for growing small amounts of cannabis for personal use, but many commented that larger amounts should be subject to penalties. Some 75% of 93 respondents who discussed the issue believed that penalties should exist for supplying cannabis. In many instances this was articulated in terms of small versus large-scale supply, noting that organised commercial supply should be penalised.

If you grow it yourself and share with your friends, fine. People who get into a business, that own it purely and simply for money and have no emotion or feeling for it [should be penalised].
[ID86, male aged 56]

Some 74% of respondents believed that penalties were appropriate for driving while affected by cannabis with 70 of 94 respondents expressing this view. Most thought driving whilst affected by cannabis should be treated the same as drink driving.

THE CANNABIS MARKET

Clearly impact on the cannabis market is one of the major issues of interest in the evaluation of the proposed cannabis laws for WA. Changes between the pre- and post-change phases of the research with regards to price, potency and availability will be important to document. So too will be: the proportion of the market supplied by small-scale user-growers, as opposed to large commercial suppliers; the availability of other drugs when people are buying cannabis; the extent to which regular users attempt to self-supply by engaging in growing; and the extent to which regular users get involved in cannabis supply.

As a consequence of the Government's exclusion of hydroponic cultivation of cannabis from the CIN scheme the relative availability of hydroponic and non-hydroponic cannabis, and the prevalence of violence and rip-offs among regular cannabis users will be of particular interest. It has been suggested that back-yard cannabis plants grown outdoors are probably more at risk of theft than hydroponic plants which can be grown indoors. Although the definition of hydroponic cultivation which applies to the interpretation of the term under the CIN scheme as provided in the Second Reading Speech of the Cannabis Control Bill 2003 was "cultivation by placing the roots of the plant in a nutrient solution rather than in soil" (Parliament of Western Australia, 2003, p. 5697). In not referring to artificial lighting this definition would allow that plants grown indoors in soil would be eligible for a CIN.

Results bearing on all these issues are presented in this section on the cannabis market and will constitute an important baseline for the pre-post comparison.

Typical Scoring

Respondents were asked about their typical pattern of purchasing over the last 6 months. Most (53%) purchased cannabis on a weekly or more frequent basis, the average amount spent on the drug being about \$50 per week. Some 53% of the sample saying it typically took 30 minutes or less to score cannabis.

Respondents said they mainly scored from 'a friend' (54%) or 'the dealer's home' (30%), only 8% said their typical source of cannabis was their own 'home grown'. Regarding the original source of this cannabis some 33% said a 'large scale supplier', 31% said a 'backyard user-grower', 8% grew their own and 28% did not know. This is important because it confirms that whilst population based samples show that many people surveyed say they buy from 'a friend', the further opportunity for inquiry in the present study found about a third believe that the original source of this cannabis was organised commercial suppliers. One of the goals of the CIN scheme is to reduce the proportion of cannabis that users claim is sourced from such suppliers. These large scale players are thought to be more likely to be involved in violence and standover tactics and to also be the source of other more hazardous drugs (Prior, Migro, Tomassini et al., 2002). The data presented in this study suggests that there may indeed be some opportunity to shift supply in this manner for at least a third of the sample who say that the original source was large scale criminal suppliers. It will also be of interest to see what proportion of the sample in the post-change sample state that they typically grow their own cannabis and what percent score from small-scale or 'backyard' user-growers.

Overwhelmingly, (80%) respondents said that the cannabis usually obtained over the last 6 months was hydroponic heads, while 14% said non-hydroponic heads. Some 67% said they typically scored a bag or less (bag, foil, stick, gram, a few grams) the next most frequent amount being 'an ounce' (approx. 28 grams) nominated by 15% of respondents. Overall, 99% of the sample said that they typically scored an ounce or less over the last 6 months. The fact that 99% of this sample typically purchased less than an ounce and, 67% not more than a few grams at a time, suggests the limits set for CINs (of up to 15 grams for a \$100 CIN and more than 15 to not more 30 grams for a \$150) are reasonably appropriate. For about two thirds of these participants police would be able to readily ascertain, without weighing the sample, that the amount of cannabis they had in their possession was far less than the cut-off for the CIN at the lower level. There was, however, about a third of the sample who typically scored between a quarter ounce and an ounce. This supports the inclusion of the 30 gram upper limit for a CIN. The most common reasons cited for buying a particular amount were cost or economic factors (62%), that the amount met consumption needs (42%) or availability factors (13%). Some 36% of respondents said that they 'often' or 'always' shared or split deals in the last 6 months, while 49% said they 'never' or 'rarely' did so.

Positive aspects of obtaining cannabis included: the involvement in a relationship with their supplier that was valued as it was characterised by trust and security; the social aspect of scoring cannabis; the quality of the cannabis obtained; and the ease of availability of cannabis. Negative aspects of obtaining cannabis included problems with their supplier; violence or rip-offs while obtaining cannabis; the presence of other drugs; costs involved; being seen at the supplier's place; and transport concerns.

Most recent score

Overwhelmingly respondents described their most recent score as a very matter-of-fact transaction. Of the 70 respondents who commented, in no case could the situation be understood as 'drug pushing'. In contrast there was a clear intent on the part of the respondents to acquire cannabis.

There were not many differences between respondents' description of the parameters of their most recent score and their typical score over the previous 6 months. This probably reflects both the stability in the cannabis market over this period and the process of retrospective recall of such information.

Most frequently, people took an hour or less to score. Some 60% said that their last score was from 'a friend', and the next most numerous response was the 'dealer's home' (30%). With regards to the original source of the cannabis at their most recent score 38% said a 'backyard user-grower', 30% said a 'large scale supplier' and 32% 'did not know'. When asked as to the original source of cannabis at their most recent use, 36% said the cannabis had come from a 'backyard user/grower', 28% a 'large scale supplier', but only 9% indicated that the cannabis they had used had been cultivated by themselves, and 23% 'did not know'. This is quite similar to cannabis users in the WA IDU sample interviewed in the 2002 Illicit Drug Reporting system (Fetherston & Lenton, 2003) where 51% said the cannabis had come from a 'backyard user/grower', 21% a 'large scale supplier', but only 7% indicated that the cannabis had used had been cultivated by themselves, and 24% 'did not know'.

Lenton (2001, 2002) has argued that although previous research suggested that 6% of cannabis users (Adikhari & Summerill 2000), and 9% of first-time convicted cannabis users (Lenton & Heale, 2000) obtained the drug from ‘a dealer’ there were good reasons to believe that in many cases the original source of the cannabis obtained from other sources such as ‘friends’ may be larger scale commercial suppliers (Swift, Copeland & Lenton, 2000). The above findings on the original source of cannabis support this view. They reinforce the importance of considering the shape of the supply-side of market in reducing cannabis-related harm (Lenton, 2001, 2002) as has been done in the WA proposals (Prior, Swensen, Migro, et al., 2002).

Seventy-six percent said that at their most recent score the cannabis was hydroponic heads, while 16% said non-hydroponic heads. Some 59% scored a bag or less (bag, foil, stick, gram) the next most frequent amount was an ounce obtained by 21% at their last score. The three most common reasons for scoring that amount were cost or economic factors (56%), that the amount met consumption needs (35%) or availability factors (18%). The modal amount spent on the last score was \$25 (34%), the next most frequent amount spent was \$50 (22%), followed by \$250 (12%). Just under half (48%) scored for their own use, a similar proportion (49%) to share with others, and two respondents (2%) scored for the purpose of dealing.

Price, potency and availability

According to respondents over the previous 6 months a gram of cannabis cost about \$25 whether it was hydroponic or non-hydroponically grown. An ounce typically sold for \$250 (non-hydro) to \$300 (hydro). Some 80% of the sample said that the price had been stable over the previous 6 months. The majority (59%) of respondents said that the potency of cannabis was ‘high’, and that cannabis was ‘very easy’ (60%) or ‘easy’ (31%) to get over the last 6 months. Cannabis price, purity and availability data for the present study was similar to that from the injecting drug users interviewed as part of the WA Illicit Drug Reporting System (Fetherston & Lenton, 2003, Hargreaves, & Lenton, 2002, 2001) where price has remained stable at \$250 per ounce (in 2003 \$270 for hydro and \$220 for non-hydro), with potency consistently rated as ‘high’ and availability as consistently ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ (Fetherston & Lenton, 2004).

Factors influencing potency

A number of respondents commented on what they believed were the main factors influencing the potency of cannabis. These included whether the cannabis was hydroponically grown or not, the strain or variety of cannabis, aspects of the growing process, improvements in skill of growers, and finally factors concerning the individual cannabis user. Most notably a number of respondents emphasised the importance of strain over whether the cannabis was hydroponically or non-hydroponically grown as being most important with regards to potency. For example:

People are under the misunderstanding that hydro cannabis is stronger than cannabis that is not grown hydro. It's got nothing to do with it, - it's the strain of plant. So I could have ... one strain of plant, 2 clones or cuttings, grow one outside, grow one indoors and when they have finished their cycle have them tested, and they will be the same THC level.

[ID21, male aged 37]

A number of specific aspects of the growing process were noted as important in producing high potency cannabis including the level of knowledge of the grower, the experience of the grower, or the way in which the grower treats the product throughout the process. There was general agreement that more expert growers could produce higher quality product.

It's actually getting better and better. The growers, especially commercial growers seem to really know what they are doing. The strains they are getting are just phenomenal.

[ID87, male aged 40, never grown]

Previous work has concluded that there is no evidence that the potency of cannabis plants has increased up to 30 times, as has been claimed. Seizure data suggests a modest increase in potency (Hall & Swift, 2000). It has been suggested that changing patterns of cannabis use, in particular the use of the more potent 'heads' of the plant (rather than the leaves), may account for apparent increases in the potency of cannabis used in Australia (Hall & Swift, 2000). The data presented in the current study suggest that it is likely to be the strain of the plant, rather than the hydroponic growing technique used which is likely to have a *direct* impact on cannabis potency. It would appear that if hydroponics have had an impact on the potency of cannabis, it is likely to be *indirectly* by (1) the increased yield from hydroponic cultivation contributing to a situation where 'heads' are the bulk of the market; (2) larger, commercial, 'more expert' and predominately hydroponic cannabis growers selecting strains to produce a more potent product which is seen as more desirable by significant numbers of consumers.

Factors influencing availability

Respondents were asked to comment on factors influencing the availability of cannabis over the time they had been involved in the market. According to respondents, availability of cannabis appears to depend upon a number of factors: personal contacts, seasonal factors, whether the cannabis is hydroponically grown or not, and at times, the impact of police operations. Seasonal variations principally impacted only non-hydroponically grown cannabis, although Christmas was generally seen as a time of low availability. Hydroponically grown cannabis was generally seen as more available than 'bush' cannabis which can be available depending upon a buyer's personal contacts. Police operations were the third most noted factor influencing the availability of cannabis.

Perceptions of the shape of the cannabis market in WA

There was considerable variation within the sample regarding the extent to which respondents could comment on the shape of the cannabis market in WA. In the majority of cases respondents commented on the part of the market which they had direct contact with, principally their friends and immediate suppliers. It appeared that those who only scored for their personal use usually had limited knowledge concerning market activities beyond their personal networks. Those who appeared to be most informed were those with personal experience of cannabis supply and associated cultivation.

Some 47 of the 72 respondents who discussed the shape of the market suggested that there are two levels to the market: the lower level end user groups, including small scale growers who self-supply, and the larger scale profit oriented (criminal) groups.

Some described a separation between the growers and sellers. The two levels of smaller-scale user-growers and larger commercial, criminal groups appear quite separate. The following quote describes this well:

The cannabis market works by a network of friends, who can form a co-op, in putting in part of the money, each putting in part of the money into one unit and purchasing the unit and distributing it to an equal share to the amount of money being given, therefore it brings the amount of the total unit down, because you are purchasing a pound or half a pound instead of an ounce or two ounces. Another part is people that grow cannabis and sell cannabis ... You could say it's for profit, but in the long run it's not profit because 3 months later, they're going to spend that money again buying cannabis off the person who's just bought the cannabis off them, because they've run out and [the other person's] crop has come through. So it's really a... a support-supply system, because even though you are selling cannabis, and I have no qualms about it at all, you are selling cannabis, you know, you are selling to somebody for what purpose? For his own purpose, his own purpose, and you know you can rely on that purpose 3 months time down-the-track to supply you, with the same fair amount that you supplied him.

And there is others who grow large amounts of cannabis, 100 plants and above, which sell purely for profit, but as an average cannabis user that most people are, they wouldn't even come into contact with them. There are only 2 or 3 people who are going to go out and buy 50 pounds, and then distribute it among their friends, so really the higher level of growing is never met by the lower grade of distribution. There are a lot of steps in between, and even though pot is just pot, there is a lot of money to be made out of pot, so therefore those at the top of the ladder will keep it that way, and be very private, they are very private people. But as an average pot smoker, they all grow dope and they all supply to each other.

[ID74, male aged 53, current grower, current seller]

In 40 cases cannabis users' point of reference in terms of the selling and supply process was their personal contact. This referred to either their participation in a small network involving backyard growers, or purchasing from friends who obtained their supply from dealers. The following responses were typical:

My main experiences are with friends and acquaintances that grow their own, or have other friends and acquaintances that grow their own. So as far as that goes, it's mainly not-for-profit, it's just to recoup expenses. And that's the people I prefer to buy it off. On occasion, I do have to purchase through other people and those people, I'm assuming, are one of many middle men and that it's come through a long string of them. Most of the time I have no idea where it comes from originally and it comes from hydroponic labs that mass-produce it for profit. I don't really ask too many questions when it comes to that.

[ID95, male aged 30, past grower]

Although there were a handful of respondents who described the involvement of organised groups, principally from South Australia, in large scale cannabis supply, this was the exception.

Well, we grow it, we just grow it. Somebody just comes along and takes it all away, just hands me the wad [of cash]. They must go and sell it. They buy 10 ounces and they go off, they must sell it to... yeah we don't ask too many questions, but obviously it must go... well a lot of the... in Perth, it's mainly Aboriginals that do the selling, because they are being used by heavies. They are called safe houses. The Perth market is run by South Australia, the South Australian mafia, you know? They basically get credit, so these guys buy them by pounds or 10 ounces - in bulk, and then they give it to these guys, ounces and ounces in credit, or a whole pound, and it's on their back. They have to sell it to make the money. These people also have a house across the road. They keep the stuff there, and they travel across or from behind or across,

you know, it's all set up, these houses get bought by these people. And then the Aboriginals just pay rent or something like that, but they are owned by Mafia, in South Australia. It's all South Australian run.

[ID75, male aged 31, current grower, current seller]

The extent to which cannabis and other drug markets are separate

As part of their qualitative accounts to a couple of questions, including their most recent score, some 32 respondents suggested that other drugs were available if they were interested. In some cases respondents stated their cannabis supplier could access other drugs although they tended to only deal in cannabis.

It's like he doesn't provide other stuff, but he can. The guy he gets his pot off, like his boss, that guy does other stuff and so he gets it off him.

[ID38, female aged 19]

Other respondents suggested that although their usual suppliers might deal in cannabis alone, they are exposed to other drugs when forced to leave their regular network. However, in the section on likely impact of the proposed scheme 34 respondents said that cannabis and other drug markets were already distinct. Yet 14 respondents commented that the proposed changes might work to create distinct markets between cannabis and other drugs. See below, 'Impact on the cannabis market'.

Having considered what appears to be conflicting data on the extent to which the markets for cannabis and other drugs is distinct the following conclusions seem appropriate: (1) Some suppliers may indeed only sell cannabis. This might be the case for smaller scale or backyard suppliers. (2) Others may only have cannabis 'on hand' and be known as 'cannabis suppliers' but with more notice they could get other drugs. (3) There are others who are known to sell cannabis along with a range of other drugs.

The extent to which a user's perception is that the market for cannabis is distinct from other drugs is likely to depend on their experience of a particular part of the wider market. Additionally, if cannabis is one's 'drug of choice' then one might not explore the possibility of other drugs with the supplier, thus the perception that the person they score cannabis from only supplies that drug could contribute to the perception of a distinct cannabis market.

Overall, the data reinforces the view that there is not a homogenous cannabis market. There are small-scale user-growers, networks of self-suppliers, and large-scale organised suppliers. Different suppliers of cannabis may have different access to other drugs. While some buyers' experience is that the person they buy cannabis from only supplies that drug, this is not the case for all buyers of cannabis.

Experience of growing cannabis

Some 71% of the sample had grown cannabis at some point in their lives and 56% (n = 39) of these had done so in the last 12 months. Most (77%) of these used non-hydroponic methods only, seven (18%) used only hydroponic methods and two (5%) grew both hydroponic and non-hydroponic cannabis. While, in the last 12 months, 66% (n=21) of those who grew non-hydro cannabis produced a harvest to maturity, 100% (n=9) of those using hydroponic methods did so. This could reflect the greater reliability of the controlled environment of hydroponic growing both in terms of growing conditions and security and concealment, but possibly also reflects that those

who grew using this method were more likely to be more experienced or knowledgeable. This was in part reflected in the number of plants grown to maturity. In the last 12 months only 16% of those using non-hydroponic methods grew more than 5 plants to maturity, compared to 44% of those using hydroponic methods.

Among those who had grown cannabis in the last 12 months: only 21% said that most of the cannabis they smoked was self grown; 50% had not given away any self-grown cannabis; and only 8% had been subject to violence or rip-offs in the past 6 months.

Reasons for growing

Fifty-nine people commented on their reasons for growing. Respondents were comprised of both current and past growers and experienced varying levels of success in their attempts. Reasons for growing included: the cost of purchasing cannabis; growing for profit; experimentation; enjoyment of the growing process; self sufficiency; the social aspect; avoidance of the criminal element; and self supply for medicinal use.

Among those who could be seen as ‘organised growers’ there appeared to be at least two groups. On one level are those whose objective is to self-supply small groups of fellow users within the group with cannabis, in some cases of different strains. On another, are those growers whose involvement in cannabis growing is principally for profit.

I like to grow it. I like to grow it in soil as well, but I like to experiment. I grow in soil and in outside hydro pots. Just all different ways. You see, I'm the key holder of the strains. I hold the strains and I do the breeding and I sell or take percentages of people's harvests. Like, I just give them so many clones, and I get a payment when they harvest, they give me a percentage of the crop. I will then either sell it, or... well if they are able to sell it on their behalf, then they just hand me a wad of money. [ID75, male aged 31, current grower]

On this basis we can infer two understandings of the social or communal as it relates to cannabis growing. Specifically, the way in which one group understands it as part of a larger ‘culture of cannabis’ where growers assist one another. This can be contrasted with another facet of cannabis where the social or communal is implicated in profit.

Those who grew non-hydroponically expressed a number of reasons for doing so including: experimentation; their belief that bush weed was a healthier product; that it was less complicated than hydroponic methods; and a perceived greater risk of growing hydroponically. Nine respondents gave reasons why they grew using hydroponic methods. These could be summarised in two themes: concealment and quality.

Crop size

There were 50 respondents who commented on their choice of crop size. In many cases crop size consisted of one to two plants although in a few cases the numbers were larger. Three primary themes emerged: perceived need; experimentation; and fear of detection. Decisions regarding crop size often took into account the possibility that not all plants would produce harvestable heads. This could be due to factors such as some plants dying due to disease, or the fact that only the female plants are of use.

The assumption that not all plants would reach fruition resulted in planting a higher number with the intention of achieving something smaller.

Well you should expect to lose one or two, perhaps through root-rot or something, so I think probably for me I need about 6 to smoke. I mean you never really know how it's going to go, so often you might put in a bit more. [ID78, male aged 46, current grower, past seller]

The difficult nature of growing cannabis

The difficult nature of growing, discussed above, was addressed by 28 respondents. Issues included lack of knowledge, and external factors such as rip-offs. The overall impression was that while throwing a few seeds in the ground might appear 'easy' the process of getting plants to maturity and a 'quality product' appears to be far more difficult than many might think. This has implications for the possible impact of the CIN scheme on cannabis cultivators. The exclusion of hydroponic cultivation from the scheme, and the difficulty in growing outdoor cannabis plants to maturity may be factors which together, limit the extent to which the scheme leads to more regular cannabis users cultivating cannabis for their own use. In addition, however, these data provide further evidence that the scheme is unlikely to result in a rapid expansion in cannabis cultivation and the cannabis market as predicted by some critics of the scheme.

Experience of supplying cannabis

It was explained to respondents that some people supplied cannabis for profit (selling), some supplied cannabis on a 'not-for-profit' basis (distributing) and some people gave cannabis away. This description preceded detailed questions about involvement cannabis supply in order to get a more fine-grained understanding of the nature of that involvement.

Overall, 88% of the sample had ever given cannabis away and 75% had done so during the previous 6 months, overwhelmingly (93%) to 'friends'. Of those who gave cannabis away in the last 6 months 72% did it on 10 occasions or less over that period.

Some 71% of respondents said that they had ever distributed cannabis 'not-for-profit' or bought on behalf of others 'not-for-profit'. About half (52%) the sample did this in the previous 6 months, mostly (65%) on 10 occasions or less, and almost all (94%) to 'friends'. Some 41% of those who distributed cannabis on a 'not-for-profit' basis over the last 6 months said that they believed the original source of that cannabis to be large-scale criminal suppliers.

Overall, 50% of the sample had ever sold cannabis for profit and 13% had done so in the last 6 months. Just over half (54%) did it on 10 occasions or less and almost all (92%) to 'friends'. Those who sold cannabis for profit over the last 6 months said that they believed the original source of that cannabis was roughly divided between large-scale criminal suppliers (31%), the respondent (23%), and other small-time growers (31%). Some 46% said between 1 and 25% of their income came from selling cannabis over the last 12 months. Income derived from selling cannabis over this period ranged from \$80 to \$13,000.

Overall, 5 (9%) of the 54 cases who sold or distributed cannabis in the last 6 months reported violence or rip-offs over this period.

The results on involvement in supplying cannabis are of interest for a number of reasons. Firstly they underscore, that for many in the cannabis market, 'supply' to friends on a not-for-profit basis and distributing to their peers was seen by them as an unremarkable part of their involvement in cannabis use, and not seen as 'dealing' as such. However, while this may be the reality of the market, this is not the way such activities are treated in the letter of the law. It is clear that how police and the courts interpret the law in practice can have a major impact on how the law impacts on those engaging in this activity.

CANNABIS AND THE LAW - EXPERIENCE

Nearly half (46%) of the sample reported prior contact with West Australian police regarding a cannabis-related offence and 87% of these were apprehended. The high rate of convictions is consistent with earlier research (e.g. Lenton, Ferrante & Loh 1996). None had been imprisoned for a cannabis offence. In terms of convictions, 15 (33%) had one conviction, five (11%) had 2 convictions, two (4%) had 3 convictions, and five people (11%) more than 3 convictions. The re-arrest rate for this regular using sample is higher than the 7% in ten years found for the population of all first-time cannabis use offenders in WA (Valuri, Indermaur & Ferrante, 2002)

Only 31% of the present sample said that none of their friends or acquaintances had been caught by police in relation to cannabis.

Some 57% of the sample said that they had heard about the WA Cannabis Cautioning scheme, but none had ever received a caution under this scheme. Some 86% of those who knew someone who had been apprehended said that this had 'no impact' on their own use of the drug.

Last contact with police

Of the 42 respondents who described their last contact with police regarding cannabis 76% were for possession, 36% were for an implement, 14% for cultivation and 14% for selling or supplying. In 38% of these cases police were motivated by suspicion of cannabis offence (possession, use, cultivation or selling), 26% were a result of police investigating another matter or person, and in 17% of cases police were on routine patrol. Most commonly people were in their own home (36%), in a motor vehicle (26%), or in a street, park or beach (24%), when they last had contact with police regarding cannabis. Some 64% of respondents said that on that occasion they were under the influence of a drug, mostly (85%) cannabis. Where the outcome was known, 55% appeared in court and were convicted, 8% were summonsed and convicted without appearing in court, 34% received an informal warning, and 3% received a juvenile caution.

Consistent with earlier work (eg. Lenton, Humeniuk, Heale & Christie, 2000; Erickson, 1980), experience with the law seemed to have little impact on the cannabis use of the majority of these experienced cannabis users. Some 86% of those respondents who had had contact with the law regarding their cannabis use reported that it had no impact on their cannabis use. Some 10% said that they were more careful about where and how they used, 5% stopped for a while, and 2% said that they reduced their consumption initially.

It is not surprising that legal sanctions do little to deter cannabis use among users. The criminological literature suggests that deterrence effects are likely to be undermined by a low likelihood of apprehension; low levels of public support for criminal penalties; attitudes of those apprehended and their peers which are very positive toward cannabis; and significant punishment avoidance (getting away with using without being caught) effects, especially for experienced users (Lenton, 2003).

One of the potential adverse impacts of infringement notice schemes such as that implemented in WA is that there will be a 'net widening' effect where more people will come into contact with the law if police reduce their use of informal cautions and warnings in favour of issuing an infringement notice, with the increased likelihood of further involvement with the law once the person has become formally known to police. It will be of interest to see whether in the post-phase research, the proportion of people who report receiving an informal warning decreases as a result of the CIN scheme.

Regarding police conduct, some 61% of the sample said that police had behaved lawfully, 44% said that they were respectful and 37% said that they were friendly. On the negative side, 49% said that police were hostile and 39% stated that they were offensive. With regards to their own behaviour towards police 96% said they were cooperative with police, 88% said that they were respectful and 66% said that they were friendly toward police. On the negative side, 10% said that they behaved in a hostile manner toward police and a 5% stated that they were offensive to police.

As a result of their last contact with police regarding cannabis 45% had become less trusting of police, 33% had become more fearful of police. As a result of the contact 38% had become more antagonistic, 47% less respectful, and 21% had become more hostile toward the legal system generally (the law in general, the cannabis law, police and the courts).

Forty-two respondents discussed the way in which their cannabis-related contact with the police impacted their attitude toward the law, police and the courts. For seventeen respondents, having contact with the police for a cannabis-related incident had a negative impact on their views towards the police. This was articulated in two ways. Among those who believed there was a change in attitude as a result, the following themes emerged: enhanced existing negative feelings towards police and the law; maintained existing negative feelings; perception of unjust treatment; sense that the cannabis laws were unfair and required change; and the view that the cannabis laws were wasteful of criminal justice resources.

It just reconfirmed what I already felt. And that the laws were unjust. Many times, more often than now, the punishment would outweigh the crime [ID71, male aged 20]

Previous research (Lenton, Humeniuk, Heale & Christie, 2000) suggested that a *prohibition with civil penalties* scheme, as opposed to a *prohibition with criminal penalties* scheme would be likely to reinforce respect for the police and the law, rather than undermine compliance with it. Those convicted under the *prohibition with criminal penalties* scheme were less likely to say that when apprehended police were friendly and respected their rights as a citizen, and were more likely to say that police treated them as if they were a criminal. Those convicted under *prohibition with criminal penalties* had become less respectful, less trusting and more fearful of police

as a result of the incident compared to the *civil penalty* group (Lenton, Humeniuk, Heale & Christie, 2000). Given this, it will be interesting to see whether the change from a system of criminal to civil penalties under the proposed change to the cannabis laws in WA results in respondents developing less negative attitudes to police as a result of being apprehended.

There were five respondents who suggested that they had a positive experience the last time they had contact with police regarding cannabis and in some cases this resulted in them improving their attitude toward police and the legal system generally.

...I mean I was actually quite impressed that I was listened to in court, and my individual story was taken into account. It wasn't just another single parent trying to make some money, it was for personal use only. I walked out of there with a lot more respect than the first time I'd been in and been told I was about to head to [prison]. [ID55, female aged 39]

CANNABIS LAW: KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

PROHIBITION WITH CIVIL PENALTIES

The vast majority (83%) of respondents understood that *prohibition with civil penalties* means, 'still illegal, a fine, but no criminal penalty applies'. Only 5% of the sample thought it meant that cannabis use would be 'legal'. This suggests that this term is well understood by regular cannabis users, and should be preferred over 'decriminalisation' which has previously been shown to be frequently confused with 'legalisation' by many members of the public (Lenton & Ovenden, 1996)

Some 96% of the sample thought it should be legal to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use, 31% did not know that it was a criminal, rather than a civil offence, but 100% believed that if cannabis use was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

Ninety-four percent of the sample thought it should be legal to grow a cannabis plant, 15% did not know that it was a criminal, rather than a civil offence, but 94% believed that, if cultivation of a cannabis plant was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

Some 97% of the sample was aware that it was currently illegal in WA for an adult to grow a cannabis plant using hydroponic equipment, but 81% of the sample thought it should be legal and 16% thought it should remain illegal. Some 87% believed that if hydroponic cultivation of a cannabis plant was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence.

Some 99% of the sample was aware that it was currently illegal in WA for an adult to sell cannabis to another adult, but 71% of the sample thought it should be legal. Some 88% of the sample believed that if sale of cannabis from one adult to another was to remain illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence. In contrast, 85% thought it should be illegal for an adult to sell cannabis to a person under the age of 18 years and 75% thought criminal rather than civil penalties should apply for this offence. With regards to penalties only 63% thought that an adult caught selling a small amount of cannabis to another adult would likely get a criminal conviction and 20% incorrectly thought they could get a formal caution.

Almost half (49%) of this sample of regular cannabis users agreed 'strongly' or at least 'somewhat' that police should have the power to remove people from the hydroponic equipment industry who police have evidence are engaging in criminal activities such as commercial cannabis production.

Some 88% of the sample was aware that it was currently illegal in WA to drive while affected by cannabis, but 29% thought it should be legal. Although 29% did not know that driving whilst affected by cannabis was a criminal, rather than a civil offence, 63% believed that if it remained illegal, it should be a civil rather than a criminal offence. Sixty-five percent of respondents agreed, to some extent, that police should test drivers for cannabis.

Although these regular cannabis users believed most personal use and cultivation should be legalised, there was not surprisingly, high levels of support for civil over criminal penalties if these were to remain illegal. The sizeable minorities of the sample who believed that civil rather than criminal penalties applied to many of these offences reinforces that education targeted at regular users should include information about the laws applying to cannabis as suggested in the proposed WA scheme (Prior, Swensen, Migro, et al., 2002).

CANNABIS CAUTIONING

With regards to the cannabis cautioning scheme about 81% understood that under the current system such cautions only applied to adult first offenders. Despite this, only 47% said that a criminal conviction would be recorded for a second offence, where this is in fact happens more than 95% of the time.

Some 28% of the sample incorrectly thought that a caution was possible for cultivation of cannabis plants under the WA Cannabis Cautioning System, and only 50% believed one could get a criminal conviction for cultivation of a small number of plants.

LIKELIHOOD OF APPREHENSION

Some 96% of respondents thought it would be unlikely that they would be caught by police if they were in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use and 88% thought they would be unlikely to be caught if they were growing a small number of cannabis plants. Similarly 88% thought it was unlikely they would be caught if they were selling a small amount of cannabis. These findings reinforce that the low likelihood of apprehension undermines the effectiveness of the threat of the law to deter cannabis use (Lenton, 2000), especially among experienced offenders (Lenton, 2003), many of whom will have an extensive history of avoiding punishment (Stafford & Warr, 1994).

ATTITUDES TO THE LAW AND POLICE

Consistent with earlier work with apprehended cannabis users (Lenton, Humeniuk, Heale & Christie, 2000) most of the sample were, in general, law-abiding and had respect for the law in general. Overall, 78% of the sample saw themselves as a law-abiding citizen, at least to some extent, and 69% agreed that most laws are fair. Some 95% believed it was important that people in a society respect most of its laws.

However, 37% agreed that it is all right to break the law if you can get away with it, and 28% agreed that people should break laws they disagree with.

Some 82% of respondents agreed, to some extent, that police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order, yet 97% believed that some police abuse their authority over people they suspect have broken the law. Perhaps most relevant for the current study, was that only 25% of the sample believed that police generally treat cannabis users with respect. Not surprisingly, 94% disagreed that police should be given more power to crack down on cannabis in the community, and 99% believed that police time could be better spent than in pursuing minor cannabis offenders.

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEW SYSTEM

Respondents were given a standardised verbal description of the proposed legislative changes for cannabis in WA and were then asked questions about their understanding of the scheme and their attitudes toward it.

Most people understood which of the possession and cultivation offences attracted civil and criminal penalties under the new scheme with 83% of responses correct on these items. For most of these offences the overwhelming majority (83% to 97% depending on the offence) said it would be unlikely they would be apprehended under the new scheme. The exception was cultivation of 3 to 10 hydroponic plants, which was seen by a larger minority of respondents as more likely to result in detection, with only 54% believing it was unlikely they would be apprehended.

Respondents were asked the extent to which a range of possible penalties would be a problem for them if they received them. In general the potential penalties associated with the proposed scheme (fines of \$100 to \$200, an education session, no criminal charge) were rated as far less a problem than potential penalties under the existing model (criminal conviction, 2 year prison sentence). For example an education session was seen as 'no problem at all' or 'a small problem' by 81% of the sample, whereas a \$200 fine was seen as 'a big problem' or 'a very big problem' by 82% of the sample. This suggests that, for the majority of regular users at least, the option of attending an education session in lieu of a fine will likely be an attractive option for many.

Whereas 79% of the sample agreed either strongly or somewhat that possession of less than 15 grams of cannabis and up to 30 grams should be a non-criminal offence, fines for these offences were less likely to be rated as fair. For example, only 43% of the sample agreed that it was fair for possession of not more than 30 grams of cannabis to attract a \$100 fine. Only 30% agreed that it was fair for possession of more than 30 grams of cannabis to attract a criminal charge. Whereas 87% of the sample agreed that it was fair that growing less than 2 non-hydro plants should be a non-criminal offence, only 11% agreed that it was fair that criminal penalties applied to the cultivation of 2 hydroponic plants.

Given the high level of support for legalisation of cannabis it is not surprising that many thought fines for the offences that would attract a CIN under the proposed scheme were unfair. Similar sentiments were evident in the qualitative accounts where although a minority thought the scheme was fair overall and many thought that cannabis should be legalised, a majority expressed the view that the proposed scheme was fairer than the existing criminal regime.

Well I still say it should be legal.

So in that sense it's not quite fitting in with what you want?

No. I don't think there should be any punishment. [ID59, female aged 34]

Well it's fairer than what it has been. A change is better than no change at all.
[ID96, female aged 32]

Hydroponic growing appeared to be the aspect of the proposed changes that provoked a significant reaction when discussing issues of fairness concerning the proposed changes. A number also pointed to the apparent inconsistency between the 30 gram limit on harvested cannabis and the two plant limit.

Because they say possession of 15-30 grams and growing 1 to 2 non-hydro plants, so while that plant is in the ground you are within legal limits; as soon as you harvest that plant you're outside the legal limit. It's a huge trap that a lot of people are going to get caught in and I believe that whoever formulated this plan did it on purpose. [ID11, female aged 50]

Like in any legislative system, there are potential anomalies in the CIN scheme. An obvious one, recognised by its architects (Prior, Swensen, Migro, et al., 2002) was the discrepancy between the amount of cannabis on two growing plants which would be eligible for a CIN being far greater than the 30 grams eligible for a CIN once harvested.

Despite the scepticism of the respondent quoted above, a number of attempts to deal with this anomaly were considered and rejected by the Ministerial Working Party. In the end it was left to the discretion of the police and the courts in applying the law, with one of the goals of the scheme articulated by the Working Party being to move cannabis supply away from large-scale criminal, commercial suppliers (Prior, Swensen, Migro, et al., 2002). Guidance as to the intent of the Act was given in the Second Reading Speech in the WA Parliament. This emphasised that:

The prosecution of minor cannabis offenders is costly in terms of police and court time. Law enforcement and the criminal justice system should target and heavily penalise those connected or involved in the business of large scale cannabis supply, those who also sell other prohibited drugs, and those engaging in violence or standover tactics.

(Kucera in Parliament of Western Australia, 2003, p. 5696.)

Clearly, if law enforcement chose to deal with anomalies such as this one by charging those cultivating 2 plants with criminal charges because they just harvested their crop, then this will undermine the scheme's capacity to shift the market. The post-phase of the research will document the extent to which this has happened.

COMMUNITY IMPACT OF THE LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Some 50 of 57 respondents who commented suggested that there would be no impact on cannabis use generally. In many cases cannabis use or lack thereof was understood to occur for reasons separate from any legislative framework in place.

Nothing, nothing at all, I don't think people give a toss about the law to be honest with you.
[ID79, female aged 22]

Others suggested similar levels of caution would exist thus translating into a lack of change in behaviour with the proposed changes:

Everyone would still have to be on their toes, obviously, if they didn't want to get into trouble.
[ID3, male aged 47]

Some 43 respondents commented on whether the proposed changes would impact on young people in a negative manner. Twenty-six people did not believe that the proposed changes would have an adverse impact on cannabis use by young people, whereas 11 believed that there might be an impact in terms of encouraging young people to use cannabis.

I think it might just make it a bit more open for first timers, stuff like that, you know, maybe young schoolies and stuff like that. It might... but besides that, I don't think it will affect it.
[ID73, male aged 20]

There were 44 respondents who discussed the issue of whether the proposed changes would impact on the public use of cannabis and 24 of these did not believe the changes in legislation would encourage more use of cannabis in public places, whereas 20 said it would.

I don't think so. I think with people who do smoke it's become so ingrained to be private about your use that I don't think that will make a great deal of difference. It's not like they're legalising it.
[ID32, female aged 32]

The extent to which the proposed changes result in such changes at a community level should be able to be detected in the post-change sub-studies of the general population, school children and regular users, as well as in analysis of police and health data.

Impact on personal cannabis use

Some 93 respondents commented on whether they thought the proposed changes would impact on their cannabis use and 79 (85%) of these said the proposed changes would have little impact on their cannabis use. Those who discussed the reasons for an anticipated lack of impact identified various reasons.

The current system is not having any impact so the new system is not going to change it very much. I still don't want to get caught.
[ID85, male aged 32]

Twenty-two respondents commented on whether they might use cannabis in public settings more often. For 20 respondents the proposed changes would have no impact on where they smoked. According to two respondents the fact of cannabis remaining illegal meant that their location of use would not change:

Because you can still get fined, so I'm not going to exactly smoke it willy-nilly everywhere.
[ID80, female aged 28]

These results are consistent with considerable prior research which suggests that the formal aspects of the law have little impact on cannabis use, especially by experienced, or regular, users (see MacCoun, 1993; Williams and Hawkins, 1986).

Intent to grow cannabis under the proposed scheme

Overall, 72% said they intended to grow cannabis under the proposed scheme. Whereas 83% (n=57) of those who had ever grown cannabis said they would, only 46% (n=13) of those who had never done so said that they intended to grow cannabis under the proposed changes. Overall, 84% of the 69 (missing = 1) respondents who said that they intended to grow cannabis under the proposed laws said that they would grow under the 2 plant limit and 81% said that they would only be growing non-hydro cannabis.

Personally I wouldn't want to get busted with a plant. If it was... completely legal, like for me to grow hydroponic plants and stuff, I probably would, but it's just easier [not to bother]; I don't have the space; I'm not much of a green thumb. I prefer people that are best at it to do it.
[ID96, female age 32]

As discussed previously, one of the goals of the proposed scheme is to reduce the proportion of the market supplied by large-scale commercial cannabis suppliers over small-scale user-growers. If this is to happen then one would expect to see a larger proportion of regular users engaging in cultivation to supply themselves and/or their peers under the collective arrangements previously described. Among this sample, the vast majority of those who expressed an intention to cultivate cannabis under the proposed scheme were those who had grown cannabis previously, rather than new initiates. Although it should be noted that some of those who had previously grown the drug may have done nothing more than have thrown a few seeds in the ground, that is they were not necessarily experienced growers.

Impact on the cannabis market generally

A number of interesting themes emerged from discussion with respondents concerning the impact of the proposed legislative changes upon aspects of the cannabis market. One of the possible impacts commented on by many respondents was the possible creation of distinct markets between cannabis and other drugs. Some 34 respondents said that cannabis and other drug markets were already distinct, 14 thought it might work to separate markets and 12 said there would be no impact on whether cannabis and other drug markets were separate. This issue has been canvassed in the discussion above 'The extent to which cannabis and other drug markets are separate'.

Fifty-six respondents commented on whether the proposed changes would impact the levels of violence and rip offs associated with the drug market. In 25 cases it was believed that there would be no impact. In some cases this was attributed to a perceived absence of violence associated with the cannabis market generally.

Impact on personal market participation

Among those 93 respondents who discussed the issue, thirty respondents believed that there would be no impact on their personal involvement with the market. Eighteen

respondents suggested that under the proposed changes they might be more likely to share cannabis with a small peer group.

Yeah personally I think my mates would have their own in their back yards as well. So I wouldn't have to supply them and they wouldn't have to supply me. If anything it would be my crops out is yours in? Yep, okay, trade off give me an ounce now and I'll give you one when mine is ready. That sort of thing. [ID19, male aged 22]

Some 14 respondents believed they might purchase cannabis less often as a result of the proposed changes and the same number believed the proposed changes would impact in some way the organised distribution of cannabis. For example:

Yeah the big guys aren't gonna get as much of the deal. [ID59, female aged 34]

There were 73 respondents who commented on whether they would consider selling for profit under the proposed scheme. Of these, 20 said they would consider selling cannabis under the proposed scheme. This included 12 who were current sellers and would continue to do so despite the proposed changes, 4 who had sold in the past said that they might consider selling again under the proposed system, and 4 who had never sold cannabis before, but would consider it. Thus there were only 8 of 72 individuals who said they would enter or re-enter the cannabis market as sellers. One of the criticisms of the scheme made by the Liberal opposition is that it will entice otherwise law abiding cannabis users into selling cannabis for profit. These data suggest that will rarely happen.

There were a couple of respondents who believed that the exclusion of hydroponic cultivation under the proposed scheme, and what they saw as a decrease in the quality of available cannabis, due to an increase in the proportion of non-hydro cannabis in the market was an opportunity to be exploited. For example:

Yeah it would definitely be more beneficial ... to me because they'd know that you've got the hydro they'll come to you ... before they go to the bush people. [ID30, female aged 28]

There were 53 respondents who indicated they would not consider selling cannabis under the proposed scheme. Twenty respondents suggested that they would not supply simply because they had no interest in doing so, 17 noted an avoidance of the lifestyle associated with selling cannabis, and for 14 the maintenance of the illegality of cannabis was a reason.

Dealing in drugs doesn't really appeal to me. I'd like to have the money but I think of all the other stuff that comes with it. Not so much the threat of getting caught but just people constantly ringing you up for things and that sort of thing. [ID67, male age 21]

Well, basically because I'm not growing, but basically because if you are selling, it's dealing. But yeah, it's criminal penalties basically. [ID23, male aged 31]

Impact of changes on willingness to seek treatment

A total of 93 respondents discussed whether or not there might be an enhanced willingness to seek treatment in the context of the proposed legislative changes. Of these, 75 respondents said that either they or cannabis users in general, would be more willing to seek treatment as a result of the proposed changes.

Well, I suppose because they are being a bit more lenient here, I suppose that it would probably help me thinking “Ok I can turn to someone for help”. [ID60, male aged 21]

I suppose I would, yeah. You wouldn't feel, [you'd] get labelled. [ID98, female aged 30]

Some 12 respondents discussed their views of the educational aspect of the proposed legislative changes. In all cases they believed the proposed changes would result in an increased willingness for users to seek treatment. Reasons why included that for those who are apprehended the education session might result in heightened awareness of aspects of their cannabis use, and an increased awareness of available services.

Yep, I think that they would know that it's a recognised problem, and they would see that there are avenues for them if they wish to go there. [ID79, female aged 22]

Some 30 respondents said they would seek treatment should they require it irrespective of whatever legal framework existed. Some 29 people responded that they would not be more likely to seek treatment in the context of the proposed legislative changes. Reasons included a rejection of expert forms of knowledge, not seeing their use within a problem framework, and others who said they would not seek treatment simply explained that they saw no relationship between willingness to seek treatment and the legal structure.

As mentioned above, one of the goals of the proposed scheme is to remove the risk of a criminal record as a barrier to cannabis users seeking treatment. The post-change phase of the study will provide an opportunity to measure the extent to which this has occurred.

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APPENDIX 1

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT

Cannabis Users' Survey

**Been using cannabis at least weekly
for the last three months?**

**Interested in being anonymously
interviewed about your experiences?**

**Then phone Fran at the
National Drug Research Institute
on 9426 4210**

**You will be reimbursed
\$30 for your time.**

**This study has been approved by the
*Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee.***

APPENDIX 2

RECRUITMENT FLYER



Cannabis Users' Survey

**Been using cannabis at least weekly
for the last three months?**

**Interested in being anonymously
interviewed about your experiences?**

**Then phone Fran at the
National Drug Research Institute
on 9426 4210**

**You will be reimbursed
\$30 for your time.**

*This study has been approved by the
Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee.*

APPENDIX 3

SCREENING QUESTIONS

Regular Cannabis Users Study: Screening Record

Participant ID No: _____

First Contact: SL | FC | MB | Other _____

Date: _____

Nickname _____ Age: _____

Male : _____

Female: _____

How frequently do you use cannabis? Weekly or more Less than weekly

How long have you been using cannabis? 3 months or more Less than 3 months

How long have you lived in Perth? _____

How did you first find out about this study? _____

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant ID No.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Interviewer's initials	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Date (day/month)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Interview start time	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Regular Cannabis Users' Questionnaire 2002

A study of regular cannabis users examining the impact of the change from criminal to civil penalties on use, cultivation and market patterns

How did you first find out about the study?	Yes	No
Television (<i>specify</i>) _____	1	0
Radio (<i>specify</i>) _____	1	0
Flyer/Poster	1	0
Community Newspaper	1	0
West Australian	1	0
Family or friend (non-participant)	1	0
Snowballing from prior participant	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	1	0

Eligibility Filter

How frequently do you use cannabis?	Weekly or more	Less than weekly
How long have you been using cannabis?	3 months or more	Less than 3 months
	↓	↓
	Eligible	Ineligible

Q. CANNABIS LAW: KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDES

Q1. Do you agree or disagree that there has there been a lot of media recently about cannabis law? **CARD 6**

- Strongly agree 1
- Agree 2
- Disagree 3
- Strongly disagree 4
- Don't know/not sure 8

POSSESSION

Q2. **Tape & take notes**
 What is your opinion of the laws regarding the possession of cannabis for personal use?
 Do you think penalties should apply?
If yes, What penalties do you think are appropriate?
If no, Why not?

Q3. Which of the following statements most closely corresponds to your understanding of the term prohibition with civil penalties? **CARD 11**

- Legal, no penalties would apply 1
- Illegal, fine applies but no criminal conviction 2
- Illegal, criminal conviction 3
- Don't know/not sure 8

Q4. Currently in WA is it legal or illegal for an adult to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use?

- Legal 1
- Illegal 2
- Don't know/not sure 8

Q5. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for an adult to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use?

- Legal 1
- Illegal 2
- Don't know/not sure 8

- Q6. Criminal offences result in a criminal record. Non-criminal offences are like speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal but result in a fine rather than a criminal record. **CARD 12**

Currently in WA is it a criminal or a non-criminal offence for an adult to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use? **CARD 12**

Criminal	1
Non-criminal	2
Don't know/not sure	8

- Q7. Assuming it were to remain illegal, do you think that possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use by an adult should be a criminal or a non-criminal offence? **CARD 12**

Criminal	1
Non-criminal	2
Don't know/not sure.....	8

- Q8. Currently in WA, according to the law which of these possible consequences could apply to an adult the first time they are caught in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 13**

Formal caution by police.....	1	0
A fine.....	1	0
Attendance at a cannabis education session	1	0
Appearance at drug court	1	0
Criminal conviction recorded.....	1	0
Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket).....	1	0
Summons to appear in court.....	1	0
No penalty	1	0
Six month prison sentence	1	0
Compulsory drug treatment.....	1	0

- Q9. Currently in WA, which of these possible consequences could apply to an adult the second or subsequent times they are caught in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use or where other charges are also laid? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 13**

Formal caution by police	1	0
A fine	1	0
Attendance at a cannabis education session.....	1	0
Appearance at drug court	1	0
Criminal conviction recorded	1	0
Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)	1	0
Summons to appear in court	1	0
No penalty	1	0
Six month prison sentence	1	0
Compulsory drug treatment	1	0

- Q10. If you were in possession of a small amount of cannabis, how likely do you think it is that you would be caught?

Very likely	4
Quite likely.....	3
Unlikely.....	2
Very unlikely	1
Don't know/not sure	8

- Q11. If one of your friends were in possession of a small amount of cannabis, how likely do you think it is that they would be caught?

Very likely	4
Quite likely.....	3
Unlikely.....	2
Very unlikely	1
Don't know/not sure	8

- Q12. Imagine if you were caught in possession of a small amount of cannabis. What penalties do you think **you** would get?

Details.

Q13. Overall, how big a problem would these penalties create for your life?

- No problem at all..... 1
- A little problem 2
- A big problem 3
- A very big problem 4
- Don't know/not sure..... 8

GROWING

Q14. **Tape & take notes**
 What is your opinion of the laws regarding the growing of cannabis plants?
 Do you think penalties should apply?
If yes, What penalties do you think are appropriate?
If no, Why not?

Q15. Currently in WA, is it legal or illegal for an adult to grow a cannabis plant?

- Legal..... 1
- Illegal..... 2
- Don't know/not sure..... 8

Q16. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for an adult to grow a cannabis plant?

- Legal..... 1
- Illegal..... 2
- Don't know/not sure..... 8

Q17. Criminal offences result in a criminal record. Non-criminal offences are like speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal but result in a fine rather than a criminal record. **CARD 12**

Currently in WA is it a criminal or a non-criminal offence for an adult to grow a cannabis plant? **CARD 12**

- Criminal 1
- Non-criminal 2
- Don't know/not sure..... 8

- Q18. Assuming it were to remain illegal, do you think that the growing of a cannabis plant by an adult should be a criminal or a non-criminal offence?

CARD 12

Criminal 1
 Non-criminal 2
 Don't know/not sure 8

- Q19. Currently in WA, which of these possible consequences could apply to an adult caught growing a small number of cannabis plants? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 14**

Formal caution by police	1	0
A fine	1	0
Attendance at a cannabis education session	1	0
Appearance at drug court	1	0
Criminal conviction recorded	1	0
Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)	1	0
Summons to appear in court	1	0
No penalty	1	0
Two year jail sentence	1	0
Compulsory drug treatment	1	0

- Q20. Currently in WA, is it legal or illegal for an adult to grow a cannabis plant using hydroponic equipment?

Legal 1
 Illegal 2
 Don't know/not sure 8

- Q21. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for an adult to grow a cannabis plant using hydroponic equipment?

Legal 1
 Illegal 2
 Don't know/not sure 8

- Q22. Criminal offences result in a criminal record. Non-criminal offences are like speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal but result in a fine rather than a criminal record. **CARD 12**

Currently in WA is it a criminal or a non-criminal offence for an adult to grow a cannabis plant using hydroponic equipment? **CARD 12**

Criminal 1
 Non-criminal 2
 Don't know/not sure 8

Q23. Assuming it were to remain illegal, do you think that the growing of a cannabis plant by an adult using hydroponic equipment should be a criminal or a non-criminal offence? **CARD 12**

Criminal 1
 Non-criminal 2
 Don't know/not sure..... 8

Q24. Do you agree or disagree that police should have the power to remove people from the hydroponic equipment industry who police have evidence are engaging in criminal activities such as commercial cannabis production?

CARD 6

Strongly agree 1
 Agree 2
 Disagree..... 3
 Strongly disagree..... 4
 Don't know/not sure..... 8

Why should/shouldn't they have this power? *Details.* _____

Q25. If you were growing a small number of cannabis plants, how likely do you think it is that you would be caught?

Very likely..... 4
 Quite likely..... 3
 Unlikely..... 2
 Very unlikely..... 1
 Don't know/not sure..... 8

Q26. If one of your friends were growing a small number of cannabis plants, how likely do you think it is that they would be caught?

Very likely..... 4
 Quite likely..... 3
 Unlikely..... 2
 Very unlikely..... 1
 Don't know/not sure..... 8

Q27. Imagine if you were caught growing a small number of cannabis plants. What penalties do you think **you** would get?

Details.

Q28. Overall, how big a problem would these penalties create for your life?

- No problem at all 1
 A little problem 2
 A big problem 3
 A very big problem 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

SELLING

Q29. **Tape & take notes**
 What is your opinion of the laws regarding the supply of cannabis?
 Do you think penalties should apply?
If yes, What penalties do you think are appropriate?
If no, Why not?

Q30. Currently in WA, is it legal or illegal for an adult to sell a small quantity of cannabis?

- Legal 1
 Illegal 2
 Don't know/not sure 8

Q31. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for an adult to sell a small quantity of cannabis to another adult?

- Legal 1
 Illegal 2
 Don't know/not sure 8

Q32. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for an adult to sell a small quantity of cannabis to a person under 18?

- Legal 1
 Illegal 2
 Don't know/not sure 8

- Q33. Criminal offences result in a criminal record. Non-criminal offences are like speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal but result in a fine rather than a criminal record. **CARD 12**

Currently in WA is it a criminal or a non-criminal offence for an adult to sell a small quantity of cannabis? **CARD 12**

Criminal 1
 Non-criminal 2
 Don't know/not sure..... 8

- Q34. Assuming it were to remain illegal, do you think that selling a small quantity of cannabis from an adult to another adult should be a criminal or a non-criminal offence? **CARD 12**

Criminal 1
 Non-criminal 2
 Don't know/not sure..... 8

- Q35. Assuming it were to remain illegal, do you think that selling a small quantity of cannabis from an adult to a person under 18 should be a criminal or a non-criminal offence? **CARD 12**

Criminal 1
 Non-criminal 2
 Don't know/not sure..... 8

- Q36. Currently in WA, which of these possible consequences can apply to an adult caught selling a small amount of cannabis? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 15**

Formal caution by police.....	1	0
A fine.....	1	0
Attendance at a cannabis education session	1	0
Appearance at drug court	1	0
Criminal conviction recorded.....	1	0
Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)	1	0
Summons to appear in court.....	1	0
No penalty	1	0
Two year jail sentence.....	1	0
Compulsory drug treatment.....	1	0

Q37. If you were selling a small amount of cannabis, how likely do you think it is that you would be caught?

Very likely 4
 Quite likely..... 3
 Unlikely..... 2
 Very unlikely 1
 Don't know/not sure 8

Q38. If one of your friends were selling a small amount of cannabis, how likely do you think it is that they would be caught?

Very likely 4
 Quite likely..... 3
 Unlikely..... 2
 Very unlikely 1
 Don't know/not sure 8

Q12. Imagine if you were caught selling a small amount of cannabis. What penalties do you think **you** would get?

Details.

Q13. Overall, how big a problem would these penalties create for your life?

No problem at all 1
 A little problem 2
 A big problem 3
 A very big problem 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

DRIVING

Q41.

Tape & take notes

What is your opinion of the laws regarding driving while affected by cannabis?

Do you think penalties should apply?

If yes, What penalties do you think are appropriate?

If no, Why not?

Prompts: Issue of detecting impairment or detecting traces of cannabis

- Q42. Currently in WA, is it legal or illegal to drive while affected by cannabis?
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Legal..... | 1 |
| Illegal..... | 2 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- Q43. Do you think it should be legal or illegal to drive while affected by cannabis?
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Legal..... | 1 |
| Illegal..... | 2 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- Q44. Criminal offences result in a criminal record. Non-criminal offences are like speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal but result in a fine rather than a criminal record. **CARD 12**
- Currently in WA is it a criminal or a non-criminal offence drive while affected by cannabis? **CARD 12**
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Criminal | 1 |
| Non-criminal | 2 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- Q45. Assuming it were to remain illegal, do you think that driving while affected by cannabis should be a criminal or a non-criminal offence? **CARD 12**
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Criminal | 1 |
| Non-criminal | 2 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- Q46. Do you agree or disagree that police should test drivers for cannabis use (like they do for alcohol)? **CARD 6**
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Disagree..... | 3 |
| Strongly disagree..... | 4 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |

R. GENERAL ATTITUDES TO LAW/POLICE

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: **CARD 6**

- R1. Most laws are worth obeying
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Disagree..... | 3 |
| Strongly disagree..... | 4 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |

R2. I am a law abiding citizen

Strongly agree	1
Agree.....	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know/not sure	8

R3. Most laws are fair

Strongly agree	1
Agree.....	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know/not sure	8

R4. It is important that people in a society respect most of its laws

Strongly agree	1
Agree.....	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know/not sure	8

R5. It's alright to break the law if you can get away with it

Strongly agree	1
Agree.....	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know/not sure	8

If agree, Does this apply to all laws or only for some? Which ones? (specify) ___

R6. People should break the laws they disagree with

Strongly agree	1
Agree.....	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know/not sure	8

If agree, Does this apply to all laws or only for some? Which ones? (specify) ___

- R7. Police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Disagree..... | 3 |
| Strongly disagree..... | 4 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- R8. Some police abuse their authority over people they suspect have broken the law
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Disagree..... | 3 |
| Strongly disagree..... | 4 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- R9. Police generally treat cannabis users with respect
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Disagree..... | 3 |
| Strongly disagree..... | 4 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- R10. Police should be given more power to crack down on cannabis in the community
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Disagree..... | 3 |
| Strongly disagree..... | 4 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |
- R11. Police time could be better spent than in pursuing minor cannabis offenders
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Disagree..... | 3 |
| Strongly disagree..... | 4 |
| Don't know/not sure..... | 8 |

A. CANNABIS USE

- A1. Approximately, what percentage of Australians 14 and over do you think have ever used cannabis? _____
- A2. Approximately, what percentage of Australians 14 and over do you think have used cannabis in the last 12 months? _____
- A3. Have you used cannabis today?
 Yes 1
 No..... 0 **Skip to A5**
- A4. On a scale of 0 to 10, how affected by cannabis (*stoned*) are you now? _____
 (where 0=not at all affected and 10= the most affected you have ever been)

FIRST CANNABIS USE

- A5. How old were you the first time you used cannabis? _____ years
- A6. How old were you when you first started using cannabis regularly? _____ years
- A7. How regularly was that?
 Monthly..... 1
 More than monthly not weekly 2
 Weekly 3
 More than weekly not daily 4
 Once daily 5
 2 to 3 times per day 6
 More than 3 times per day 7

MOST RECENT CANNABIS USE

- A8. Not including today, when was the last time you used cannabis? _____ days ago
- A9. Where were you?
 Own home 1
 Friends home..... 2
 At work 3
 In a car..... 4
 Street/park or beach 5
 Other public place 6
 Other (*specify*) 7
 Don't know/not sure 8

A10. Who else was there? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 1**

1. No one	1	0
2. Partner	1	0
3. Child/Children.....	1	0
4. Other family members.....	1	0
5. Friends.....	1	0
6. Acquaintances	1	0
7. Work mates	1	0
8. People I don't really know	1	0
88. Don't know/not sure	1	0

A11. What type of cannabis did you use? (*Prompt: mainly*) **CARD 2**

Hydroponic leaf.....	1
Hydroponic head	2
Mixture of hydro leaf/head.....	3
Non-hydro leaf	4
Non-hydro head.....	5
Mixture of non-hydro leaf/head	6
Hash	7
Hash oil	8
Don't know/not sure	88

A12. How did you use it? (*Prompt: mainly*)

Joint.....	1
Wet bong	2
Bucket bong	3
Pipe.....	4
Cone	5
Ate it.....	6
Don't know/not sure	8

A13. How much did you use last time you used cannabis? _____

(ask amount/unit used eg one joint/cone/bong & amount of cannabis contained)

A14. Last time you used cannabis, as far as you know, what was the original source of that cannabis?

- Grew my own..... 1
 'Backyard' user/grower 2
 Large scale supplier 3
 (eg crime syndicate, bikie gangs etc)
 Refused to answer 6
 Other (specify) _____.. 7
 Don't know/not sure 8

TYPICAL PATTERN OF USE

A15. In a typical day that you use cannabis, how many hours do you spend affected by cannabis (*stoned*)? _____

A16. How often do you *usually* use cannabis?

- Once a week..... 1
 2 to 3 times a week..... 2
 4 to 6 times a week..... 3
 Once a day..... 4
 2 to 3 times a day 5
 4 to 6 times a day 6
 More than 6 times a day..... 7

A17. How long would you say this has been your typical pattern of use?

- Less than 1 month 1
 1 to 6 months..... 2
 7 to 12 months..... 3
 Over 12 months to 5 years 4
 More than 5 years..... 5
 Don't know/not sure 8

A18.

Tape & take notes

Would you be able to tell me about any changes that have occurred with your cannabis use since you first started? *Prompts: Why has it changed recently?*

A19. What type of cannabis do you *mainly* use? **CARD 2**

Hydroponic leaf.....	1
Hydroponic head	2
Mixture of hydro leaf/head.....	3
Non-hydro leaf	4
Non-hydro head.....	5
Mixture of non-hydro leaf/head	6
Hash	7
Hash oil	8
Don't know/not sure	88

A20. Given the option, would you prefer to use hydroponically grown or non-hydroponically grown cannabis?

Hydroponic.....	1
Non-hydroponic	2
No preference	3
Don't know/ not sure.....	8

If preference indicated, Why? _____

A21. How do you *mainly* use cannabis?

Joint.....	1
Wet bong	2
Bucket bong	3
Pipe.....	4
Cone	5
Eat it	6

A22. Does the method you use change in relation to where you are? *Prompt - How and why change? (eg risk of detection, influence of friends/partner, intoxication effect, amount available)*

Details. _____

A23. Who do you use cannabis with? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 1**

1. No one.....	1	0
2. Partner.....	1	0
3. Child/Children.....	1	0
4. Other family members.....	1	0
5. Friends.....	1	0
6. Acquaintances.....	1	0
7. Work mates.....	1	0
8. People I don't really know.....	1	0
88. Don't know/not sure.....	1	0

A24. Who, out of these people, do you use cannabis with the most? _____

A25. In a typical day that you use cannabis, how much do you use?

(ask unit used eg one joint/cone/bong- prompt for amount in smallest unit if respondent answers in grams – eg How many joints would that be?)

PROJECTED USE

A26. How likely is it that you will continue to use cannabis over the next 12 months?

Very likely.....	4
Quite likely.....	3
Unlikely.....	2
Very unlikely.....	1
Don't know/not sure.....	8

A27. If you intend to continue using cannabis do you think your use will:

Increase.....	1	
Decrease.....	2	
Stay the same.....	3	Skip to B.
Don't know/not sure.....	8	Skip to B.

A28.

Tape & take notes

If the respondent indicates an increase or a decrease:

Would you be able to tell me what you believe will change about your cannabis use? Can you explain why you think it will change?

B. ATTITUDES TOWARDS CANNABIS USE

REASONS FOR USE

B1. **Tape & take notes**
 Why do you currently use cannabis? *(prompt for more than one response)*
 What has changed about your reasons for using cannabis since you first started using it? *Prompts- why has it changed etc.*
 Do you ever use cannabis for medicinal or medical reasons? *Ask respondent to specify reasons.*

B2. **Tape & take notes**
 Now I'd like us to talk about what you like most and least about cannabis:
 What do you like most about using cannabis? *(prompt for more than one response)*
 What do you like least about using cannabis? *(prompt for more than one response)*

B3. **Tape & take notes**
 Can you tell me whether aspects of your cannabis use bother you? Why/why not? *Prompts- health, financial, legal, relationship problems*

Yes 1 No 0 Don't know 8

ATTITUDES TO CANNABIS

B4. Overall, how safe or dangerous a drug do you think cannabis is?

Very safe	1
Moderately safe.....	2
Neither safe nor dangerous	3
Moderately dangerous.....	4
Very dangerous	5
Don't know/not sure	8

B5. Overall, how useful or beneficial a drug do you think cannabis is?

No benefit at all.....	1
Slightly beneficial	2
Moderately beneficial	3
Highly beneficial.....	4
Don't know/not sure	8

B6. Do you think there are any health problems associated with using cannabis?

Yes	1
No.....	0

If yes, what are they? DON'T PROMPT

Lung cancer.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bronchitis.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other respiratory diseases, eg asthma.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under achievement of a person's potential.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behaviour problems	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decreased concentration	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memory impairment	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Failure at school or other educational institution...	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paranoia, anxiety and panic	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impairment of physical co-ordination.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased risk of schizophrenia/other psychosis....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confusion/Cognitive impairment.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commit suicide/attempt suicide.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dangerous during pregnancy	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genetic mutation.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decreases sperm count/damages sperm.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adverse effect on brain function.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addiction/dependence.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/not sure	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of these health problems have you personally experienced?
(tick boxes above)

B7. Do you think there are any benefits to a person's health from using cannabis?

Yes.....1
 No0

If yes, what are they? DON'T PROMPT

Relieves stress	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makes you feel good/fun.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improves concentration	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps people with AIDS	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aesthetic enhancement.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps asthma	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relieves stomach cramps	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps with chemotherapy.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stops glaucoma	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduces aggression	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps with PMT	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appetite stimulation	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pain relief	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increases sex drive	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/not sure	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of these health benefits have you personally experienced?
 (*tick boxes above*)

B8. Do you think there are any social problems associated with using cannabis?

Yes..... 1
No..... 0

If yes, what are they? DON'T PROMPT

Family domestic problems.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of friends.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committing crime to support use.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial difficulties	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use is illegal.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Causes anti-social behaviour.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dangerous driving.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional problems	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic violence.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dangerous behaviour	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impaired perception	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Failure at school or other educational institution... 1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Under achievement of a person's potential..... 1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mix with undesirable crowd	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addiction/dependence.....	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/not sure	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of these social problems have you personally experienced?

(tick boxes above)

B9. To what extent do you think people risk harm if they use cannabis occasionally (i.e. once a month)? **CARD 3**

No risk..... 0
Slight risk..... 1
Moderate risk

2

Great risk..... 3

Don't know/not sure

8

B10. To what extent do you think people risk harm if they use cannabis regularly (i.e. at least once a fortnight)? **CARD 3**

No risk..... 0
Slight risk..... 1
Moderate risk

2

Great risk..... 3

Don't know/not sure

8

B11. To what extent do you think people risk harm if they use cannabis every day? **CARD 3**

No risk..... 0
Slight risk..... 1
Moderate risk

2

Great risk..... 3

Don't know/not sure

8

- B12. To what extent do you feel cannabis is addictive? Would you say it is...
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Very addictive | 4 |
| Moderately addictive..... | 3 |
| Not very addictive | 2 |
| Not at all addictive | 1 |
| Don't know/not sure | 8 |
- B13. Which of the following best describes how you would weigh up the relative harms and benefits of cannabis?
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Benefits outweigh harms..... | 1 |
| Benefits roughly equal harms..... | 2 |
| Harms outweigh benefits..... | 3 |
- Now I'd like to you to think about your cannabis use over the past year.**
- B14 Did you think your use of cannabis was out of control? **CARD 4**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Never/almost never | 0 |
| Sometimes | 1 |
| Often..... | 2 |
| Always/nearly always | 3 |
- B15 Did the prospect of missing a smoke make your anxious or worried? **CARD 4**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Never/almost never | 0 |
| Sometimes | 1 |
| Often..... | 2 |
| Always/nearly always | 3 |
- B16 Did you worry about your use of cannabis? **CARD 4**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Never/almost never | 0 |
| Sometimes | 1 |
| Often..... | 2 |
| Always/nearly always | 3 |
- B17 Did you wish you could stop? **CARD 4**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Never/almost never | 0 |
| Sometimes | 1 |
| Often..... | 2 |
| Always/nearly always | 3 |
- B18 How difficult did you find it to stop, or go without cannabis? **CARD 5**
- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Not difficult..... | 0 |
| Quite difficult | 1 |
| Very difficult..... | 2 |
| Impossible | 3 |

C. INFLUENCES ON USE

C1 Do you have any rules or guidelines about when you will or won't use cannabis? (*prompts- do you limit your use in certain situations/ occasions*)

Yes 1
 No..... 0 **Skip to C3**

C2. *If yes,* **Tape & take notes**
 Can you give me an idea about the rules or guidelines that you use to control your cannabis use? *Prompts: What are your rules? Do they vary under different circumstances?*

C3. If you refused any cannabis you were offered in the last 6 months, what were your reasons for refusing it? **DON'T PROMPT**

Did not refuse any offers of cannabis	1	0
Wanted to limit use	1	0
Was not using at time.....	1	0
Couldn't afford it	1	0
Didn't feel like it.....	1	0
Wrong time/situation	1	0
Suspicious of person offering it	1	0
Concerned about getting busted.....	1	0
Didn't like offer (eg quality).....	1	0
Was driving at time	1	0
Was working at time	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	0

C4. What do you do when you run out of cannabis?
 (*Prompts – does it affect your use of other drugs including alcohol & tobacco*)

Details. _____

Yes No

C5. Have you ever tried to stop using cannabis all together? **1 0**
—Skip to C9

If yes, How many times? _____ times

C6. What is the longest period you have stopped using cannabis for? _____ wks/mths/yrs

C7. What were your main reasons for stopping the last time you stopped?

Details. _____

C8. Why did you start using again?

Details. _____

C9. Have you ever tried to cut down or reduce your cannabis use, without stopping?	Yes	No
	1	0

- Skip to C12

C10. What were your main reasons for trying to cut down?

Details. _____

C11. How successful were you?

Details. _____

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

C12.	Tape & take notes
I'm interested in how the people you spend the most time with and care about the most influence your cannabis use. Do the people you live with or spend your time with also use cannabis, and do they approve of you using? <i>Prompts: Partner? Children? Family? Housemates? Friends? Do you decrease or increase your use when specific people are around? Why?</i>	

C13. About what proportion of your friends and acquaintances use cannabis?

- None..... 0
 A few..... 1
 About half 2
 Most 3
 All 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: **CARD 6**

C14. My friends disapprove of me using cannabis

- Strongly agree 1
 Agree..... 2
 Disagree 3
 Strongly disagree 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

C15. My family disapproves of me using cannabis

- Strongly agree 1
 Agree..... 2
 Disagree 3
 Strongly disagree 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

LEGAL

C16.

Tape & take notes

Now I'd like to know if the illegality of cannabis affects your use? *Prompts: where you use, who you use with, how open you are about using?*

If yes, What effect does it have? Why?

If no/ don't know, Why not?

Yes 1 No 0 Don't know 8

C17.

Tape & take notes

Do you worry about being caught by the police in possession of cannabis and the possibility of a criminal conviction?

If yes, What effect does it have?

If no, Does it restrict where you use, who you use with, how open you are about using?

Yes 1 No 0 Don't know 8

C18. How much does the prospect of being caught and convicted affect your cannabis use? **CARD 7**

- Not at all.....0 **Skip to C20**
- Slightly 1
- Moderately 2
- A lot..... 3
- Don't know/not sure 8

C19. Does the prospect of being caught and convicted affect your cannabis use in terms of:

	Yes	No	If yes, how?
Quantity (how much you use).....	1		0 _____
Frequency (how often you use).....	1		0 _____
Type of cannabis (hydro head, leafs, etc)	1		0 _____
Method (bong, joint etc).....	1		0 _____
Where you use.....	1		0 _____
Who you use with	1		0 _____
Other (specify) _____	1		0 _____

C20. If cannabis were as legal as alcohol, how much would it affect your cannabis use? **CARD 7**

- Not at all.....0 **Skip to D**
- Slightly 1
- Moderately 2
- A lot..... 3
- Don't know/not sure 8

C21. If cannabis were as legal as alcohol, would it affect your cannabis use in terms of:

	Yes	No	If yes, how?
Quantity (how much you use).....1		0	_____
Frequency (how often you use).....1		0	_____
Type of cannabis (hydro head, leafs, etc)1		0	_____
Method (bong, joint etc)1		0	_____
Where you use.....1		0	_____
Who you use with1		0	_____
Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ 1		0	_____

D. RISKY CANNABIS USE**RISKY FEATURES**

D1. How often do you use cannabis with or around strangers? **CARD 8**

Always4
 Often.....3
 Sometimes2
 Rarely1
 Never0

D2. How often do you use cannabis mixed with tobacco? **CARD 8**

Always4
 Often.....3
 Sometimes2
 Rarely1
 Never0

D3. How often do you use cannabis in conjunction with any other drugs?

CARD 8

Always4
 Often.....3
 Sometimes2
 Rarely1
 Never0

Which drugs? (*specify*) **CARD 9** _____

D4. How often do you share joints/bongs? **CARD 8**

Always4
 Often.....3
 Sometimes2
 Rarely1
 Never0

Who with? (*specify*) **CARD 1** _____

D5. Do you ever binge?

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Yes | 1 | |
| No..... | 0 | Skip to D8 |
| Don't know/not sure | 8 | Skip to D7 |

D6. What does a binge mean to you?

Details. _____

D7. *If answered Don't know/ not sure*, A binge is when you use cannabis to excess:

How often do you binge? **CARD 8**

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Always | 4 |
| Often | 3 |
| Sometimes..... | 2 |
| Rarely..... | 1 |
| Never..... | 0 |

RISKY ACTIVITIES (DRIVING, WORKING, STUDYING, OPERATING MACHINERY)

People we have spoken to have described the effects of cannabis alone, and in combination with alcohol, on driving, working, studying and operating machinery. This section explores your personal experiences of these activities.

<p>D8. Can you tell me about your experiences related to cannabis and driving? <i>Prompts: Have you experienced any accidents or mishaps? If not, have you been a passenger when the driver has been using cannabis?</i></p>	<p>Tape & take notes</p>
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<p>D9. Can you tell me about your experiences related to cannabis and working? <i>Prompts: Have you experienced any accidents or mishaps?</i></p>	<p>Tape & take notes</p>
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D10. **Tape & take notes**
 Can you tell me about your experiences related to cannabis and studying?
Prompts: Have you experienced any accidents or mishaps?

D11. **Tape & take notes**
 Can you tell me about your experiences related to cannabis and operating machinery? (eg. drill, lawn mower) *Prompts: Have you experienced any accidents or mishaps?*

D12.	Driven a vehicle	Worked	Studied	Operated machinery
<u>Cannabis Alone:</u>	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
How many times affected whilst:	_____	_____	_____	_____
How many times used whilst:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Effect on performance?	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Details				
<u>Cannabis & Alcohol:</u>	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
How many times affected whilst:	_____	_____	_____	_____
How many times used whilst:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Effect on performance?	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Details				

1. In the last 6 months, how many times have you (*insert activity*) whilst affected by cannabis?
2. In the last 6 months, how many times have you actually used cannabis whilst (*insert activity*) ?
3. Do you think using cannabis just before or while you (*insert activity*) has any effect on your (*insert activity*) performance? *Details*

E. TREATMENT

E1. **Tape & take notes**

If you felt that you needed help in relation to your cannabis use, would you seek professional help? *Prompt: eg. Counsellor, GP*

If yes, Who would you go to? Why would you choose that person?

Prompt: how would you identify that you needed help?

If no, Why not?

Prompts: Awareness of professional services available? Worried about illegality?

If maybe, If you were going to see someone, who would you go to? Why would you choose that person? Prompt: how they would identify they needed help

Yes 1 No 0 Maybe/don't know 8

E2. Are you currently receiving any drug treatment in relation to your cannabis use?

Yes 1

No..... 0

Skip to E5.

E3. What type of treatment? (*mark main type only*)

Drug counselling 1

GP 2

Mental health 3

Therapeutic community 4

Narcotics Anonymous..... 5

Other _____ 6

E4. How long have you been in this treatment for? _____ months

E5. Have you *ever* attended treatment or counselling in relation to any drug use?

Yes 1

No..... 0

Skip to E9.

E6. Which drug or drugs did you attend treatment or counselling for? **CARD 9**

- E7. What kind of treatments have you had? (*can mark more than one*)
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Therapeutic community | 1 | 0 |
| Narcotics Anonymous | 1 | 0 |
| Drug counselling | 1 | 0 |
| GP | 1 | 0 |
| Mental health | 1 | 0 |
| Methadone | 1 | 0 |
| Buprenorphine | 1 | 0 |
| Naltrexone | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) | 1 | 0 |
- E8. How long ago was your most recent treatment?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Less than 6 months ago | 1 |
| Over 6 months but less than 12 months ago | 2 |
| One to two years ago | 3 |
| Three to five years ago | 4 |
| Six to ten years ago | 5 |
| More than ten years ago | 6 |
- E9. Have you ever attended a health professional for a mental health problem other than drug dependence?
- | | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 0 Skip to F. |
- E10. What issue did you go for?
- E11. What kind of health practitioner did you see?
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| GP | 1 | 0 |
| Psychiatrist | 1 | 0 |
| Psychologist | 1 | 0 |
| Counsellor | 1 | 0 |
| Community health nurse | 1 | 0 |
| Mental health nurse | 1 | 0 |
| Hospital ED | 1 | 0 |
| Psychiatric ward | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) | 1 | 0 |
- E12. How long ago was this?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Less than 6 months ago | 1 |
| Over 6 months but less than 12 months ago | 2 |
| One to two years ago | 3 |
| Three to five years ago | 4 |
| Six to ten years ago | 5 |
| More than ten years ago | 6 |

F. OTHER DRUG USEHave you used any of the following drugs? **CARD 9**

	Ever used	Age at first use	Ever injected	Age at first injection	Last 12 months		Last 4 weeks	
					No. of times used	Injected	No. of times used	Injected
1. Alcohol	Y / N							
2. Tobacco	Y / N							
3. Hallucinogens (lsd, mushrooms)	Y / N							
4. Inhalants (nangs, amyl, paint, petrol etc)	Y / N							
5. Amphetamines (speed, crystal)	Y / N		Y / N			Y / N		Y / N
6. Ecstasy	Y / N		Y / N			Y / N		Y / N
7. Benzos (valium, rohypnol)	Y / N		Y / N			Y / N		Y / N
8. Anti-depressants (prozac) <i>for nonmedical purposes</i>	Y / N		Y / N			Y / N		Y / N
9. Cocaine	Y / N		Y / N			Y / N		Y / N
10. Heroin / opioids	Y / N		Y / N			Y / N		Y / N
11. Other drug: _____	Y / N		Y / N			Y / N		Y / N

MARKET FACTORS

G. GENERAL MARKET KNOWLEDGE

G1. **Tape & take notes**
 Now I'd like to ask you some questions about cannabis potency, availability and price.
 What do you think about the potency of cannabis? *Prompts: strength dependent on strain? Whether hydro or not? Seasonal effect or variation?*
 Can you tell me about the availability and price of cannabis over the time you have been involved in the cannabis market? *Prompts: is it easier/more difficult/stable? Recent changes*

Now for the more specific questions:

G2. How much does cannabis cost at the moment? (*can put ranges here*)

Hydro \$_____ gm \$_____ ounce

Non-hydro \$_____ gm \$_____ ounce

G3. What amounts of cannabis have you bought in the last **6 months**?

(*Tick boxes below*)

G4. What did you pay *last time* you bought each amount?

(single figure only here –specify whether hydro or non-hydro prices)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | a gram of hash? | \$ _____ | gram |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | a cap of hash oil? | \$ _____ | cap |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hydro gram of cannabis? | \$ _____ | hydro gram |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | non-hydro gram of cannabis? | \$ _____ | non-hydro gram |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hydro ‘stick’ of cannabis? | \$ _____ | hydro ‘stick’ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | non-hydro ‘stick’ of cannabis? | \$ _____ | non-hydro ‘stick’ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hydro ‘foil’ of cannabis? | \$ _____ | hydro ‘foil’ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | non-hydro ‘foil’ of cannabis? | \$ _____ | non-hydro ‘foil’ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hydro ‘bag’ of cannabis | \$ _____ | hydro ‘bag’ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | non-hydro ‘bag’ of cannabis | \$ _____ | non-hydro ‘bag’ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hydro quarter ounce? | \$ _____ | hydro quarter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | non-hydro quarter ounce? | \$ _____ | non-hydro quarter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hydro half ounce? | \$ _____ | hydro half ounce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | non-hydro half ounce? | \$ _____ | non-hydro half ounce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hydro ounce? | \$ _____ | hydro ounce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | non-hydro ounce? | \$ _____ | non-hydro ounce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | other amount? | \$ _____ | <i>specify</i> |
-

G5. Has the price of cannabis changed in the last 6 months?

- Increasing 1
 Stable..... 2
 Decreasing..... 3
 Fluctuates 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

G6. How strong would you say cannabis is at the moment?

- High..... 1
 Medium 2
 Low 3
 Fluctuates 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

G7. Has the strength of cannabis changed in the last 6 months?

- Increasing 1
 Stable..... 2
 Decreasing..... 3
 Fluctuates 4
 Don't know/not sure 8

- G8. How easy is it to get cannabis at the moment?
- Very easy..... 1
 - Easy 2
 - Difficult 3
 - Very difficult 4
 - Don't know/not sure 8
- G9. Has this changed in the last 6 months?
- More difficult 1
 - Stable..... 2
 - Easier..... 3
 - Fluctuates 4
 - Don't know/not sure 8

H. MOST RECENT CANNABIS SCORE

H1. **Tape & take notes**
 I want you to tell me in your own words what happened the last time you scored cannabis. Without mentioning any names, how would you describe the person you scored from?
Prompt: friend, dealer (cannabis or other drugs)
 What occurred from the time you decided to score to when you got the cannabis, used it or went home?
Prompts: how much was scored, was it all used at once or stored at home, gift or purchase, was it for a group or just for yourself?

Now I would like to ask you some specific questions—it might seem a bit repetitive but it helps to make sure that I don't miss anything you tell me.

H2. The last time you scored how long did it take you to score? _____ minutes

H3. Where did you score from? (*mark only one*)

Street dealer	1
Dealer's home.....	2
Mobile dealer	3
Spouse/partner.....	4
Other family member	5
Friend	6
Grow your own	7
Gift from friends	8
Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	77

H4. As far as you know, what was the original source of that cannabis?

Grew my own.....	1
'Backyard' user/grower	2
Large scale supplier	3
(<i>eg crime syndicate, bkie gangs etc</i>)	
Refused to answer	6
Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	7
Don't know/not sure	8

H5. What form of cannabis was it? **CARD 2**

Hydroponic leaf	1
Hydroponic head.....	2
Mixture of hydro leaf/head	3
Non-hydro leaf	4
Non-hydro head	5
Mixture of non-hydro leaf/head	6
Hash	7
Hash oil	8
Don't know/not sure	88

H6. What quantity did you score? (*mark only one*)

Gram	1
Stick	2
Foil	3
Bag	4
Quarter ounce.....	5
Half ounce	6
Ounce	7
Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	77

- H7. Why did you score that amount? (*can mark more than one*)
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Cost, economics | 1 | 0 |
| Meets consumption needs | 1 | 0 |
| Availability..... | 1 | 0 |
| Less risk of detection | 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) | 1 | 0 |
- H8. How much did this amount cost (\$0 if it was a gift) ? _____ dollars
- H9. Did you score this amount all for your own use?
- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No..... | 0 |
- If no*, how many people was it to be split/shared with? _____ people
- If no*, how much did you personally spend (\$0 if it was a gift) ? _____ dollars

J. TYPICAL PURCHASING

- J1. Approximately, how many times have you purchased cannabis over the last 6 months?
-
- J2. Over the last 6 months, approximately how much of your total income did you spend on cannabis?
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 76%-100% | 4 |
| 51%-75% | 3 |
| 26%-50% | 2 |
| 1%-25% | 1 |
| None of it | 0 |
| Don't know/not sure | 8 |
- Approximate dollar amount per week? _____ dollars
- J3. Over the last 6 months, how long did it **usually** take you to score cannabis? _____ minutes
- J4. Over the last 6 months, what place did you **mainly** score cannabis from? (*mark only one*)
- | | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Street dealer..... | 1 |
| Dealer's home | 2 |
| Mobile dealer | 3 |
| Spouse/partner..... | 4 |
| Other family member | 5 |
| Friend | 6 |
| Grow your own | 7 |
| Gift from friends | 8 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) | 77 |

J5. Over the last 6 months, as far as you know, what was the original source of the cannabis you **usually** scored?

- Grew my own..... 1
 'Backyard' user/grower 2
 Large scale supplier 3
 (eg crime syndicate, bkie gangs etc)
 Refused to answer 6
 Other (specify) _____.. 7
 Don't know/not sure 8

J6. Over the last 6 months, what form of cannabis did you **usually** score?
CARD 2

- Hydroponic leaf 1
 Hydroponic head 2
 Mixture of hydro leaf/head 3
 Non-hydro leaf 4
 Non-hydro head 5
 Mixture of non-hydro leaf/head 6
 Hash 7
 Hash oil 8
 Don't know/not sure 88

J7. Over the last 6 months, what quantity do you **typically** score? (mark only one)

- Gram 1
 Stick 2
 Foil 3
 Bag 4
 Quarter ounce..... 5
 Half ounce 6
 Ounce 7
 Other (specify) _____ 77

J8. Why did you **typically** score that amount?

- Cost, economics 1 0
 Meets consumption needs 1 0
 Availability 1 0
 Less risk of detection 1 0
 Other (specify) _____.. 1 0

J9. Over the last 6 months, how often did you share or split deals? **CARD 8**

- Always 4
 Mostly 3
 Often 2
 Sometimes..... 1
 Never..... 0

J10. Have you ever been offered or asked for other drugs when purchasing cannabis?

Yes 1
 No.....0

Skip to J15

J11. **Tape & take notes**

I'd like you to talk a bit about buying other drugs with cannabis.
 Without using any names, can you tell me about what usually happens when other drugs are available when you score cannabis?

*Prompts: Are other drugs offered to you or do you ask? What other drugs are available?
 Do you score other drugs? Which ones?*

Do fluctuations in the availability of cannabis relate to the availability of other drugs?

J12. When you purchased cannabis over the last 6 months, have you ever been offered or asked for other drugs?

	Yes	No	
Offered	1	0	If both 'no', Skip to J15
Asked for	1	0	

J13. Which drugs have you been offered/asked for? (*specify*) **CARD 9**

J14. Did you purchase any of the drugs? *Which ones, why/ why not?*

J15.

Tape & take notes

Now I'd like you to tell me some of the things you like and dislike about the way you currently obtain your cannabis. What are the good and the bad things about it?

Prompts: convenience, availability, other drugs; quality, criminal aspect, violence, rip-offs, secrecy

J16. How many times during the last 6 months have you experienced violence or rip-offs when purchasing cannabis?

None.....	0	Skip to K
1-2 times.....	1	
3-4 times.....	2	
5 or more times	3	
Don't know/not sure	8	

J17.

Tape & take notes

Can you give me an example of a situation when this happened, in the last 6 months?

K. GROWING

K1. Have you ever grown cannabis?

Yes 1
 No.....0

Skip to L

K2. Tape & take notes
 I'd like you to tell us about your growing of cannabis. Can you take me through the process—beginning with how you got involved, decisions to grow hydro or non-hydro, what the yields per year are, and whether growing has changed since you began?
Prompts: How many plants do you grow? Why this amount? Juvenile vs mature plants? Are they hydro or non-hydro? Why do you use that method? Reasons for growing? Are there others involved?

Now I would like to ask you some specific questions—it might seem a bit repetitive but it helps to make sure that I don't miss anything you tell me.

K3. Have you grown cannabis **in the last 12 months?** Yes 1 No 0
(Skip to K6)

In the last 12 months:
 What method have you used to grow cannabis *eg. hydro* (tick box)
 How many plants have you grown in total, including juveniles?
 How many of these would you have grown to maturity (went to head)?
 How many separate crops have you grown? *Prompt: How many times have you harvested?*

	Non-hydro <input type="checkbox"/>	Hydro <input type="checkbox"/>
Total including juveniles	_____	_____
Grown to maturity	_____	_____
Crops/harvested	_____	_____

K4. How much of the cannabis you used **in the last 6 months** did you grow yourself?

- 76%-100%..... 4
- 51%-75%..... 3
- 26%-50%..... 2
- 1%-25%..... 1
- None of it 0
- Don't know/not sure 8

K5. How much of the cannabis you grew **in the last 6 months** did you give away?

- 76%-100%..... 4
- 51%-75%..... 3
- 26%-50%..... 2
- 1%-25%..... 1
- None of it 0
- Don't know/not sure 8

*If yes, Who do you give it to? **CARD 1** _____*

K6. How many times during the last 6 months have you experienced violence or rip-offs when growing cannabis?

- None..... 0 **Skip to L**
- 1-2 times..... 1
- 3-4 times..... 2
- 5 or more times 3
- Don't know/not sure 8

K7. **Tape & take notes**
 Can you give me an example of a situation when this happened, in the last 6 months?

L. SUPPLYING

Before we talk about supplying cannabis, I want to discuss the different types of supply with you. Some people supply cannabis for profit, whereas others supply cannabis not-for-profit, and some people give it away. For the following section, selling means selling cannabis for profit, and distributing means selling cannabis not-for-profit. **CARD 10**

L1.

Tape & take notes

Now in general terms, I'd like you to describe to me how the selling and supply process works. I don't want you to tell me specific details or provide me with any names, I simply want you to provide me with a rough idea of how the cannabis market works.

(Remind respondent about the confidential nature of the study and that if they accidentally mention names these will be deleted or changed when the tape is transcribed)

Now for the more specific questions:

Yes = 1, No = 0

	Give		Distribute		Sell	
L2. During the last 6 months, did you:	1	0	1	0	1	0
	If no, skip to L3					
During the last 6 months, how many times did you:	_____		_____		_____	
During the last 6 months, who did you: CARD 1	_____		_____		_____	
During the last 6 months, as far as you know, what was the original source of the cannabis you:	_____		_____		_____	
L3. Have you ever:	1	0	1	0	1	0
L4. How long ago did you first:	_____		_____		_____	

Give: give cannabis to others?

Distribute: sell cannabis to others not-for-profit, or buy cannabis on behalf of others?

Sell: sell cannabis to others for profit?

Original source: Grown by me = 1, Another backyard user-grower = 2, Large scale supplier = 3

If answers No to giving, distributing and selling in last 6 months, Skip to L9

If answers No to selling, but yes to distributing in last 6 months, Skip to L11

L5. How much of the money you earned last year came from selling cannabis?

- 76%-100%..... 4
 51%-75%..... 3
 26%-50%..... 2
 1%-25%..... 1
 None..... 0
 Don't know/not sure 8

Approximate dollar amount?

_____ dollars

L6. Would you consider yourself as a cannabis dealer?

Yes 1
 No.....0

Why/ Why not? (*specify*) _____

L7. Have you ever exchanged cannabis for other drugs, goods or favours?

Yes 1
 No.....0

If yes, Under what circumstances? *Details.* _____

L8. Have you ever given cannabis away to people who buy from you?

Yes 1
 No.....0

If yes, Under what circumstances? *Details.* _____

L9. How many times during the last 6 months have you experienced violence or rip-offs associated with distributing or selling cannabis?

None 1
 1-2 times.....2
 3-4 times.....3
 5 or more times.....4
 Don't know/not sure8

Skip to L11

L10. **Tape & take notes**
 Can you give me an example of a situation when this happened?

L11. Have you ever sold drugs other than cannabis?

Yes, regularly 3

Yes, occasionally 2

Yes, but not in the last 6 months..... 1

No..... 0

If yes, Who do you sell it to? (*specify*). **CARD 1** _____

If yes, Which drugs have you sold? (*specify*). **CARD 9** _____

EXPERIENCE OF POLICE AND COURTS

In this section I would like to look at the events surrounding your contact with police in relation to cannabis-related offences *in WA only*.

M. PERSONAL CONTACT WITH POLICE AND COURTS

M1. Have you ever been apprehended or caught by the police in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1

No..... 0

How many times? _____ times

M2. Have you ever been informally warned in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1

No..... 0

How many times? _____ times

M3. Have you ever been formally cautioned in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1

No..... 0

How many times? _____ times

M4. Have you ever been given an infringement notice in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1

No..... 0

How many times? _____ times

M5. Have you ever been charged in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1

No..... 0

How many times? _____ times

M6. Have you ever been arrested in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1

No.....0
 How many times? _____ times

M7. Have you ever been to court in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1
 No.....0
 How many times? _____ times

M8. Have you ever been convicted in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1
 No.....0
 How many times? _____ times

Have you previously been convicted of any offences, prior to your first cannabis conviction? *Details.*

M9. Have you ever been imprisoned in relation to cannabis?

Yes 1
 No.....0
 How many times? _____ times

Was imprisonment a result of a sentence for a criminal offence or a fine default?

If none of these things have happened, skip to N

M10. The last contact you had with police in relation to cannabis-related offences in WA was for: (*can mark more than one*)

Possession/use - cannabis.....	1	0
Possession/use - implement.....	1	0
Cultivation.....	1	0
Sell/supply.....	1	0

M11.

Tape & take notes

Now I would like you to briefly describe, in your own words, the events surrounding the last time you had contact with police in relation to cannabis-related offences in WA.

Prompts – what were you doing, who were you with, where were you, were you intoxicated?

What happened when the police arrived? What happened after that – did you receive a summons, caution etc, did you have to go to the police station, attend court etc. What affect did this experience have on you? What consequences did you experience as a result of the police contact?

Now I would like to ask you some specific questions about the last time you had contact with police in relation to cannabis - it might seem a bit repetitive but it helps to make sure that I don't miss anything you tell me.

M12. When did this occur? _____ month / _____ year

M13. What brought you to the attention of the police on that last occasion? (*can mark more than one*)

Suspicion of possession	1	0
Suspicion of use	1	0
Suspicion of cultivation	1	0
Suspicion of selling.....	1	0
Suspicion of presence of drug other than cannabis	1	0
Non-drug criminal matter	1	0
Non-drug and non-criminal matter	1	0
Routine patrol.....	1	0
Police investigating another matter or person.....	1	0
Don't know/not sure	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	0

M14. Who were you with? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 1**

1. No one	1	0
2. Partner	1	0
3. Child/Children.....	1	0
4. Other family members.....	1	0
5. Friends.....	1	0
6. Acquaintances	1	0
7. Work mates	1	0
8. People I don't really know	1	0
88. Don't know/not sure	1	0

M15. Where were you?

Own home	1
Others home	2
Work/study place	3
Street/park/beach.....	4
Club/pub.....	5
Other public place	6
In motor vehicle	7

M16. Was anything seized?

Yes	1
No.....	0

If yes, What was seized? (specify) _____

M17. Were you under the influence of any drugs at the time?

Yes	1
No.....	0

If yes, Which drugs? (specify). **CARD 9** _____

M18. I am going to read you a list of words. I would like you to tell me whether you think they describe the way in which the police conducted the investigation. Were they:

	Yes	No	Don't know
Lawful	1	0	8
Hostile	1	0	8
Respectful	1	0	8
Offensive	1	0	8
Friendly	1	0	8

M19. I am going to read you another list of words. This time I would like you to tell me whether you think they describe the way in which you behaved towards the police. Were you:

Friendly	1	0	8
Hostile	1	0	8
Respectful	1	0	8
Offensive	1	0	8
Cooperative	1	0	8

M20. On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) please indicate how accurately the following list of statements relate to how the police conducted themselves at the time of your last contact with police in relation to cannabis:

The police respected my rights as a citizen throughout this incident	1	2	3	4	5
I was unfairly singled out for special treatment	1	2	3	4	5
The police abused their powers	1	2	3	4	5
I realise that by using cannabis I may be arrested from time to time	1	2	3	4	5
I broke the law, the police were just doing their job	1	2	3	4	5

The following few questions relate to the impact of the whole incident.

M21. What consequences did you experience as a result of that incident? (*can mark more than one*)

Employment difficulties (<i>lost job, unsuccessful job application, disciplinary action, promotion withheld</i>).....	1	0
Relationship difficulties (<i>partner, friends, family – disputes/relationship ended</i>).....	1	0
Accommodation difficulties.....	1	0
Overseas travel difficulties.....	1	0
Problems associated with being known to police.....	1	0
Made no difference	1	0
Don't know/not sure	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>).....	1	0

M22. What impact did this incident have on your cannabis use? (*can mark more than one*)

Made no difference.....	1	0
Used less.....	1	0
Reduced consumption initially.....	1	0
More careful about where/how used	1	0
Stopped for a while	1	0
Changed to/increased use of other drugs instead ...	1	0
Gave up completely.....	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	0

M23. **Tape & take notes**
 In general, what way did your attitude towards the law, cannabis law, the police and the courts change as a result of your last contact with police in relation to cannabis?

M24. More specifically, did you become more or less (*insert adjective*) towards the system?

	Much more	Somewhat more	No change	Somewhat less	Much less
Trusting	5	4	3	2	1
Fearful	5	4	3	2	1
Antagonistic	5	4	3	2	1
Respectful	5	4	3	2	1
Hostile	5	4	3	2	1
Friendly	5	4	3	2	1

N. CAUTIONING

N1. Had you heard about the WA cautioning scheme?

Yes 1
 No..... 0 **Skip to N3.**

N2. What do you know about it? *Details* _____

N3. The *Cannabis Cautioning and Mandatory Education System* has been in operation throughout WA since March 2000. This system results in those caught in possession of small amounts of cannabis or plants on a first occasion receiving a caution and being referred to a mandatory education session. Individuals caught on a second or subsequent occasion, or where other, more serious offences are involved, are still dealt with by means of a formal charge, court appearance and possible conviction.

Have you ever received a caution under the WA cautioning scheme?

Yes 1
 No..... 0 **Skip to P.**

N4. Was this the last contact you had with the police regarding cannabis?

Yes 1 **Check this
was discussed
in Section M,
then Skip to P.**

No..... 0

N5.

Tape & take notes

Now I would like you to briefly describe, in your own words, the events surrounding the last time you received a caution for cannabis, if this is a different incident to the 'last involvement with police' we just talked about.

Prompts – what were you doing, who were you with, where were you, were you intoxicated?

What happened when the police arrived? What happened when you received the caution,, did you have to go to the police station, did you attend the education session?

What affect did this experience have on you?

Now I would like to ask you some specific questions about that time you were cautioned in relation to cannabis - it might seem a bit repetitive but it helps to make sure that I don't miss anything you tell me.

N6. When did this occur? _____ month / _____ year

N7. What brought you to the attention of the police when you were cautioned?
(can mark more than one)

Suspicion of possession	1	0
Suspicion of use	1	0
Suspicion of cultivation	1	0
Suspicion of selling	1	0
Suspicion of presence of drug other than cannabis	1	0
Non-drug criminal matter	1	0
Non-drug and non-criminal matter	1	0
Routine patrol	1	0
Police investigating another matter or person	1	0
Don't know/not sure	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>)	1	0

N8. Who were you with? (*can mark more than one*) **CARD 1**

1. No one.....	1	0
2. Partner.....	1	0
3. Child/Children.....	1	0
4. Other family members	1	0
5. Friends.....	1	0
6. Acquaintances	1	0
7. Work mates	1	0
8. People I don't really know	1	0
88. Don't know/not sure	1	0

N9. Where were you?

Own home.....	1
Others home	2
Work/study place	3
Street/park/beach.....	4
Club/pub.....	5
Other public place	6
In motor vehicle	7

N10. Was anything seized?

Yes	1
No.....	0

If yes, What was seized? (specify) _____

N11. Were you under the influence of any drugs at the time?

Yes	1
No.....	0

If yes, Which drugs? (specify) **CARD 9** _____

N12. I am going to read you a list of words. I would like you to tell me whether you think they describe the way in which the police behaved towards you when cautioning you under this scheme. Were they:

	Yes	No	Don't know
Lawful	1	0	8
Hostile	1	0	8
Respectful	1	0	8
Offensive	1	0	8
Friendly	1	0	8

N13. I am going to read you another list of words. This time I would like you to tell me whether you think they describe the way in which you behaved towards the police when last cautioned under this scheme. Were you:

Friendly	1	0	8
Hostile	1	0	8
Respectful	1	0	8
Offensive	1	0	8
Cooperative	1	0	8

N14. One a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) please indicate how accurately the following list of statements relate to how the police conducted themselves when you were last cautioned under this scheme:

The police respected my rights as a citizen throughout this incident	1	2	3	4	5
I was unfairly singled out for special treatment	1	2	3	4	5
The police abused their powers	1	2	3	4	5
I realise that by using cannabis I may be arrested from time to time	1	2	3	4	5
I broke the law, the police were just doing their job	1	2	3	4	5

N15. Did you attend the mandatory education session?

Yes..... 1
 No..... 0

After asking why/not—Skip to N17

Why/ Why not? *Details.* _____

N16. **Tape & take notes**
 In your own words, what did you think of the education session?

The following few questions relate to the impact of the whole incident.

N17. What consequences did you experience as a of this incident? (*can mark more than one*)

Employment difficulties (<i>lost job, unsuccessful job application, disciplinary action, promotion withheld</i>).....	1	0
Relationship difficulties (<i>partner, friends, family – disputes/ relationship ended</i>).....	1	0
Accommodation difficulties.....	1	0
Overseas travel difficulties	1	0
Problems associated with being known to police.....	1	0
Made no difference	1	0
Don't know/not sure	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>).....	1	0

N18. What impact did this incident have on your cannabis use? (*can mark more than one*)

Made no difference	1	0
Used less	1	0
Reduced consumption initially.....	1	0
More careful about where/how used.....	1	0
Stopped for a while	1	0
Changed to/increased use of other drugs instead ...	1	0
Gave up completely.....	1	0

P. OTHER POLICE/COURT EXPERIENCES

P1. Have you ever been apprehended or caught by the police for an offence not involving cannabis?

Yes	1	
No.....	0	Skip to P4

P2. What sort of police contact have you experienced? (*can mark more than one*)

Apprehended.....	1	0
Informally warned.....	1	0
Formally cautioned	1	0
Infringement notice.....	1	0
Charged.....	1	0
Arrested.....	1	0
Attended court.....	1	0
Convicted	1	0
Imprisoned	1	0

P3. What was this in relation to? *Details.* _____

P4. About what proportion of your friends and acquaintances have been apprehended or caught by the police in relation to cannabis?

None	0	Skip to Q
A few	1	
About half	2	
Most	3	
All.....	4	
Don't know/ not sure.....	8	

P5. What type of cannabis offence were they caught for? (*can mark more than one*)

Possession/use - cannabis.....	1	0
Possession/use - implement.....	1	0
Cultivation.....	1	0
Sell/supply.....	1	0

P6. Did knowing someone who had contact with the police for a cannabis-related offence have any impact on *your* cannabis use? (*can mark more than one*)

Made no difference.....	1	0
Used less.....	1	0
Reduced consumption initially.....	1	0
More careful about where/how used	1	0
Stopped for a while	1	0
Changed to/increased use of other drugs instead ...	1	0
Gave up completely.....	1	0

S. IMPACT OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

In this section I am interested in your opinions about the possible effect that changing the laws relating to cannabis may have on cannabis use, the growing of cannabis, and the cannabis market.

You may be aware that new cannabis laws are currently being considered in parliament. The proposed scheme is based on a system of **prohibition with civil penalties**.

Under this system, possession of any amount of cannabis will remain **illegal**. However, people found in possession of not more than 30 g of cannabis, or growing up to two (non-hydroponic) plants, will be given an infringement notice and receive a fine, but no criminal conviction will be recorded against their name. In this regard, the laws will be much like those that apply to speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal, not condoned, but no criminal record.

Under the proposed scheme, possession of not more than 15 grams of cannabis attracts a \$100 fine, possession between 15 grams and not more than 30 grams of cannabis attracts a \$150 fine, and cultivation of not more than two non-hydroponic growing plants attracts a \$200 fine. Offenders will have to pay their fine or attend a cannabis education session within 28 days.

Possession and non-hydroponic growing outside of these limits, growing of any hydroponic cannabis plants, or any supplying/selling/dealing in cannabis will remain subject to **strict criminal penalties**.

The laws will be accompanied by comprehensive community education about the harms associated with cannabis and about the laws which apply to its use.

Those under 18 years will be excluded from the new system, but will be dealt with under existing juvenile justice provisions.

SHOW CARD 16 THROUGHOUT THIS SECTION

S1. Tape & take notes

Do you think the proposed system is fair? *Details*

Prompts – Are certain aspects fair while others not? Fairer than current system? Do the ‘punishments fit the crimes’?

USE**S2. Tape & take notes**

What impact do you think such changes would have on the pattern of cannabis use in the community? *Prompts – more use among those using already, encourage use among those not yet using, more use among young people, more use in public places?*

S3. Tape & take notes

What impact do you think this new system might have on your cannabis use? *Prompts – how much and often you use, who you would use with? Where you would use? When you use? What form or how you use cannabis? Why/why not?*

S4. Tape & take notes

If you had a problem with your cannabis use, would you be more willing to seek professional help within this new system? *Prompts – why/why not? Do you think people would be more willing to get treatment if they knew it was impossible to get convicted?*

GROWING**S5. Tape & take notes**

What impact do you think such changes would have on cannabis growers in general? *Prompts – more/less cannabis growers, more/less using hydroponic equipment, growing more or less plants? Why/why not?*

Tape & take notes

S6a. *For those who **do currently grow** cannabis:*
 What impact do you think these changes would have for you as a cannabis grower? Would your growing practices be affected by this new system?
Prompts: Grow more/less/same amount of plants, grow amounts within civil penalty range, would you continue to use hydroponic equipment if you do currently? Why/why not?

S6b. *For those who **do not currently grow** cannabis, Why don't you grow cannabis at present? Prompts: fear of detection by police, partner, family etc; because of its illegality and potential impact this may have on job opportunities, travel, etc. Would you reconsider growing cannabis with the introduction of this new system? Prompts: Would you grow within civil penalty range, would you consider hydroponic methods? Why/why not?*

Quantity/type respondent intends to grow: (prompt for answer if not given)

same as now Method: _____ No. of plants:

MARKET

S7. **Tape & take notes**
 What impact do you think such changes would have on the drug market and how it operates? How will it affect the buying and selling of cannabis? *Prompts – changes in availability, potency, price, availability of other drugs? Increase/decrease the level of violence/rip offs associated with the drug market? Reduce availability of other drugs to those buying cannabis? Create distinct markets for cannabis and other drugs?*

S8. **Tape & take notes**
 What impact do you think these changes would have on **your** participation in the cannabis market? Do you think it would have any effect on the way you score cannabis? *Prompts: Would you try and buy within the civil penalty range, would you switch to growing your own? Why/why not?*

Quantity respondent intends to possess: (prompt for answer if not given)

same as now Amount: _____

Tape & take notes

S9a. *For those who do currently supply cannabis,* What impact do you think these changes would have for you as a supplier? Would your supplying practices be affected by this new system? *Prompts: Sell more/less/same amount, sell amounts within civil penalty range, Why/why not?*

S9b. *For those who do not currently supply cannabis,* Why don't you supply cannabis at present? *Prompts: fear of detection by police, partner, family etc; because of its illegality and potential impact this may have on job opportunities, travel, etc.* Would you reconsider supplying cannabis with the introduction of this new system? *Prompts: Why/why not?*

ATTITUDES/PERCEPTIONS

S10. Is *(insert offence here)* a criminal or non-criminal offence under this new system?

	Criminal	Non-criminal	Not sure
Possessing not more than 15 g of cannabis	1	2	0
Possessing over 15 but not more than 30 g of cannabis	1	2	0
Possessing over 30 but not more than 100 g of cannabis	1	2	0
Growing not more than 2 non-hydroponic cannabis plants	1	2	0
Growing 3 but not more than 10 non-hydroponic cannabis plants	1	2	0
Growing not more than 2 hydroponic cannabis plants	1	2	0

S11. If you were *(insert offence here)*, how likely do you think it is that you would be caught under this new system? **Note: can use wording from S10 for each offence**

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Quite likely	Very likely	Not sure
Possessing 15g or less	1	2	3	4	8
Possessing >15 to 30g	1	2	3	4	8
Possessing >30 to 100g	1	2	3	4	8
Growing 2 or less non-hydro	1	2	3	4	8
Growing 3 to 10 non-hydro	1	2	3	4	8
Growing 2 or less hydro	1	2	3	4	8

S12. If you (*insert penalty here*), how big a problem would this be for you?

	No prob at all	A little prob	A big prob	A very big prob	Not sure
Had to pay a fine of \$100	1	2	3	4	8
Had to pay a fine of \$150	1	2	3	4	8
Had to pay a fine of \$200	1	2	3	4	8
Had to attend a cannabis education session	1	2	3	4	8
Had to pay a fine of \$2,000	1	2	3	4	8
Had to serve a 2-year prison sentence	1	2	3	4	8
Were convicted of a criminal offence	1	2	3	4	8

S13. Non-criminal penalties for cannabis offences involve paying a fine up to \$200 or attending an educational session, and no criminal conviction.

Overall, how big a problem would these penalties create for your life?
(*Record below*)

Criminal penalties for cannabis offences involve paying a fine up to \$2,000, or serving up to 2 years in prison, and being convicted of a criminal offence.

Overall, how big a problem would these penalties create for your life?
(*Record below*)

	No prob at all	A little prob	A big prob	A very big prob	Not sure
Non-criminal penalties	1	2	3	4	8
Criminal penalties	1	2	3	4	8

- S14. To what extent do you agree with the **fairness** of the proposed penalties for each of these cannabis offences:

It is fair that:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Possessing 15g or less attracts a \$100 fine	1	2	3	4	8
Possessing 15g or less is a non-criminal offence	1	2	3	4	8
Possessing >15 to 30g attracts a \$150 fine	1	2	3	4	8
Possessing >15 to 30g is a non-criminal offence	1	2	3	4	8
Possessing >30 to 100g is a criminal offence	1	2	3	4	8
Growing 2 or less non-hydro is a non-criminal offence	1	2	3	4	8
Growing 3 to 10 non-hydro is a criminal offence	1	2	3	4	8
Growing 2 or less hydro is a criminal offence	1	2	3	4	8

T. DEMOGRAPHICS

T1. Sex:

Male 1
 Female..... 2

T2. Age _____ years

T3. What is your *current* marital status?

Never married 1
 Widowed..... 2
 Divorced or separated 3
 Married (including de facto) 4

T4. What type of accommodation do you *currently* live in?

Own house/flat (*includes renting*)..... 1
 Parents' /family house..... 2
 Boarding house/hostel..... 3
 Shelter/refuge 4
 No fixed address/homeless 5
 Other (*specify*) _____.. 7

T5. Postcode/suburb _____

T6. Who else lives with you? (*can mark more than one*)

Live alone.....	1	0
Partner.....	1	0
Child/children	1	0
Parents.....	1	0
Other family members	1	0
Friends.....	1	0
Housemates	1	0
Other (<i>specify</i>) _____..	1	0

T7. Do you have any children (who may or may not live with you?)

Yes 1
 No..... 0

If yes, How old are they and how many do you have? (specify) _____

- T8. Which best describes you? (READ OUT LIST)
- Australian born non-Aboriginal 1
 Australian born Aboriginal 2
 Torres Strait Islander 3
 Born outside Australia 4
If born outside Australia, What country? (specify) _____
- T9. What is the main language you speak at home?
- English 1
 Other (*specify*) _____ .. 7
- T10. What is the highest level of formal education you have obtained? (*if still studying note what education they have completed*)
- Primary school 1
 Year 8 2
 Year 9 3
 Year 10 4
 Year 11 5
 Year 12 6
 Trade qualification 7
 Non-degree tertiary qualification 8
 Bachelor's degree 9
 Post-graduate qualification 10
 Other (*specify*) _____ 77
 Details of course: _____
- T11. What is your **current** employment status? (*can mark more than one*)
- | | |
|--|---|
| Full time work 1 | 0 |
| Part time or casual employment 1 | 0 |
| Full-time student 1 | 0 |
| Part-time student 1 | 0 |
| Unemployed 1 | 0 |
| Benefits/pension 1 | 0 |
| Home duties 1 | 0 |
| Retired 1 | 0 |
| Other (<i>specify</i>) _____ .. 1 | 0 |
- T12. What kind of work are you doing now or did you do when you last worked?

T13. What was your *main* source of income last month?

Wage or salary	1
Pension/allowance/benefit	2
Sale of drugs	3
Other criminal activity	4
Child support.....	5
Supported by partner/family	6
Other (<i>specify</i>)	7

T14. Please indicate which income bracket best described how much money you earned or were paid before taxes last year. **CARD 17**

1. No personal income at all	1
2. Up to \$5,000 (about \$100 p/w)	2
3. \$5,001 - \$12,000 (up to \$230 p/w)	3
4. \$12,001 - \$20,000 (up to \$380 p/w)	4
5. \$20,001 - \$30,000 (up to \$580 p/w)	5
6. \$30,001 - \$40,000 (up to \$770 p/w)	6
7. \$40,001 - \$50,000 (up to \$960 p/w)	7
8. More than \$50,000 (more than \$960 p/w)	8
Prefer not to say	66
Don't know/not sure	88

APPENDIX 5

SHOWCARDS

Show Cards Index

1. Who else was there?
2. Type of cannabis
3. Extent of risk
4. SDS (Always)
5. SDS (Difficult)
6. Agree – disagree
7. Not at all – A lot
8. Always – never
9. Other drugs
10. Selling definitions
11. Definition of prohibition with civil penalties
12. Definition criminal/non-criminal penalties
13. Possible consequences of possession
14. Possible consequences of growing
15. Possible consequences of supplying
16. Impact of Legislative Change
17. Income brackets

Show Card # 1

Topic: Who else was there/ Who else was with you?

Who else was there?

- No-one
- Partner/spouse
- Child/children
- Other relatives(s)
- Friend(s)
- Acquaintance(s)
- Work-mate(s)
- People I don't really know

Show Card # 2

Topic: Type of cannabis

What type of cannabis did you use?

- Hydroponic leaf
- Hydroponic head
- Mixture of hydro leaf/head
- Non-hydro leaf
- Non-hydro head
- Mixture of non-hydro leaf/head
- Hash
- Hash oil

Show Card # 3

Topic: Extent of risk

To what extent do people risk harm?

- No risk
- Slight risk
- Moderate risk
- Great risk

Show Card #4

Topic: SDS 'Always'

**Now I'd like to you to think about
your cannabis use *over the past year.***

- Never/almost never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always/nearly always

Show Card # 5

Topic: SDS 'Difficult'

**Now I'd like to you to think about
your cannabis use *over the past year.***

- Not difficult
- Quite difficult
- Very difficult
- Impossible

Show Card # 6

Topic: Agree/disagree

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Show Card # 7

Topic: 'How much' response set

How much does it affect your cannabis use?

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Quite a bit
- A lot

Show Card # 8

Topic: 'Always – Never'

How often?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Show Card # 9

Topic: Other drugs

Other drugs

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Hallucinogens (lsd, mushrooms)
- Inhalants (nangs, amyl, paint, petrol etc)
- Amphetamines (speed, crystal)
- Ecstasy
- Benzos (valium, rohypnol, etc)
- Anti-depressants for nonmedical purposes (prozac)
- Cocaine
- Heroin / opioids
- Other drugs

Show Card # 10

Topic: Selling definitions

Different types of supply

Selling = selling for profit

Distributing = selling not-for-profit

Show Card # 11

Topic: Prohibition with civil penalties

Which of the following statements most closely corresponds to your understanding of the term ‘prohibition with civil penalties’?

- Legal, no penalties would apply
- Illegal, fine applies but no criminal conviction
- Illegal, criminal conviction

Show Card # 12

Topic: Criminal/non-criminal

Criminal versus non-criminal offences

Criminal offences

Criminal offences result in a criminal record.

Non-criminal offences

Non-criminal offences are like speeding in a motor vehicle, still illegal but result in a fine rather than a criminal record.

Show Card # 13

Topic: Consequences for possession

Possible consequences for possession of a small amount of cannabis

- Formal caution by police
- A fine
- Attendance at a cannabis education session
- Appearance at drug court
- Criminal conviction recorded
- Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)
- Summons to appear in court
- No penalty
- Six month prison sentence
- Compulsory drug treatment

Show Card # 14

Topic: Consequences for growing

Possible consequences for growing a small number of cannabis plants

- Formal caution by police
- A fine
- Attendance at a cannabis education session
- Appearance at drug court
- Criminal conviction recorded
- Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)
- Summons to appear in court
- No penalty
- Two year prison sentence
- Compulsory drug treatment

Show Card # 15

Topic: Consequences for selling

Possible consequences for selling a small amount of cannabis

- Formal caution by police
- A fine
- Attendance at a cannabis education session
- Appearance at drug court
- Criminal conviction recorded
- Receive an infringement notice (similar to a speeding ticket)
- Summons to appear in court
- No penalty
- Two year prison sentence
- Compulsory drug treatment

Show Card # 16

Topic: Prohibition with civil penalties

New system: Prohibition with civil penalties

- Cannabis remains illegal
- System of fines and education instead of criminal penalties
- Similar system to speeding penalties
- Comprehensive community education
- People under 18 excluded

Penalties are as follows:

- * Possession of 15g or less = \$100 fine or education session
- * Possession of 15 to 30g = \$150 fine or education session
- * Growing up to 2 non-hydro plants = \$200 fine or education session
- * Possession and growing above these limits = criminal penalties
- * Any supplying = criminal penalties
- * Any hydroponic growing = criminal penalties

Show Card # 17

Topic: Income

Please indicate which income bracket best described how much money you earned or were paid before taxes last year.

1. No personal income at all
2. Up to \$5,000 (about \$100 p/w)
3. \$5,001 - \$12,000 (up to \$230 p/w)
4. \$12,001 - \$20,000 (up to \$380 p/w)
5. \$20,001 - \$30,000 (up to \$580 p/w)
6. \$30,001 - \$40,000 (up to \$770 p/w)
7. \$40,001 - \$50,000 (up to \$960 p/w)
8. More than \$50,000 (more than \$960 p/w)