

Drugs: do you know what they'll do to you?

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The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) today welcomed the launch of the 2005 National Drugs Campaign by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health the Hon Christopher Pyne.

Referring to the launch, Chairman of the ANCD, Major Brian Watters said "The aim of this campaign is to reduce the number of young people using drugs. A key component of the campaign will be educating young people on the risks and consequences of drug use by screening advertisements that provide dramatic but clear information about the dangers from marijuana, ecstasy and amphetamines."

Major Watters added "This phase of the National Drugs Campaign builds on the previous one from 2001 which was directed towards parents and families but nonetheless resulted in 85% of 15 to 17 year olds expressing a willingness to talk to their parents about drugs."

ANCD Co-Deputy Chair and Campaign Reference Group Chair, Professor Margaret Hamilton stated "The development of this prevention campaign is the result of more than two years of extensive research and pilot testing to ensure that we send young people messages that are both clear and credible. It is expected that this campaign will reinforce the disinclination of most young people to use illicit drugs."

Professor Hamilton added "The results from the recently released National Drug Strategy Household Survey indicated a continuing decline in the use of most illicit substances and it is hoped that this campaign can contribute to sustaining this trend. Therefore it is important that we continue to provide the community with access to evidence based information about the dangers associated with the use of illicit drugs."

Noting the range of campaign resources Major Watters said "The campaign will be supported by a range of resources that will be useful for young people, parents and professionals. These resources include websites, a 1800 free-call information line, and booklets and I would strongly encourage anyone to make use of these products."

The ANCD worked very closely with the Australian Government in the development of this campaign and hopes that it will help counteract the belief amongst some young people that drugs such as marijuana, ecstasy and amphetamines can be used safely and 'recreationally'. This is why the campaign emphasises that when it comes to any of these drugs — You don't know what it will do to you!

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The ANCD is the principal advisory body to Government on drug and alcohol issues.

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