

Data Sources

Three sources of drug statistics are used: offence and seizure data, drug purity data and drug price data.

Arrest and Seizure Data

Arrest and seizure data were supplied by:

- Australian Federal Police Regional.
- Australian Federal Police; and
- New South Wales Police
- Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
- Queensland Police Service
- South Australia Police
- Tasmania Police
- Victoria Police
- Western Australia Police Service

Drug Purity Data

The purity tables do not represent the purity figures for all seizures of that drug-type, only those that have been analysed at a forensic laboratory. Drug purity figures for Victoria, Queensland, and the Australian Capital Territory represent the purity level of drugs seized by police during the relevant quarter. Figures for South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and those supplied by the Australian Forensic Drug Laboratory represent the purity level of drugs received at the laboratory during the relevant quarter. Specifically, the Western Australian Forensic Science Laboratory does not analyse all seizures less than two grams.

As a result, the purity table will underestimate the number of samples that are tested.

The time between the date of seizure by police and the date of receipt at the laboratories can vary from a few days to several months – and in isolated cases – years. The purity table represents those seizures analysed during the 2002–03 financial year, not necessarily all seizures during that period.

New South Wales Analytical Laboratory only tests for purity levels on cases larger than the trafficable level – three grams for amphetamine, methylamphetamine, heroin, cocaine and 0.75 grams for phenethylamines. Additionally, the laboratory will only test a limited number of samples per case. The laboratory also tests purity levels on controlled operations for the New South Wales Police, including undercover units.

The Northern Territory Forensic Laboratory was unable to provide purity data for the 2002–03 report.

Drug Price Data

Data on prices for illicit drugs, as shown in Tables 4.1 to 4.5, were collected quarterly from each of the police services and are based on information supplied by covert police units and police informants.