

Meth Dominates, Cocaine Climbs: New report reveals key workplace drug trends

TDDA Launches the Imperans Report, a New Quarterly Snapshot of Workplace Drug Abuse to Provide Businesses with Actionable Health and Safety Information

MELBOURNE - 18 Nov 2025 - [The Drug Detection Agency](#) (TDDA), one of Australia's leading workplace drug testing providers, has launched the Imperans Report, its new quarterly workplace drug trends report. The report aims to empower Australian employers to engage in proactive workplace risk management. It provides an analysis of drug and alcohol usage trends, combining results from across the country [1].

Data on drug and alcohol use in Australian workplaces from the Q3, 2025 Imperans Report reveals that the most pressing issues for employers include:

- Amphetamine-type substances (ATS), including methamphetamine, are most prevalent and are detected in over half (53.2%) of all positive [2] tests
- Opioid positivity rates remain stubbornly high, holding steady at 16% of positive tests
- Cocaine has trended upward all year and now accounts for 8.5% of positive tests

This quarter, 3.1% of the screenings conducted by TDDA indicated the presence of drugs. These results suggest shifting patterns in substance use that require greater employer awareness and policy reinforcement.

Below are substances detected nationally and compared to Q2 levels from TDDA's testing results [3]:

- **Amphetamine-type substances (ATS), including methamphetamine:** were present in 53.2% of positive tests, up 2.3% from 50.9% in Q2 2025.
- **Cannabis (THC):** was present in 46.5% of positive tests, up 6.3% from 40.1% in Q2 2025.
- **Opioids:** were present in 16% of positive tests, down 2.2% from 18.2% in Q2 2025.
- **Benzodiazepines:** were present in 12% of positive tests, up 0.4% from 11.5% in Q2 2025.
- **Cocaine:** was present in 8.5% of positive tests, up 1.8% from 6.8% in Q2 2025.

Overall detections have remained relatively steady but are accompanied by a marked increase in cannabis and cocaine use. It's **a concern for employers ahead of the holiday season** since, traditionally, usage increases during the summer months.

"Cocaine use has been steadily increasing over the year, and we believe that's in no small part due to cartel activity," says **Glenn Dobson, CEO, TDDA**. "Cocaine used to be considered a white-collar drug, but we're seeing it crop up in all industries we serve."

Unfortunately, the drug has a seasonal pattern where usage tends to increase over the holidays. Blue collar and corporate businesses alike are concerned -- and rightly so -- about how it affects the behaviour of their staff and their company's reputation."

As social gatherings rise, the line between recreation and workplace risk can blur. Employers must remember that compliance requires them to keep people safe at events, on-site, and even on the way home.

TDDA recommends that companies review and update drug and alcohol policies. Businesses should also consider return-to-work testing, train managers to recognise the signs of use, particularly the subtle signs of prescription medications, and use regular and random drug testing to deter misuse and protect workplace safety.

"Reinforcing policies now prevents difficult conversations and potentially life-threatening accidents. Talking to staff about return-to-work testing reminds people that safety doesn't take a holiday off and everyone needs to come back to work fit for duty," adds Dobson. "It's about balancing goodwill with responsibility."

The Imperans report addresses an information gap for business. Government organisations like Safe Work Australia, and state regulators such as WorkSafe Victoria and SafeWork NSW, publish incident data, but they do not quantify when substances are a factor. Future reports will serve to build businesses' understanding of substance use patterns regionally and temporally so that they can anticipate and reduce workplace risks.

TDDA drug tests screen for amphetamines; benzodiazepines; cocaine; methamphetamine; opiates; oxycodone; cannabis; tramadol; fentanyl; as well as synthetic drugs like synthetic cannabis.

Methodology: Tests from 19 sterile clinics and over 50 mobile clinics in Australia were used. All tests were taken between 1 July 2025 and 30 September 2025. Data from preemployment, post incident, regular and random testing has been combined. Testing methods included urine and oral fluid screening. Data is reported into, anonymised, and aggregated using TDDA's Imperans system, a bespoke IT platform for testing services, data recording, and reporting. It represents a snapshot of drug trends across Australasian workplaces and industries.

Editors notes:

1. This report provides a national view of workplace substance use trends, based on data from all states and territories except the Northern Territory.
2. For the purposes of this report, the term "positive result" refers to non-negative initial screening results. This approach was adopted to provide a comprehensive view of potential drug presence in the workforce, acknowledging that not all non-negative samples proceed to confirmatory testing due to operational constraints such as employee resignation, withdrawal of consent, or logistical limitations in sample viability. While confirmatory testing offers definitive identification, initial non-negative results are used given their relevance to immediate workplace safety considerations and policy triggers.
3. Data overlap may occur due to poly-drug use, where multiple substances are detected in a single test.

ENDS**For more information, or to speak with a TDDA spokesperson, please contact:**

Richelle Gillett
Giant Squid Inc
0418 781 610 rg@giantsquidinc.com.au

Sheldon Gillett
Giant Squid Inc
0419 472 355 sg@giantsquidinc.com.au

About the Imperans Report

The Imperans report addresses an information gap for business. Government organisations like Safe Work Australia and state regulators such as WorkSafe Victoria and SafeWork NSW, publish incident reports, but they do not quantify when substances are a factor. Reports build businesses' understanding of substance use patterns regionally and temporally so that they can anticipate and reduce workplace risks. TDDA provides over 100,000 tests every year.

About The Drug Detection Agency

The Drug Detection Agency (TDDA) is a leader in workplace substance testing with more than 300 staff, 90 mobile health clinics, 65 locations throughout Australasia. TDDA was established in 2005 to provide Australian and New Zealand businesses with end-to-end workplace substance testing, education and policy services. TDDA holds ISO17025 accreditation for workplace substance testing in both AU and NZ. Refer to the [IANZ](http://ianz.org) and [NATA](http://nata.org) websites for TDDA's full accreditation details. As members of the National Drug and Alcohol Screening Association ([NDASA](http://ndasa.org)) and the California Narcotic Officers Association ([CNOA](http://cnoa.org)), TDDA closely follows and acts on global drug trends. Learn more about TDDA by visiting <https://tdda.com/>.