

**From:** David McDonald [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 13 April 2015 6:28 PM  
**To:** Kosseck, Nicola  
**Cc:** Michael Moore PHAA; Melanie Walker PHAA  
**Subject:** Correcting an error in evidence presented to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services

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**Categories:** Cannabis

Dear Nicola. I am writing to correct an error that I made in presenting evidence to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services, on 31 March 2015.

Page 69 of the proof transcript correctly records what I stated:

'Mr McDonald: Yes, definitely. The existing framework is undoubtedly deterring some people from using cannabis who would otherwise use it. It is enforced. In the ACT some 85 per cent of all contacts with the criminal justice system related to drugs are cannabis consumers—not traffickers, not high-scale producers but cannabis consumers...' However, the expression 'some 85% of all contacts with the criminal justice system related to drugs are cannabis consumer' should have been 'some 67% of all drug arrests in the ACT are cannabis consumers.'

My summary of the latest published information on ACT and national cannabis arrests was published in the May 2014 issue of ATODA's *Research eBulletin*, <http://www.atoda.org.au/publications/research-ebulletin/> 'Past Research eBulletins', as follows. It may be of some interest to the members of the Standing Committee:

quote

The Australian Crime Commission's report on illicit drugs covering the 2012-13 year was released on 29 April, and we provided some highlights in the April issue of the Research eBulletin. Additional information is provided here regarding cannabis arrests in the ACT during that year.

- In the year ending 30 June 2013, the ACT had 540 arrests for illicit drug offences. This included 391 for cannabis, 72% of the total.
- Of the cannabis arrests, 92% were classified as consumers and just 8% were cannabis providers. Nationally, cannabis consumers composed 87% of the cannabis arrests, a slightly lower proportion than in the ACT.
- Some 32% of the cannabis consumer arrests were occasions in which people were issued with a Simple Cannabis Offence Notices (SCONs); in the remaining 68% of cases the consumers were charged with a cannabis offence and would have had to appear before a court to answer the charge.
- In the ACT, cannabis consumers composed 67% of all drug arrests, compared with the corresponding national figure of 53%.
- Over the last five years the number of ACT cannabis consumer arrests has risen by 25% and the total number of cannabis arrests (consumers plus providers) has risen by 29%. Nationally, the number of consumer arrests rose by 13% over the same period, and the total number of cannabis arrests rose by 12%, a much slower rate of increase.
- A different trend is observed for amphetamine-type substances (ATS). Over the last five years the number of ACT ATS consumer arrests fell by 7% and the number of all ATS arrests fell by 5%. Meanwhile, nationally the number of ATS consumer arrests rose by 41% and the number of all ATS arrests rose by 35%, the opposite trend to that observed in the ACT.

Further information: Australian Crime Commission 2014, *Illicit drug data report 2012-13*, Australian Crime Commission, Canberra, <https://www.crimecommission.gov.au/publications/intelligence-products/illicit-drug-data-report/illicit-drug-data-report-2012-13> .

Media release: <http://www.ministerjustice.gov.au/Mediareleases/Pages/2014/Second%20Quarter/29April2014-DrugDataReportFindsIllicitDrugArrestsAndSeizuresAreHighestOnRecord.aspx> .

unquote

I apologise for making this error in my evidence.

Best wishes - David

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