

ENTERED
WMT 11/4/18
DATE

Spotlight on drug trends

HEALTH

BY JADE BATE

Region

alcohol and drug consumption.

Her comments come after the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIA) released its latest report last week showing crystal methamphetamine, ice, use had increased in regional Victoria. The report, called the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program, also revealed Victoria had

ALCOHOL and cannabis use in the Wimmera remains the highest concern for health organisations.

Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce co-ordinator Sally Pymmer said, although drug use was high in regional Victoria, all areas were prone to

the highest average regional consumption of oxycodone in the country.

"People take drugs for multiple reasons and they can often be a way to forget about life's problems," Ms Pymmer said.

"People in rural areas can often be more socially isolated and may find it harder to ask for help due to confidentiality within smaller

communities and stigma associated with substance use."

Ms Pymmer said the main drugs used in the Wimmera were alcohol and cannabis, although there was some methamphetamine use.

"Trends of drug use change over the years according to availability, supply and cost," she said. "This may vary between metropolitan and regional areas."

government's plan when he was elected."

Wastewater samples were collected during October and December 2017, and covered 12 different substances.

Ms Pymmer said people seeking support for alcohol and other drug use could contact Grampians Community Health on 5362 1200 or Uniting Wimmera on 5362 4000.

Member for Lowan Emma Kealy said the ACIC report was evidence that Victoria's drug crisis was getting worse, not better.

"It's yet more proof that Daniel Andrews' Ice Action Plan is a dud," she said. "Regional Victorians could have access to additional residential rehabilitation if Daniel Andrews hadn't dropped the former Liberal Nationals