



International Congress to Address Synthetic Drug Trade this Week

Wednesday 21 October 2009

Minister for Police Michael Daley and Commissioner of Police Andrew Scipione will today launch the 13th Australasian Chemical Diversion Congress (ACDC) in Sydney to look at ways to combat illegal drug manufacturing.

Mr Daley said the international conference, which is being hosted by the NSW Police Force, would bring together industry experts from around Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

“This three day conference will focus on law enforcement strategies to stop the manufacture of deadly amphetamines such as ice and ecstasy, which are all too prevalent on our streets,” he said.

“The congress brings together organisations affected by the illegal drug trade – from the pharmacists who sell pseudoephedrine products, to the companies who make glassware used in the illegal “cooking” process and the law enforcement agencies who investigate and prosecute drug syndicates.

“Everyone at this conference has a role to play in detecting, preventing and disrupting this criminal activity which is why it’s so important to have everyone workshopping ideas under one roof,” Mr Daley said.

Mr Scipione said that while the production and use of drugs such as MDMA and methylamphetamine continued to be a problem, police were achieving record results on the streets.

“While the illicit production of these drugs is a very serious problem, we must acknowledge the hard work of the NSW Police Force who has seized more than 40kg of amphetamines in NSW so far this year, with an estimated street value of more than \$21.5 million,” he said.

“In the past nine months, Police have also shut down 57 chemical drug labs which is already two more than last year’s raids.

“But over recent years there has been a substantial increase in the use of synthetic drugs and we can’t afford to rest on our laurels.

“That is why global conferences like this are so important. We can share information and work on strategies to stop organised criminal networks from producing the drugs from the very outset,” Mr Scipione said.

Mr Daley said one of the measures the NSW Government was currently considering was the mandatory tracking of cold and flu products that contain pseudoephedrine.

“Currently pharmacists have the option to join NSW’s centralised pharmacy database “Project Stop” which provides chemists with real time advice on whether a person has bought suspicious amounts of legal pseudoephedrines anywhere in Australia.

“To date, 60 per cent of pharmacies have signed up to the program, which means drug syndicates can still legally get their hands on significant quantities of pseudoephedrine at 40 per cent of outlets.

“We need to make sure pseudoephedrine products purchased from pharmacies are being used for genuine medical purposes – and with the proper consultation, we believe the industry can work together to make a difference.

“Over the next few weeks, the NSW Health Minister and I will be talking to the industry about making this highly successful tracking system compulsory to put a permanent stop to “pseudo runners” who collect these drugs from chemists across the state.

“On the expert advice of the Police, we’ll also be looking at making it mandatory to provide photo ID when buying pseudoephedrine products to make it harder for these runners to operate anonymously,” Mr Daley said.

The conference starts today (Wednesday October 21) and finishes on Friday October 23 at the Sofitel Wentworth Hotel.