

DRUG ADVERTISING
Thursday, 13 September 2007

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: The minister will no doubt recall my previous questions about the Montana meth project and the merits of using the type of advertising material featured in that campaign to deter people, in particular young people, from using the illicit drug commonly known as ice. Last month, the federal government, to its credit, via minister Christopher Pyne, launched television advertisements of the kind Family First has been calling for for some time now. In her answer to my question of 13 May concerning the Montana meth project, the minister said that the advertising was 'compelling to watch and quite powerful' (and I am pleased the minister took the time to watch the advertisement), and she said that she had asked her department to look at the advertising to fully assess its suitability for South Australia. My follow-up questions to the minister are:

1. What is the status of her department's investigations into these advertisements?
2. Will the state government run its own television, radio and print media campaign against the use of this drug?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse): I thank the honourable member for his important questions. I have had looked at this project, which I am informed commenced in September 2005 in Montana, USA. As the honourable member has said, the campaign included a mass media campaign and other policy and law enforcement initiatives. The program states on its website that the methamphetamine use by young people in Montana is drastically higher than the national average and that the state is in the top 25 per cent of states in the USA for methamphetamine misuse.

The project has a goal of reducing the prevalence of first-time users of methamphetamine by trying to change the attitudes and beliefs of young people and to raise awareness of the risks associated with the drug. The campaign is based around a 'Meth not even once' slogan. However, the advice I have received is that it is not clear whether this campaign has directly impacted on the prevalence of methamphetamine use in Montana. The 2007 Montana Meth Use and Attitudes Survey report stated, 'Usage appears to be neither higher nor lower than in past surveys.' However, the survey does indicate changes in perceptions of risk associated with methamphetamine use by young adults and parents.

I have been informed that the Montana campaign was not designed for dealing with circumstances surrounding methamphetamine use in Australia or with consideration of Australia's National Drug Strategy. The rates of methamphetamine use in Montana differ quite considerably from those in South Australia. In 2005, Montana's Youth Risk Survey found that 8.3 per cent of Montana high school students had never used methamphetamine, which is an alarming rate, whereas here in South Australia, lifetime use of amphetamines was reported by 4.5 students. So, South Australian rates are not significantly

different from Australia's rate as a whole. As I have pointed out, this contrasts to Montana, where the rate of methamphetamine use in Montana is drastically higher than the national average.

For social marketing campaigns to be effective, they must be tailored to suit the particular audience, and the Australian government focus-tested two of the advertisements for the Montana meth project as part of the development of the current phase of the national illicit drug campaign. The advice I have received is that, according to the focus test results, the materials were considered to be attention grabbing but were also found to be lacking in credibility, particularly with high risk groups. So, the focus-test data completed by the federal government does not present a very encouraging application of this campaign in Australia and, for that matter, South Australia.

As members would know, the third stage of the National Drug Campaign, which aims to prevent young people using illicit drugs, was launched in August this year.

The campaign includes a new methamphetamine commercial called 'Don't let ice destroy you,' and features a clinician in an emergency department who treats someone suffering from psychosis caused by using a form of methamphetamine called ice. The campaign's advertising will run in the print media, television and online. We are very pleased to have that strategy which has been funded by the federal government and which has been tailored and designed to particularly resonate with Australian young people.