

Barwon Health

Drug Alert via SMS

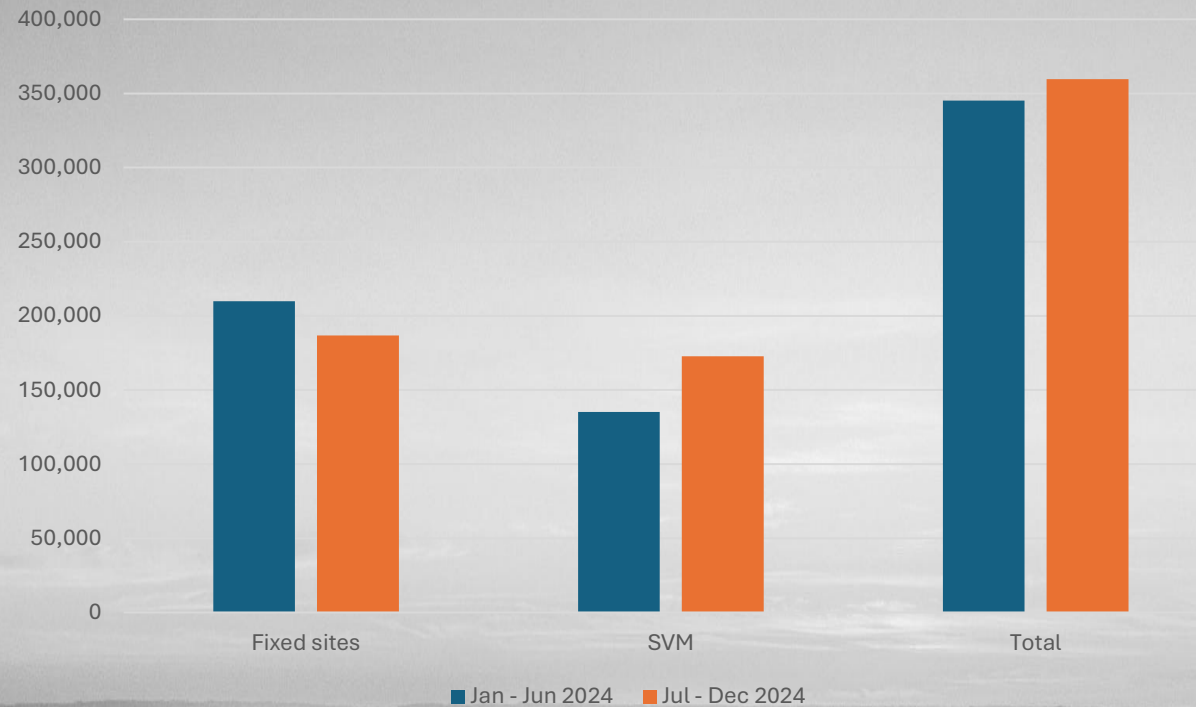


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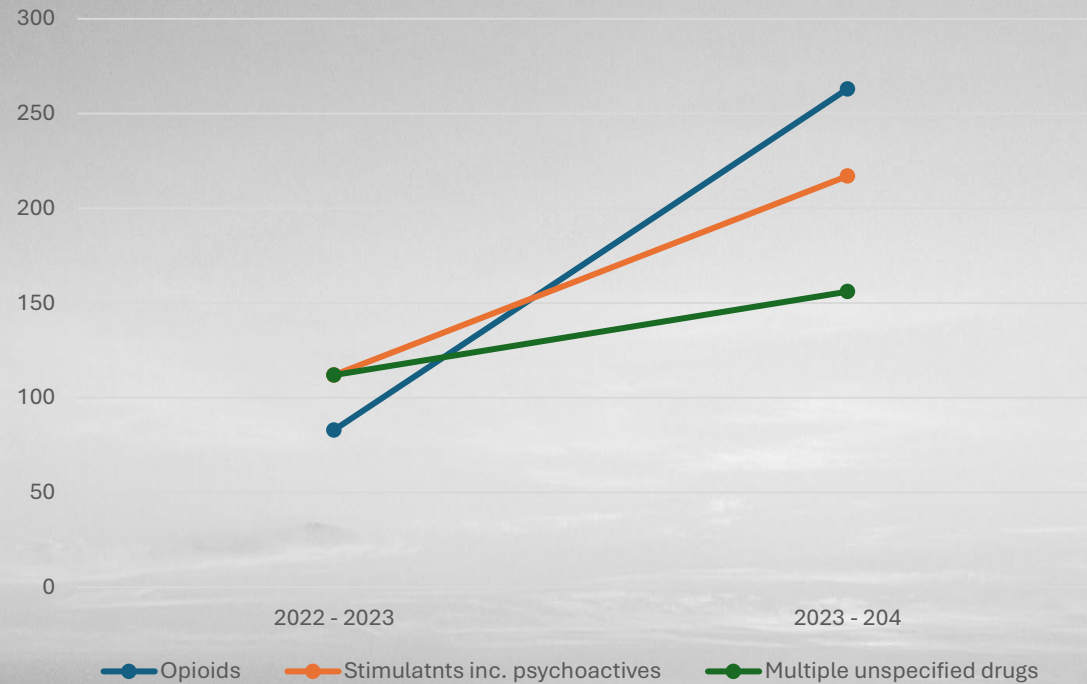
Syringes out Jan - Dec 24



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ED Presentations



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Drug Alert via SMS



Department of Health – Drug Advice (DA-14)
Alert: Cocaine adulterated with protonitazene
July 2024
OFFICIAL

Drug alert

A white powder sold in Melbourne as cocaine contains the potent opioid ‘protonitazene’.

- **Protonitazene is a novel synthetic opioid that can produce life-threatening toxic effects in very small amounts**

Opioids are central nervous system depressants, typically producing a range of effects including pain relief, sedation and respiratory depression (dangerously slow breathing). Respiratory depression often appears more quickly with **novel synthetic opioids** (NSOs), increasing the risk of life-threatening overdose.

Protonitazene is an **extremely potent NSO**, which means it can produce strong effects in very small amounts. Protonitazene has a potency **over 100 times** that of heroin.

Cocaine and protonitazene are **very different substances**. Cocaine produces stimulant effects, whereas protonitazene produces sedative effects and may lead to opioid overdose. Using protonitazene with depressants such as alcohol, GHB or depressant drugs (such as Xanax or Valium) increases the risk of overdose.

- **Know the signs of opioid overdose and carry naloxone**

There have been recent **serious harms** in Melbourne associated with a white powder sold as cocaine that contained protonitazene. The product appears to produce **strong adverse effects** such as loss of consciousness, respiratory depression, and life-threatening hypoxia (insufficient oxygen for normal functioning).

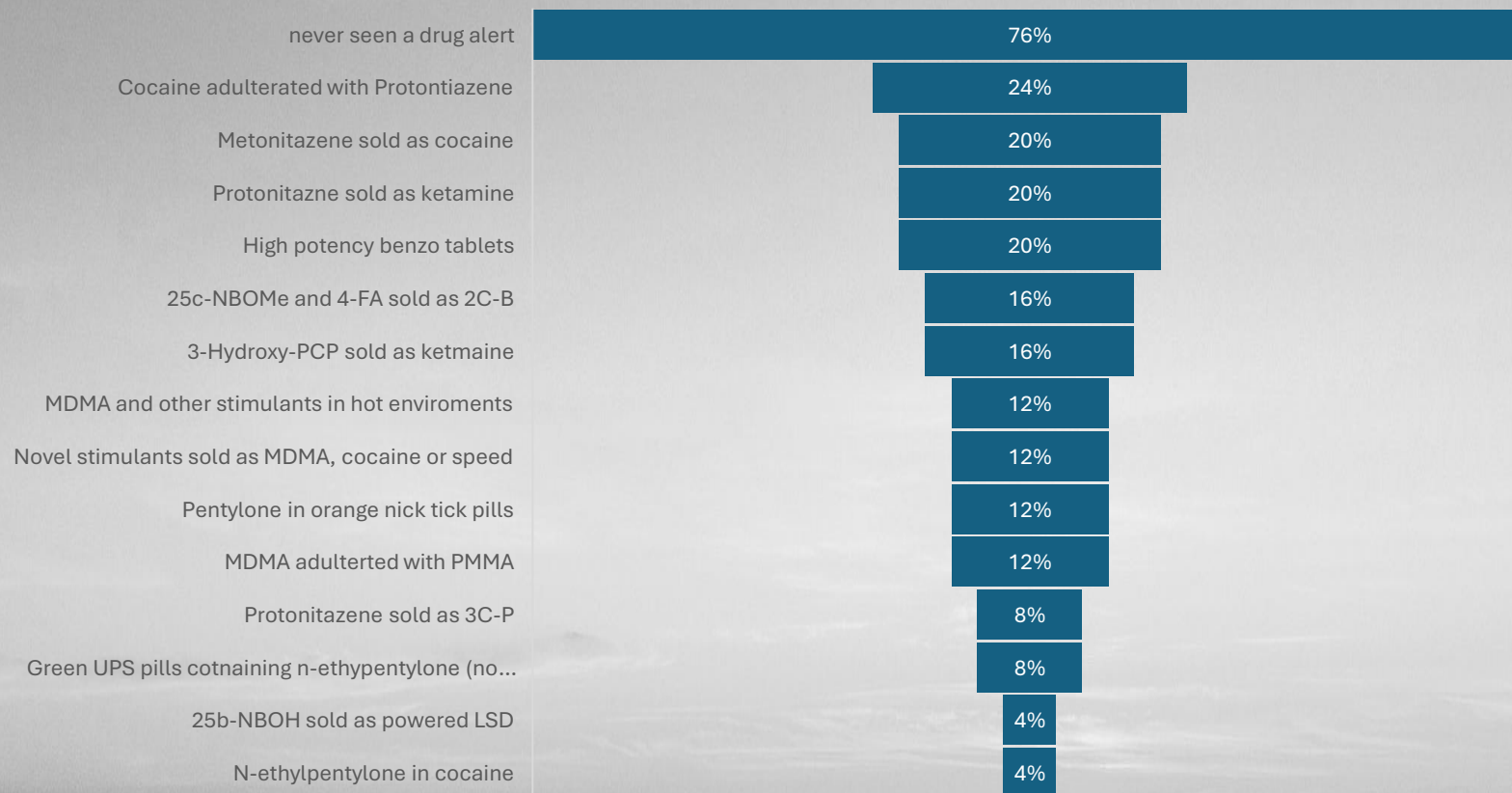
Signs of opioid overdose include breathing slowly and reduced consciousness (meaning someone is hard to wake up). In some cases, there may also be tiny pupils. More information about opioid overdose symptoms can be found on the [Penington Institute website](#).

Naloxone is an **easy-to-use medication** that can **reverse opioid overdose** – it is safe to use even if you are not sure whether someone has taken opioids. Naloxone can be accessed free of charge at participating **pharmacies, needle and syringe programs** and the **medically supervised injecting centre**. You can find an approved naloxone provider on the [Take Home Naloxone program website](#).

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Drug Alert- % of respondents having seen alert

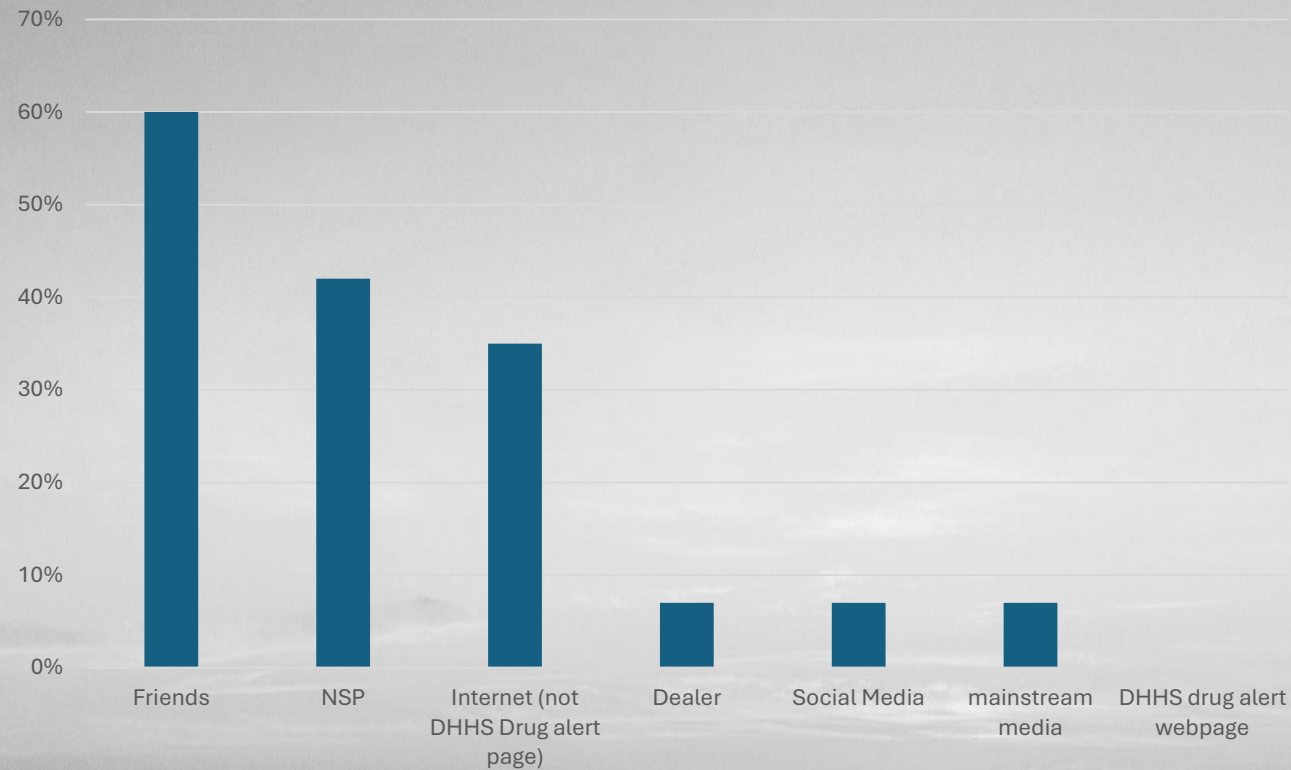


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From where did you hear of Drug Alert?



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Drug Alert via SMS

Brien, R., Volpe, I., Grigg, J. *et al.* Co-designing drug alerts for health and community workers for an emerging early warning system in Victoria, Australia.





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What we did



Get help ▾What to expect ▾Health information ▾Tools ▾Family & carers ▾Get involved ▾



Barwon Health Mental Health, Drugs & Alcohol Services
Harm Reduction Services

Home / Services / Harm Reduction Services

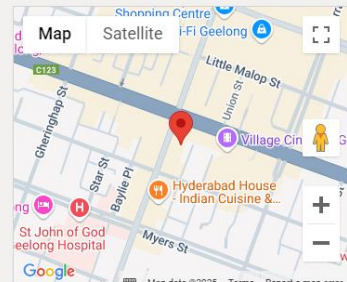
Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.

For more information and a discussion of the principles of harm reduction, please [click here](#).

Drug Alerts SMS

The drug alert system is an anonymous, free text messaging service aimed at helping people make informed decisions about their drug use.

Any person who uses drugs or has a loved one who uses drugs can sign up, anonymously, to receive text alerts when any drugs of concern are identified in Victoria. Whilst this might not apply to your specific location, nor can it be relied upon to accurately reflect all potential contaminants of commonly used illicit drugs, the data is driven by numerous drug testing services, including the Emerging Drugs Network of Australia (EDNAV), RAPID and any future Department of Health drug checking systems.



Contact us
181 Moorabool Street,
Geelong, Victoria

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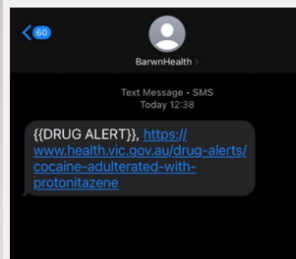
What we did

Alerts will only be sent from validated sources, as described below;

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Harm Reduction Victoria
- Sesh.Ed

You only need to provide your mobile phone number. Your number will be stored securely and will not be used for any other purpose. To unsubscribe from this list, please see details below.

Below is an example of how an alert will appear on your mobile phone:



Sign up to Drug Alerts

Your subscription has been confirmed. You will receive a text when a new drug alert is published.

There is no charge for this service.

For details on past drug alerts published by the Department of Health, [click here](#).

Unsubscribe from Drug Alerts

Email harmreductionservices@barwonhealth.org.au or send a SMS to 1800 196 850 with the word UNSUBSCRIBE and the number you wish to be removed.

Ph. 1800 196 850 (freecall)

Useful links

[Map of Syringe Disposal Locations](#)

Barwon Health offers 24/7 help, information or referral via our Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs Services triage.

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The boring bit...

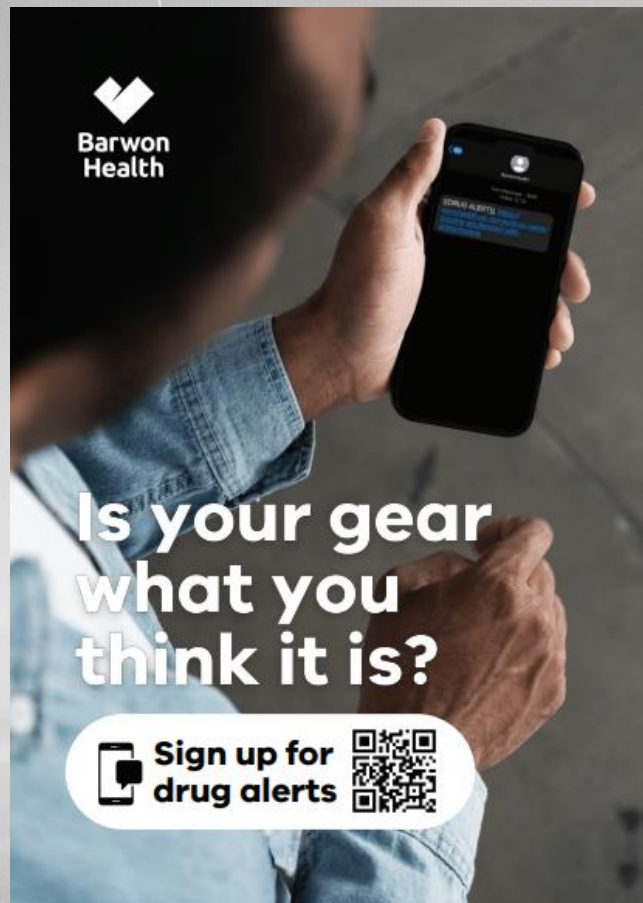


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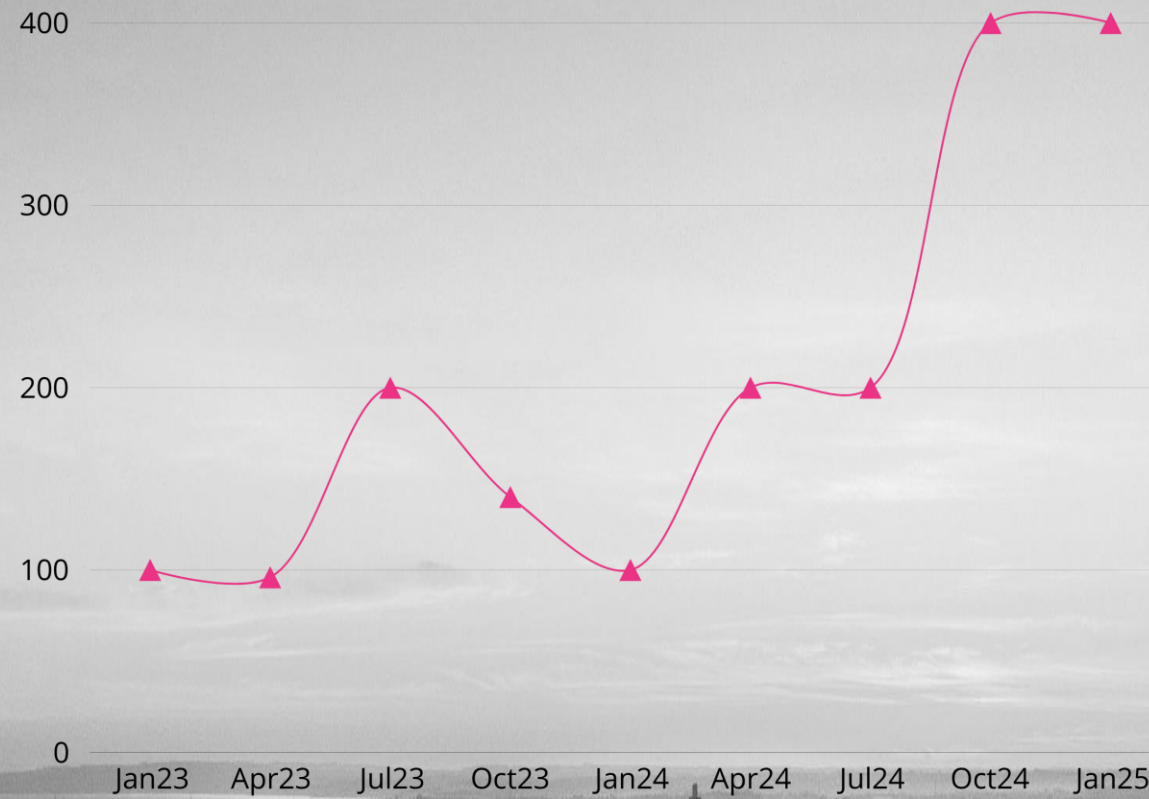
What we did



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Harm Reduction Webpage – Visits Jan 23 – Jan 25



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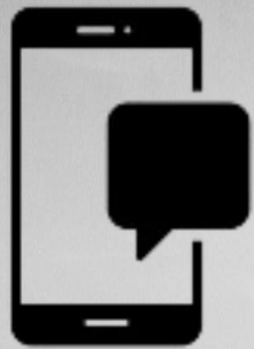


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Next steps...



**Sign up for
drug alerts**



Craig.Harvey@barwonhealth.org.au



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