

**Question on Notice  
No. 392  
Asked on 13 March 2008**

MR ENGLISH asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport (MS SPENCE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to a United Nations report released last week that claims Queensland is the base of most of the clandestine drug laboratories in the country, supplying amphetamines to the rest of Australia—

- (1) Is this true?
- (2) What are the police doing to combat the drug trade in this State?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Police Services advises there is no current information or intelligence to support the suggestion made in the recent United Nations report that Queensland is the centre of drug production in Australia, or that Queensland is responsible for supplying the entire country with amphetamines.

Through their investigate skills and dedication to stamping out the illicit drug trade Queensland Police locate a substantial number of clandestine drug laboratories every year in Queensland. In the period July 2007 to February 2008, Queensland Police located 82 clandestine laboratories. In the 2006–07 financial year, 132 of the laboratories were located. In the 2005–06 financial year, 210 were located. These figures show a significant decrease in the numbers of clandestine drug laboratories located in recent years demonstrating that police efforts are having the desired affect.

The vast majority of clandestine drug laboratories located in Queensland are small-scale operations, as opposed to large commercial-type ventures which appear to be prevalent in the southern states, particularly New South Wales and Victoria. Queensland-based clandestine drug laboratories therefore tend to produce lesser drug yields than some of the laboratories in the southern states.

The seizure of clandestine laboratories in Queensland has reduced significantly over the past two years. This has been largely due to the introduction of Project STOP and the Queensland Government's re-scheduling of pseudoephedrine and other precursor chemicals used in the production and manufacture of methylamphetamine.

In addition to these initiatives, the Queensland Police Service's State Crime Operations Command undertakes controlled operations, controlled activities and a considerable number of state-wide and/or regional 'intelligence driven' drug operations and investigations.

Since May 2007, a number of major and protracted controlled operations have resulted in the arrests of 115 people on 575 criminal charges, including 25 charges of trafficking in dangerous drugs and 214 charges of supplying dangerous drugs.

These investigations have resulted in the seizure by police of over \$500,000 worth of drugs including large quantities of methylamphetamine, crystal methylamphetamine, ecstasy, cannabis and other dangerous drugs.

In addition, shorter term 'intelligence driven' tactical operations have also been conducted throughout the State in respect to illicit drugs, including in the Roma, Surat, Charleville, Bundaberg, Mt Isa and Cloncurry areas.

More recently, two major operations on the Sunshine Coast have led to the arrest of 59 people on 280 charges including trafficking, supply and possession of dangerous drugs. More than \$220,000 worth of drugs were seized in these operations, including significant quantities of ecstasy pills, methylamphetamine, cocaine, liquid 'fantasy', LSD and cannabis.

Aside from the tactical and operational aspects of illicit drug investigations, the Queensland Police Service also regularly liaises with, and works alongside, interstate and federal law enforcement agencies, in the exchange of current and timely intelligence on illicit drugs. The Queensland Police Service is also involved in joint collaborative efforts and partnership arrangements with industry and other community groups, including real estate and motel associations, to assist in preventing illicit drugs from gaining a stronger foothold within our communities.

The Queensland Police Service continues to proactively monitor the illicit drug market and remains vigilant in identifying and responding to new and emerging illicit drugs and associated criminal methodologies and technologies in Queensland.