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## Prohibition and Cannabis Use in Australia: A Survey of 18- to 29-year-olds

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### Abstract

#### Abstract

The prevalence of cannabis use in Australia has increased in the last few years, prompting some to argue that the prohibition against cannabis is both costly and ineffective and should be lifted. Surveys designed to evaluate the effect of reducing or eliminating sanctions for cannabis use, however, have been more concerned about the effect of cannabis law reform on the number of new cannabis users than about its effect on cannabis consumption among existing users. This is a serious oversight because most of the risks associated with cannabis are associated with regular rather than occasional use of the drug. The present research was designed to assess some of the potential effects of lifting the prohibition against cannabis use. The study results suggest that, while the illegal status of cannabis does act to limit its use, it is not a major factor in decisions about whether to use cannabis or to cease using it. Prohibition does, however, appear to limit consumption among existing cannabis users and particularly among those who use the drug on a weekly basis or more frequently.

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