

FORMER CLANDESTINE DRUG LABORATORIES – KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN NSW

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Outline

- What are the risks posed by these premises?
- Case study – overview
- Australian and NSW guidelines



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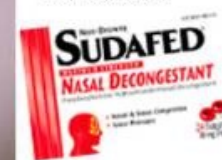
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What is a Clan Lab?

Hidden improvised laboratories manufacturing illegal drugs often from publically available source materials



Coming soon from
the makers of



Look for money
saving coupons inside!

Going to send your kids out to the street to sell something they made themselves at home? Forget the lemonade stand. Now they can learn the fun of science while saving up for a college education. Maybe a new car... Or just some kick ass bling bling.



MY FIRST METH LAB
Every kid needs a hobby.

Worth1000.com

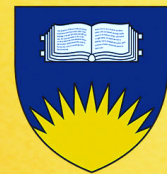


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Public Health Concern

- People associated with **operational labs** are at risk from toxic gases, chemical burns/residues, drug exposure & fires/explosions
- **Neighbours** may also be at risk from gases and explosions etc and chemical migration, e.g. apartments, soil/GW
- **Occupants** (including future occupants) of “busted” & abandoned labs are exposed to chemical residues, possibly for many years
- **Public** who encounter external sites, waste or contamination spread



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Exposure – After Cook

Contaminated Home

- Inhalation of vapours and gases including off-gassing from porous materials
- **Contact with persistent chemicals and drug/methamphetamine residues throughout home**
- Contact with waste (outdoors)
- Environmental issues with waste disposal



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Health Effects

- Respiratory problems
- Behavioural issues
- Changes in sleep patterns and behavior
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Eye and skin irritation

All these effects reported in individuals unknowingly exposed to contamination that remains in unremediated premises. Based on published information and case studies in my research. Exposures are to levels in homes that are 5 to 50 times the guideline.



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Case Study – Rural Property in Victoria

- May 2013 – police seize equipment from property from shed on property and notified council of the presence of suspected clan lab at property
- Council issued notices to owner to remediate – owner was offender and did nothing. Council did not follow-up
- August 2013 - Owner sold home
- During sale of property checks were made (conveyancing and mortgagee) and no outstanding notices were identified



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Case Study – Rural Property in Victoria

- October 2013 – family moved into home
- May 2014 – Council contacted family and informed them there was an old clan lab at their property
- Without testing Council issued a letter stating *“due to the limited nature of illegal activity at the property it seems unlikely that any health risks will arise from continuing use of the land”*.



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Case Study – Rural Property in Victoria

- Council did preliminary testing in the shed only – found contamination and said they need to do more tests – Council again stated all was safe but keep the kids out of the shed
- October 2014 – additional testing done which confirmed contamination in shed but also found contamination in home well above residential criteria



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Contamination Levels

| Location | Surface residues reported ($\mu\text{g}/100 \text{ cm}^2$) | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Methamphetamine | Pseudoephedrine |
| External Sheds | | |
| South wall shed 2 | 35.9 | 0.86 |
| North wall shed 2 | 64.7 | 2.01 |
| West wall shed 3 | 0.59 | ND |
| Inside Residential Home | | |
| Laundry Wall | 23.1 | 0.04 |
| Kitchen/dining wall | 13.7 | Trace |
| Hallway wall (outside children's bedrooms) | 26.0 | Trace |
| Living room wall (outside master bedroom) | 11.7 | Trace |

Case Study – Rural Property in Victoria

- March 2015 – Family moved out of the home leaving all possessions behinds as these are deemed contaminated
- May 2016 – Council has just commenced collecting additional data to inform remediation



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Case Study – Rural Property in Victoria

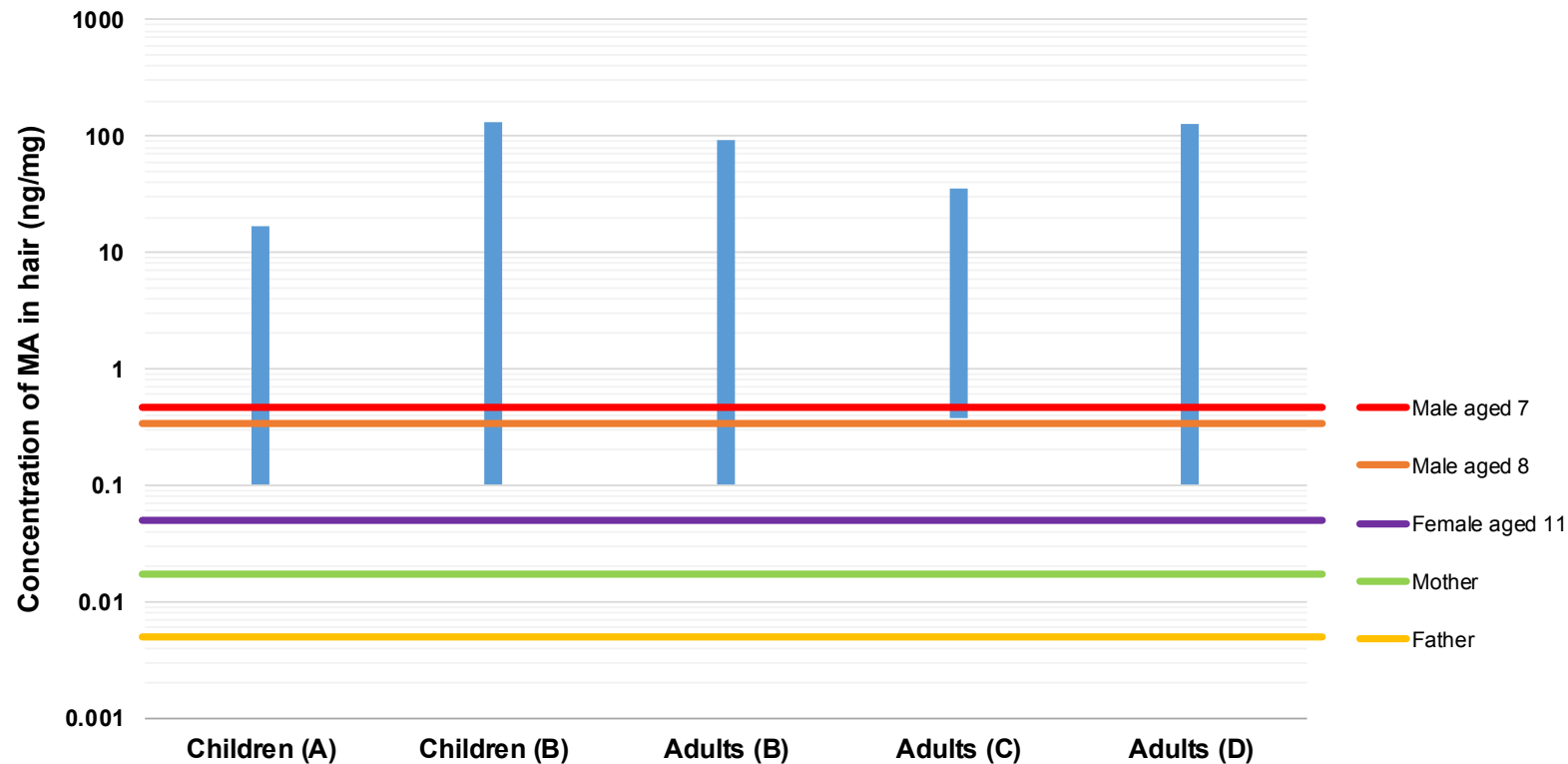
- Living at the home caused their youngest child to develop respiratory problems (asthma-like symptoms) and behavioral changes (similar to inattentive ADHD)
- Other family members also affected but to a lesser extent
- Respiratory effects stopped once moved out of the home
- Behavioral changes have been resolving now out of the home
- But there are other family stressors – the behavior of the Council and slow action to resolve problem



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Intakes of Methamphetamine Hair Analysis



A – drug exposed children (methamphetamine drug laboratories and homes with users) from California (Castaneto et al 2013);

B – drug exposed children from clandestine drug laboratories and adult drug users in New Zealand (Bassindale 2012);

C – range reported in long-term adult drug users (based on doses of 0.25 to 4 g/day of MA) (Han et al 2011);

D – range reported in adult workplace drug use testing (Tsanaclis and wicks 2007).

It is noted that for the published studies included in this figure the reporting limit for MA in hair was 0.1 ng/mg.



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What does this mean.....

- **Potential for actual**
- **harm to occur must**
- **be the driver for**
- **proper assessment**
- **and remediation**

the guidelines?



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Responsibilities

- Police remove evidence only. They do not make the premises safe – they do provide a limited report on the site
- Police do not address injuries/effects in others living in home
- Notify local councils to indicate premises may be contaminated – they notify owners
- When is it safe for re-occupancy?

BUT – not all drug labs are the same

The level of contamination does vary significantly

ACC - Established a safe level for meth residues on surfaces in Australia



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Guidance

Clandestine drug laboratory remediation guidelines – 2011

<http://www.ag.gov.au/CrimeAndCorruption/Drugs/Documents/Clandestinedruglaboratoryremediationguidelines.pdf>

Derivation of risk-based investigation guidelines, clandestine drug laboratory, site investigation guidelines – enRiskS 2009:

<http://www.enrisks.com.au/resources/>

enHealth Position Statement – Clandestine Drug Laboratories and Public Health Risks – August 2013 (to be updated shortly)

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/\\$File/Clan-Labs.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/$File/Clan-Labs.pdf)

NSW Health guidance <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/hazard/Documents/clan-lab-guidelines.pdf>



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NSW Guidance

- Prepared for NSW Health as advice on what is required in NSW
- Addresses clandestine drug laboratories and hydroponic plantations
- Clan labs: different approaches advocated for low risk and high risk properties
- Provides guidance on what is a suitably qualified professional for undertaking assessment and remediation works



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Clan Lab Bust

NSW Police
 Clandestine drug laboratory identified
 Removal of lab equipment , chemicals and drugs
 Sticker placed on door – indicating former lab and no one to enter prior to remediation being completed
 Notification of lab to local council EHO

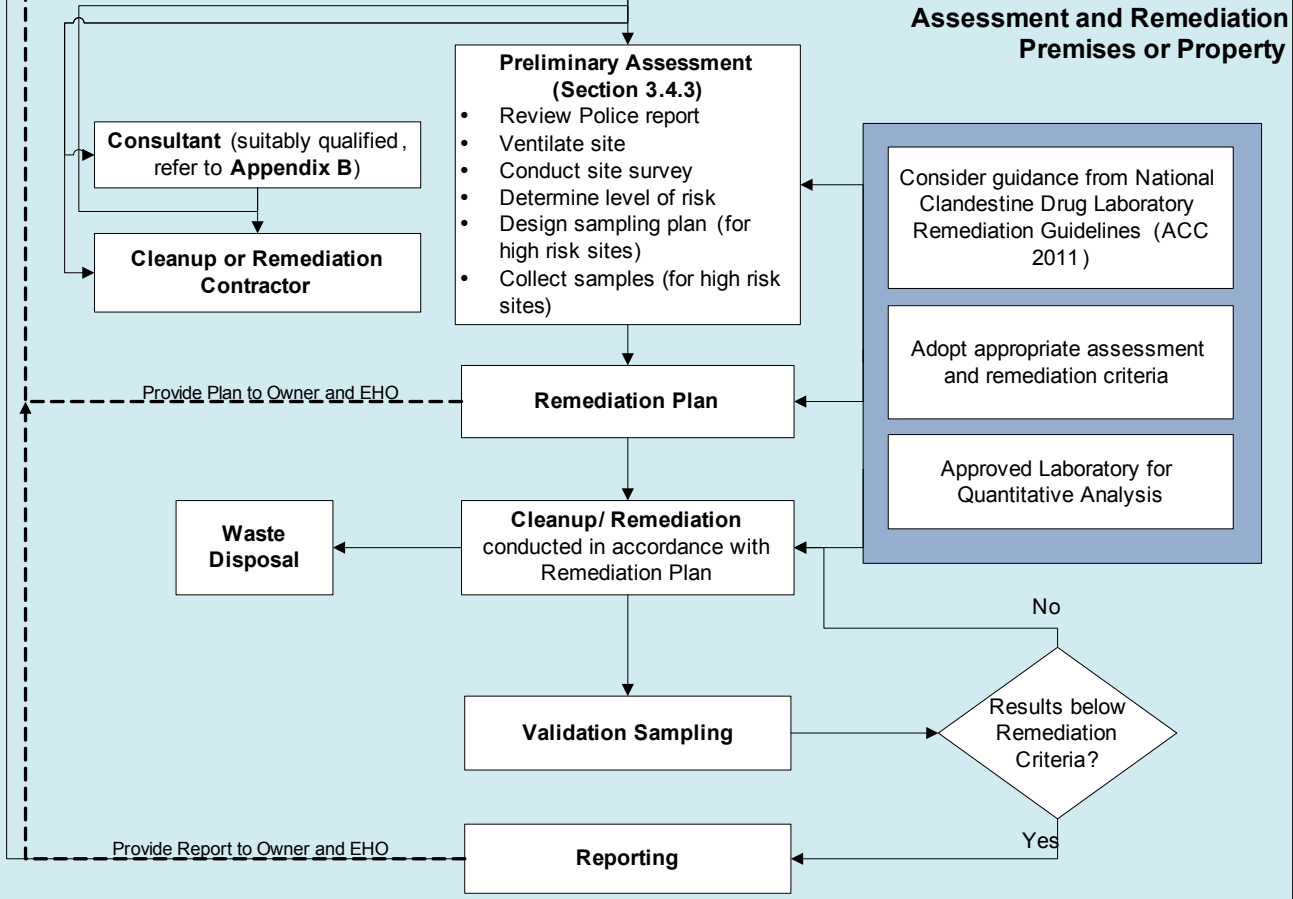
Notification (Section 3.4.2)

Council EHO
 Advises Property owner of presence of laboratory and requirements to assess and remediate the property before further occupation or use

Consideration of Responsibilities and Powers under:
 • LGA 1993
 • POEO Act 1997

Property Owner
 Responsible Party for Remediation
 Advises EHO of progress and completion of assessment and remediation

Assessment and Remediation Premises or Property



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SEEMS LEGIT

**Thank You
Questions?**



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