

**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

**STATUTORY RULES 1988 NO. 204**

**Issued by Authority of the Minister for Community Services  
and Health**

**Epidemiological Studies (Confidentiality) Act 1981**  
**Epidemiological Studies (Confidentiality)**  
**Regulations (Amendment)**

Section 13 of the Epidemiological Studies (Confidentiality) Act 1981 (the Act) provides that the Governor-General may make regulations, not inconsistent with the Act, prescribing all matters required or permitted by the Act to be prescribed or necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to the Act.

The purpose of the Act is to provide for the confidentiality of information collected in certain epidemiological studies conducted by, or on behalf of, the Commonwealth.

Subsection 3(1) of the Act defines "prescribed study" to mean the Vietnam Veterans Study or a Commonwealth epidemiological study which is declared by the regulations to be a study to which the Act applies. "Commonwealth epidemiological study" is defined to be an epidemiological study conducted by, or on behalf of, the Commonwealth.

2.

The Regulations prescribe four studies to be epidemiological studies to which the Act applies. The four studies, which are being conducted on behalf of the Commonwealth by the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse, are -

- . a survey of illicit drug users on patterns and predictors
- . an evaluation of cocaine usage in high income groups
- . the determination of the extent and nature of cocaine use by illicit drug users and upper economic strata individuals
- . the illicit drug charge database project.

The study on patterns and predictors involves interviewing users of illicit drugs to identify the social learning framework for current drug use and possible future use.

The study of cocaine usage in high income groups will estimate the demographics of cocaine users in university and tertiary education institute staff and stock market industry groups to assist in the understanding of the characteristics of cocaine users in Australia.

### 3.

The study of cocaine usage by illicit drugs users and upper economic strata individuals will determine the extent and nature of cocaine usage by these two groups and will assess recruitment and supply factors and the attitudes of identified users.

The illicit drug charge database project will establish a database, using court records in Western Australia, to determine changes over time with respect to the number of charges and offences, the type and the quantity of drugs and the result of court cases. The study will aim to determine how those changes over time are affected by changes in government policies, treatment practices and penalties.

The Regulations came into operation on the date of their notification in the Gazette.