



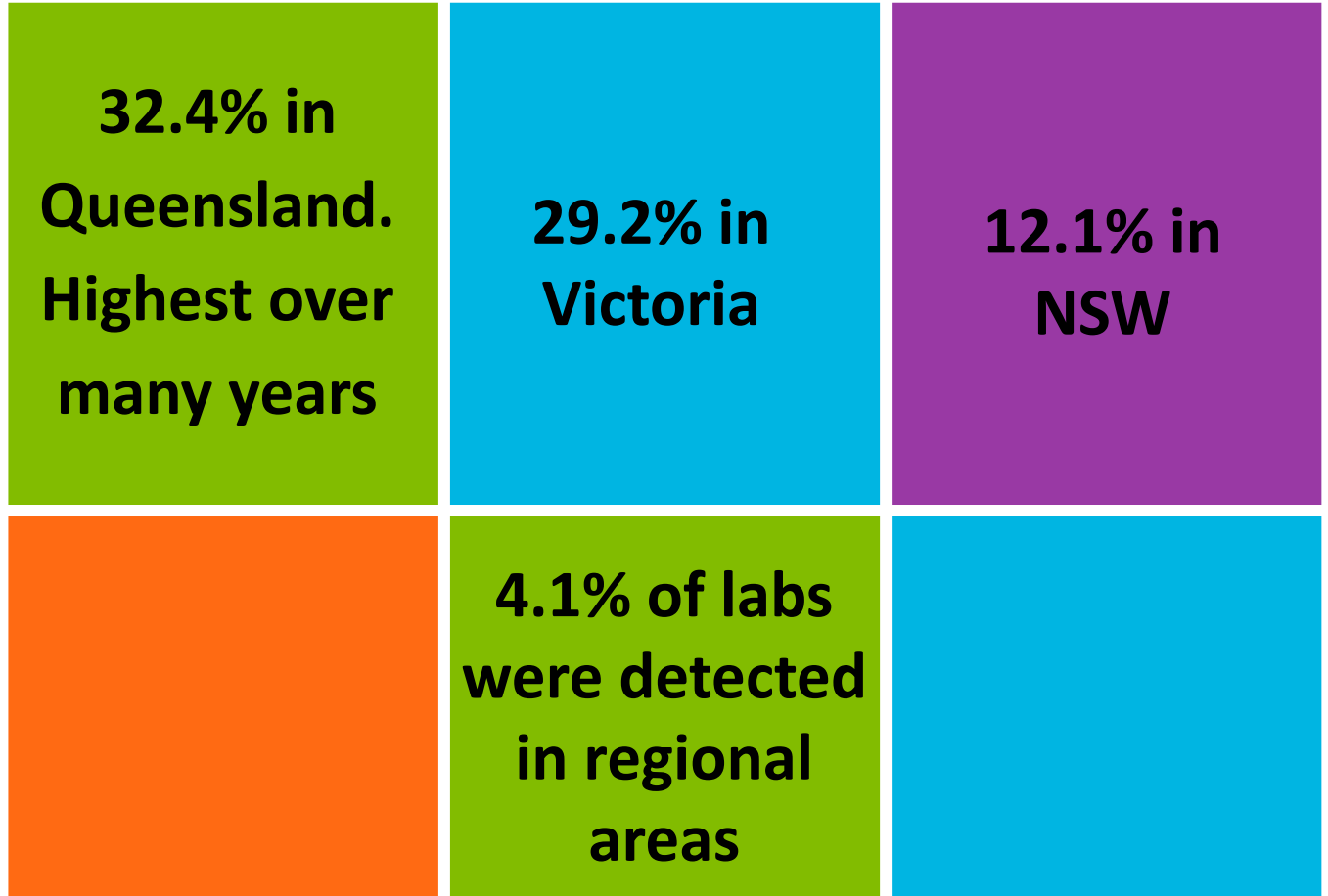
Not in our Backyard: how clandestine drug laboratories impact the health and environment of our regional communities

SEGRA 2019

**Kathy Woolley, CEO WRI
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How big a problem are clandestine drug labs?

463 laboratories detected in Australia in 2016-17



... they are already in our back yards

2007-08

2016-17

30.8% more than previous year

11.9 tonnes illicit drugs detected

27.4 tonnes detected

Amphetamine type stimulants – most commonly manufactured drug

63.9% of detections of drug labs in residential areas

Kitchen labs 49.5% - producing small amounts for own use or to share with friends

Mobile labs
Second largest locality after residential areas

Range from crude to highly sophisticated. Large scale producing 50+ kgs of ATS per cycle

Rural labs 4.1% of laboratories found in rural areas

How can I tell if a clandestine lab is in my backyard?



Windows
blacked out

Heavy
condensation
on windows

Chemicals or
containers –
Acetone,
ammonia,
solvents

Equipment
such as tubing,
pumps,
syringes and
medication
boxes

Drugs
paraphernalia

Strong odours,
staining in sinks,
toilets and on
walls.

... but not only in
premises – mobile
labs create
additional
problems like
dumping
chemicals

Case study



Case study

Family of five – including 3 children aged 7–11 years - rural Victoria, 2015

Former identified drug lab – inhabited for almost two years before vacated

Testing revealed methamphetamine residue on surfaces was 23-52 times above the Australian limit of 0.5 micrograms/100cm²

OUTCOME

- Evidence of systematic absorption of methamphetamine from the environment in hair samples
- The family members developed adverse health effects including asthma like symptoms, trouble sleeping and behavioural change
- Most pronounced in the youngest child

Case study

Regional City in NSW

A resident in a regional city bought a house in a long established residential area.

Drug manufacturing related equipment left in the house.

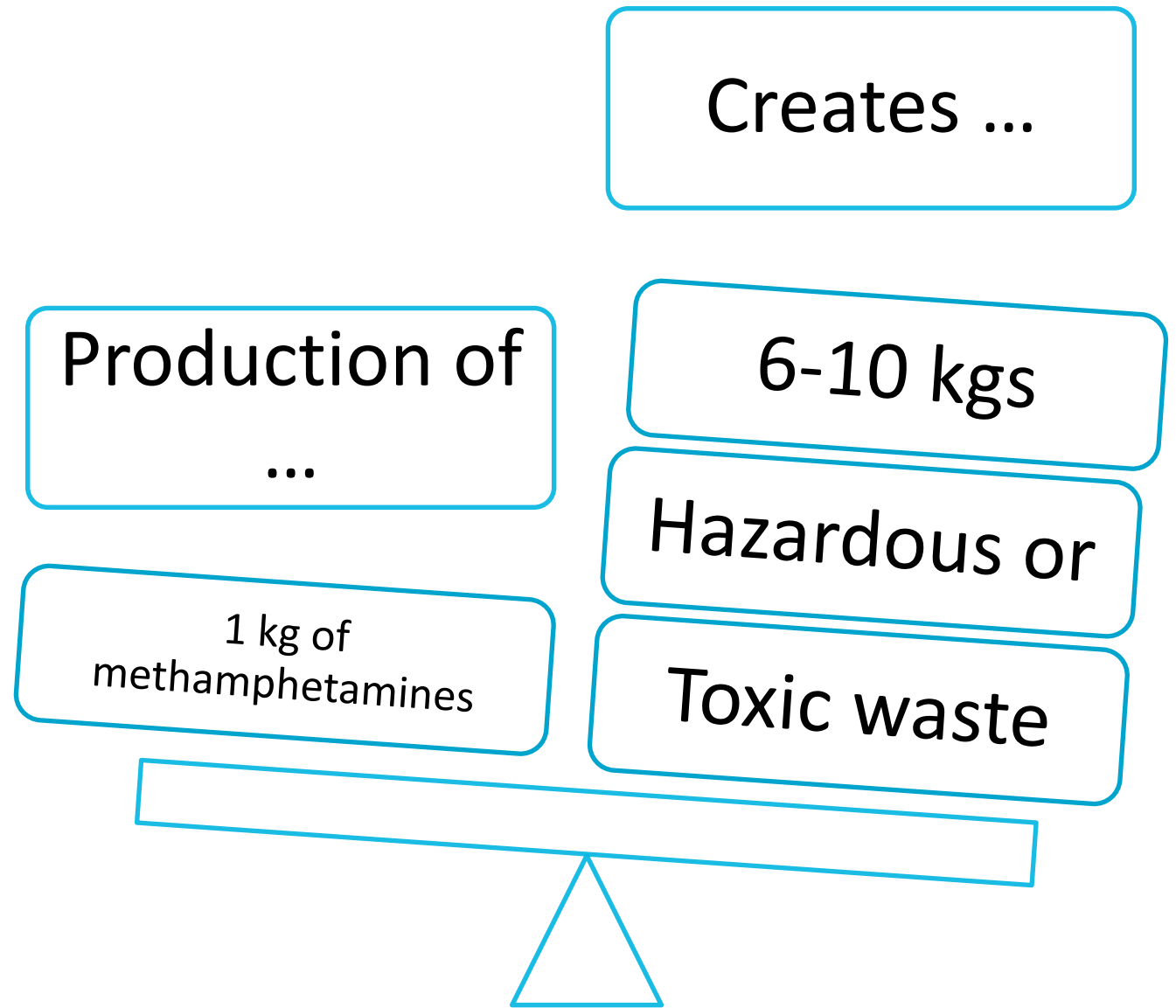
She started to clean house herself.

OUTCOME

- Hospitalised several days after cleaning with high fever, migraines, skin rashes, nausea, vomiting and severe stomach pains.
- 2 years later – still has health issues
- House sold for \$45K less than purchase price – and spent \$65K on renovations and \$600 on professional cleaners.

What impacts do clandestine drug labs have on the environment?

Here's some bad news....



Case studies

Longevity and volatility of the contamination



San Diego

Dumping of red phosphorous

Fires occurred **10 years** after dumping

Sierra Nevada Mountains

Site contaminated

2002

No degradation of meth. residue after **9 years**

Remote regional NSW area

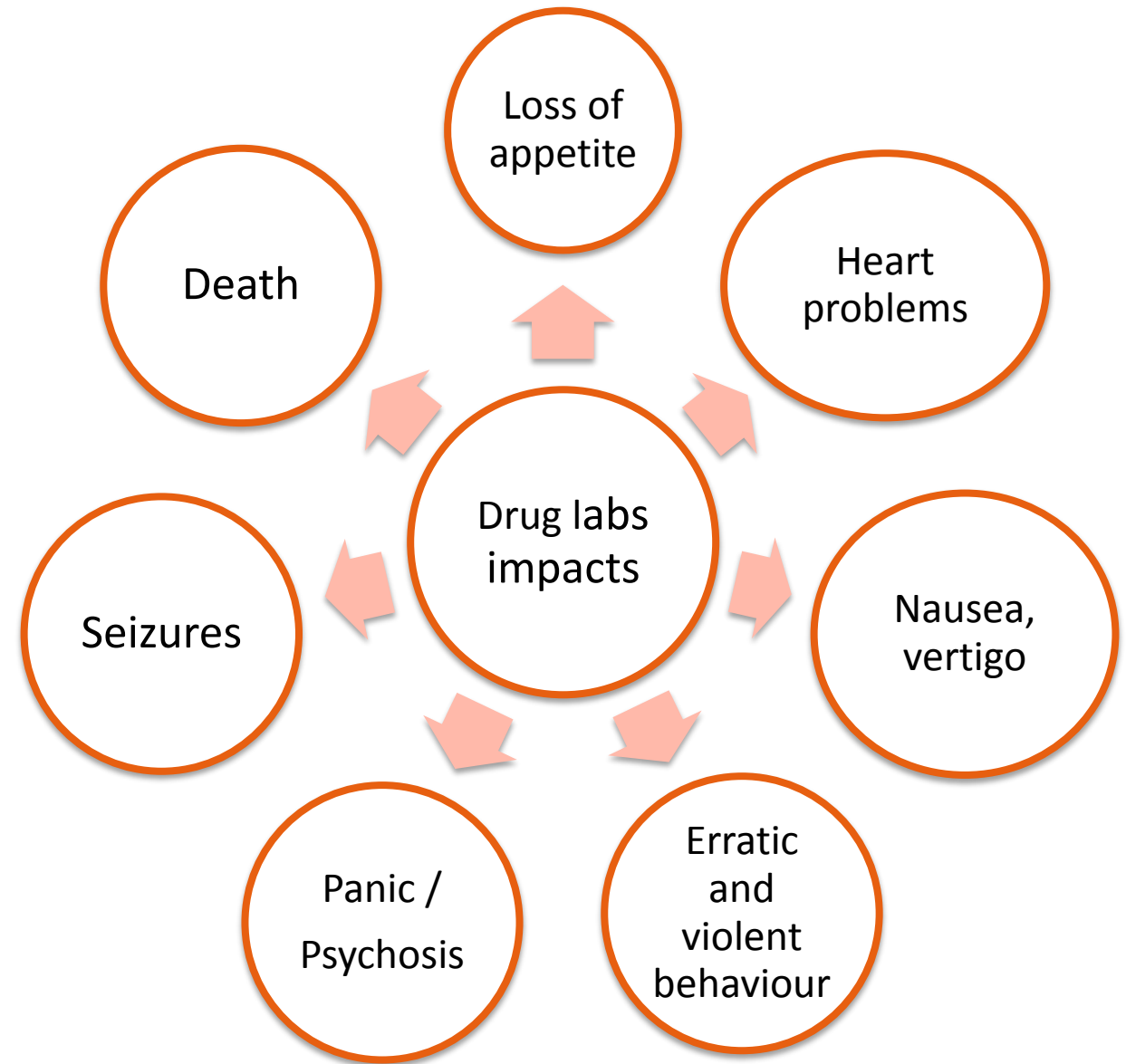
Chemicals from drug manufacturing in backyard.

Extensive soil contamination and potential leaching into groundwater.

Half a football field.

Remediation costs around \$38K – **who pays?**

**What impacts do clandestine labs have on me?
Here's the really bad news.
Contact with drug lab sites can lead to**



Case studies



Drug lab explosion	Mobile lab explosion	Drug lab explosion
<p>Western Sydney</p> <p>Explosion caused significant damage and scattered debris outside the second floor apartment.</p> <p>The “cook” died of his burns 5 weeks later.</p>	<p>Gladstone, Qld</p> <p>2 people found in car – severe injuries consistent with chemical explosion.</p> <p>Ingestion of fumes in small spaces concentrates the danger.</p>	<p>Kingswood, NSW</p> <p>Explosion and fire at townhouse</p> <p>The fire did not ignite the 70 litres of diethyl ether found at the premises - fortunately.</p>

Apart from the crims, who else is at risk?

- * **First responders**
- * **Children**
- * **Pets**
- * **Home owners**
- * **Neighbours**



First responders	Innocent victims	Innocent victims
Police Council staff Ambulance officers Fire brigades	Children Pets Property owners – current and new Stock	Real Estate agents Cleaners Painters

Impacts

- it's getting worse...

exposure to fumes from
a drug lab site for 30
seconds.... 4 days of
pain



NOTICE TO ████████████████████ SUBCONTRACTORS	
DATE: 28/03/2019	SUBJECT METH LABS
Effective immediately all ██████████ subcontractors are required to comply with the processes below.	
Dear Subcontractors,	
██████████ wishes to issue a safety warning regarding ██████████ properties where tenants may be undertaking illicit drug making activities.	
A ██████████ employee and subcontractor were exposed to illicit drug manufacture earlier in the week. Exposure to fumes for less than 30 seconds has resulted in ongoing vomiting, breathing issues, stomach aches and stinging eyes over 4 days. NSW police have confirmed the presence of a meth lab within the house.	

Thank you



Juliet Duffy
Phone: 02 6884 8820 0407 120 325
E: juliet@enviroscience.com.au
www.enviroscience.com.au



Kathy Woolley
Phone: 02 6333 4000 0428 987 202
E: kathy.woolley@wri.org.au
www.wri.org.au