



MEDIA STATEMENT

Peak Body welcomes Upper House support of drug checking motion

Tuesday, 19 November 2019

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania has congratulated the Tasmanian Legislative Council members who supported Member for Murchison, Ruth Forrest's drug checking motion this evening.

ATDC chief executive, Alison Lai said that while the final motion stopped short of calling on the Tasmanian Government to trial drug checking during this festival season, she was very pleased with the outcome, which would assist in keeping a Tasmanian drug checking trial a possibility in the future.

"First and foremost we are respectful of the Tasmanian Government's position that they are not ready, at this stage, to conduct a trial of drug checking," Ms Lai said.

"We appreciate that this is not a matter that will be able to be resolved before the upcoming festival season, and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to reviewing the evidence as it becomes available.

"The concept of drug checking continues to generate strong interest and opinions across the broader community, and these diverse views are being mirrored in our parliament.

"It is still our position that there is sufficient evidence to conduct a trial of drug checking in Tasmania and we remain committed to working with government to address any concerns that they may have.

"We are encouraged by tonight's outcome, which sends a clear message that the Upper House wants to see strategies introduced to reduce the harms of illicit drugs at our music festivals and events, and that there continues to be broad support for keeping drug checking on the table as a potential option for the future.

"We want to express our thanks to Ruth Forrest for her unwavering commitment to progressing this important issue, and to all the members of the Legislative Council who supported Ms Forrest's motion including the members of the Tasmanian Labor Party, represented by Member for Rumney, Sarah Lovell.

"We also express our appreciation to the Liberal Government members of the Upper House, represented by Member for Montgomery, Leonie Hiscutt, for their collaborative approach to this debate.

"While the final motion that was supported was worded slightly differently to the amendments proposed by the Liberal Party members, it was evident through the views expressed this evening, that everyone was working with the same goal in mind, which is to reduce the harms of illicit drug-use at Tasmanian music festivals and events."



Following a number of amendments, the version of Ms Forrest’s motion that was supported is as follows:

(1) That the Legislative Council notes:

- (a) The Report of the State Coroner’s Court of New South Wales of the Inquest into the death of six patrons of NSW music festivals (the Report), released on 8 November 2019 by Magistrate Harriet Grahame, the Deputy State Coroner for New South Wales; and
- (b) The thorough and evidence-based approach taken to inform the Report.

(2) That the Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian Government to:

- (a) Fully consider the NSW Coroner’s Report;
- (b) in partnership with Festival organisers put in place measures to actively promote the safety of patrons attending Tasmanian 2019-20 music festivals;
- (c) undertake evidence informed public education campaigns related to the harms of illicit drug use; and
- (d) give full and genuine consideration to the Report’s Recommendation 1, to the New South Wales’ Department of Premier and Cabinet, recommending the introduction of a front of house medically supervised drug checking and reaffirm the Government’s commitment made during debate on 14 August 2019, to review the NSW Coroner’s Report and the forthcoming Australian National University independent evaluation of the second drug checking trial in the ACT.

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All media enquiries please contact Alison Lai, CEO on 0450 517 017

Need a refresher on how drug checking works? ATDC’s drug checking position statement can be viewed [here](#).

Who are the ATDC? The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania is the peak body representing and supporting community organisations, and the people they assist, to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harm for all Tasmanians.

Our vision is a Tasmania without alcohol, tobacco or other drug related harm or discrimination.

LANGUAGE MATTERS – Language is powerful, especially when discussing alcohol and other drugs and the people who use them. Stigmatising language reinforces negative stereotypes. “Person-centred” language focuses on the person, not their substance use.

When reporting on people who use alcohol and other drugs....	
Try this ☺	Not this ☹
Substance use, non-prescribed use	Abuse, misuse, problem use, non-compliant use
Person who uses drugs	Drug user, drug abuser
Person with a dependence on....	Addict, junkie, druggie, alcoholic
Person experiencing drug dependence	Suffering from addiction, has a drug habit
Person who has stopped using drugs	Clean, sober, drug-free
Person with lived experience of drug dependence	Ex-addict, former addict, used to be a...
Please see the attached Language matters resource attached or at: www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/	