

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Drug checking: we know why, so let's talk about how we can trial drug checking in Tasmania

Tuesday 10 December 2019

**"We are hopeful that the release of this report now finally enables us to move the conversation away from 'why' to 'how' a trial of drug checking can be delivered in Tasmania because any continuing push-back can no longer be based on concerns about a lack of evidence." - Alison Lai, ATDC CEO**

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania welcomes the release today of the independent evaluation from the Australian National University, confirming that Pill Testing Australia's front-of-house drug checking model reduces the risk of harm for people that may use drugs at music festivals and events.

ATDC chief executive Alison Lai said that the ANU's independent evaluation adds to the significant weight of evidence to support a trial of drug checking in Tasmania.

"Like many, we have been eagerly awaiting the release of the ANU evaluation report" Ms Lai said.

"Alongside the release of the New South Wales Coroner's Report into festival deaths, the ANU's report is now the second independent assessment in a matter of weeks that has endorsed drug checking as an evidence-based harm-reduction strategy that reduces the harms of illicit drug use at music festivals and events.

"The Tasmanian Government has committed on several occasions that they will review the information in the ANU report, and we will be looking to meet with them at the earliest available opportunity to discuss the findings.

"We are hopeful that the release of this report now finally enables us to move the conversation away from 'why' to 'how' a trial of drug checking can be delivered in Tasmania because any continuing push-back can no longer be based on concerns about a lack of evidence.

"And suggesting that drug checking condones, or sends a message that illicit drug use is safe simply cannot continue, because to do so would be in complete disregard to the evidence in the ANU Report, and the recommendations of the New South Wales Coroner's Office.

"While it may be too late to coordinate a trial at the upcoming Falls Festival, in our view there is nothing stopping a trial from occurring at the February 2020 Party in the Paddock music festival, aside from a commitment from the Tasmanian Government to allow it to occur.

"Now armed with the information from the ANU's independent evaluation that drug checking reduces harm, we hope that we will be given the opportunity to make it happen."

-----

**Media Contact:** Alison Lai, CEO – 0450 517 017



*No Harm, No Discrimination*

Suite 1, Level 1, 175 Collins Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000  
PO Box 4702 Bathurst Street PO, Hobart TAS 7000  
9am – 5pm Monday to Friday | P 03 6231 5002  
E [admin@atdc.org.au](mailto:admin@atdc.org.au) | [atdc.org.au](http://atdc.org.au)

The ATDC's position on drug checking can be viewed in more detail [here \(updated December 2019\)](#)

The ATDC's position on drug checking is echoed by the following Australian peak bodies:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Australian Medical Association                     | 11. College of Emergency Nursing                              |
| 2. Public Health Association of Australia             | 12. Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation                 |
| 3. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners  | 13. Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists |
| 4. Royal Australian College of Physicians             | 14. Paramedics Australasia                                    |
| 5. Australasian College for Emergency Medicine        | 15. National LGBTI Health Alliance                            |
| 6. Rural Doctors Association of Australia             | 16. Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association          |
| 7. Australian Nursing Midwifery Association           | 17. Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council                |
| 8. National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association | 18. Australian Lawyers Alliance                               |
| 9. Pharmaceutical Society of Australia                | 19. Australian Lawyers for Human Rights                       |
| 10. Forensic and Clinical Toxicology Association      | 20. Civil Liberties Australia                                 |

At the local level, it is also supported by Tasmanian community organisations including Health Consumers Tasmania, the Youth Network of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and Community Legal Centres Tasmania. A trial is also supported by the Hobart City Council.

**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 Language matters resource at: <a href="http://www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/">www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/</a>	



*No Harm, No Discrimination*

Suite 1, Level 1, 175 Collins Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000  
PO Box 4702 Bathurst Street PO, Hobart TAS 7000  
9am – 5pm Monday to Friday | P 03 6231 5002  
E [admin@atdc.org.au](mailto:admin@atdc.org.au) | [atdc.org.au](http://atdc.org.au)