



## Harm Reduction Australia 2016 Election – Drug Policy Guide

In late May 2016 HRA asked 6 political parties to share whether they supported a number of harm reduction based policies and programs for Australia - the results are presented below.

Policy - Program	Aust Sex Party	Liberal Party	Labor Party	Greens	Nationals	NXT *
Medicinal cannabis	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Needle and syringe programs	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	unclear
Methadone and buprenorphine programs	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	unclear
Safe injecting facilities	yes	no	unclear	yes	no	no
Decriminalisation of personal drug use	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
Diversion of drug users from criminal justice system into health services	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prison based needle and syringe programs	yes	no	unclear	yes	no	no

Pill testing (or drug checking) and relevant information being provided at festivals and other events	yes	no	unclear	yes	no	no
Heroin prescription programs	yes	unclear	no	yes	unclear	no
Peer education services	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	unclear
Consumer participation in drug and alcohol services	yes	yes	yes	yes	unclear	unclear
Managed alcohol programs (where homeless chronic alcohol dependent people are provided with a regulated amount of alcohol and housing in an effort to stabilise their drinking)	yes	unclear	no	yes	unclear	no
Greater funding for drug treatment services	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Greater funding for harm reduction services	yes	unclear	yes	yes	unclear	no
Drug consumption rooms - facilities that manage both the safe injection and inhalation of illicit substances	yes	no	unclear	yes	no	no

\* *As no response was received the response included is based on an HRA interpretation of their submission to the National Ice Taskforce see <http://www.nickxenophon.com.au/media/nicks-must-reads/show/submission-to-national-ice-taskforce/>*

## **Other Information Provided**

### **Australian Sex Party**

Thanks for the opportunity. Our Federal and state policies can be found here

<http://voteasxp.org.au/asxp-policies/your-safety>

<http://voteasxp.org.au/asxp-policies/drugs-decriminalisation>

<http://www.sexparty.org.au/policy/48-victorian-drug-law-reform-policy>

Our evidenced-informed drug policy focuses on harm reduction, rather than the costly and ineffective law-and-order approach. Crime can be reduced, with better outcomes for drug users by decriminalising all drugs for personal use but specifically legislating to immediately decriminalise cannabis. Legalising prescription heroin for registered users and funding supervised injecting facilities and needle exchange programs including in all prisons, will save the state millions of dollars and result in better outcomes for addicts.

### **Liberal Party**

The Turnbull Government recognises that Australians are doing harm to themselves through the use of illicit drugs. We are committed to reducing their use in our society. Equally we are committed to reducing the misuse of alcohol.

We are against all forms of illegal drugs and we will not legalise a drug or decriminalise a drug that destroys health, employment, relationships, lives and families.

We understand that the use of illegal drugs problem cannot be solved by arrests alone. An effective response has to focus on preventative measures, education and health care, and at the same time reduce the demand for drugs.

Earlier this year, the Turnbull Government secured the passage of legislation that allows the locally controlled cultivation of cannabis for medicinal and scientific purposes.

Cannabis has not been legalised or decriminalised for recreational use. Medicinal cannabis products that are manufactured in Australia may be prescribed for patients with particular conditions by medical practitioners authorised to do so by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

While strong law enforcement is important to stop the supply of illegal drugs through detection, apprehension and prosecution, we know that more must be done.

A drug testing service is not part of the Coalition's commitment to tackling drug use. We will not ask law enforcement agencies to enhance people's ability to take illegal drugs. Our balanced approach is based on evidence and incorporates prevention, early intervention and health care strategies as well as law enforcement.

At the local level, the Coalition Government has provided Primary Health Networks with more than \$240 million over three years to work with local communities to determine what form of treatment will be most effective in their area.

In relation to amphetamines including ice, the Turnbull Government is tackling the problem across a number of areas by giving support to families, communities and frontline workers; targeting prevention activities to those most at risk. These measures are part of our \$300 million response to the National Ice Taskforce report.

While the delivery of treatment services is traditionally the responsibility of state governments, the Federal Coalition Government has recognised the urgency of this situation and acted.

## Greens

Medicinal cannabis	Yes. The Australian Greens have been strong supporters of the introduction and regulation of medicinal cannabis in Australia, which we know has significant positive effects for a range of medical conditions.
Needle and Syringe Programs	Yes. The Australian Greens have championed harm reduction approaches to drug policy which have shown to be more effective, safer and less wasteful of government resources. We have announced our Harm Reduction Innovation Fund of \$10 million per annum to fund harm reduction programs and trials.
Methadone and buprenorphine programs	Yes. As above, we are strong supporters of the harm reduction approach to drug policy and recognise the significant successes of these programs to date.

Safe injecting facilities	Yes. Our Harm Reduction Innovation Fund would facilitate the roll out of further safe injecting facilities in Australia, as well as other harm reduction programs.
Decriminalisation of personal drug use	Yes. The Greens would decriminalise personal drug use. Treating drug users as criminals wastes limited resources which could be better directed to providing drug treatment services and addressing health issues. Examples overseas such as in Portugal demonstrate the success of this approach.
Diversion of drug users from criminal justice system into health services	Yes. As above, it is Greens policy to address drug use as a health issue rather than a criminal one.
Prison based needle and syringe programs	Yes. Our Harm Reduction Innovation Fund would provide the resources required to roll out these harm reduction programs in more locations including in prisons.
Pill Testing and relevant information being provided at festivals and other events	Yes. Our Harm Reduction Innovation Fund would provide the resources required to roll out harm reduction programs such as pill testing at festivals.
Heroin prescription programs	Yes. The Greens would support consideration of prescription of heroin to long-term addicts as part of our harm reduction approach and in collaboration with programs to provide more effective treatment services.
Peer education services	Yes. The Greens are supportive of peer approaches to drug and alcohol education which provide accessible and credible information to users about the harms associated with drug use.
Consumer participation in drug and alcohol services	Yes. The Greens support consumer participation in drug and alcohol services.
Managed alcohol programs	Yes. The Greens support a range of measures which will assist those with drug and alcohol dependency to manage their consumption; this should be coupled with other treatment services.
Greater funding for treatment services	Yes. The Greens recognise the current funding for alcohol and drug treatment services is meeting approximately half the current need. We would double Commonwealth funding to alcohol and drug treatment services.

Greater funding for harm reduction services	Yes. Our Harm Reduction Innovation fund would provide \$10 million per year for roll out of harm reduction programs and services.
Drug consumption rooms	Yes. As above, our Harm Reduction Innovation Fund would provide the resources to fund harm reduction approaches to reduce the risks associated with drug taking.

**Labor Party**

Safe injecting facilities	N/A – State and territory responsibility.
Prison based needle and syringe programs	N/A – State and territory responsibility.
Pill testing (or drug checking) and relevant information being provided at festivals and other events	N/A – State and territory responsibility.
Drug consumption rooms - facilities that manage both the safe injection and inhalation of illicit substances	N/A – This is regulated by state and territory laws and policy.