



MEDIA RELEASE

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International Networking Event Celebrates New Initiatives & Support

An international networking event hosted by [Harm Reduction Australia \(HRA\)](#) at the [2023 Harm Reduction International Conference](#) in Melbourne was the venue for the announcement of new HRA initiatives and a celebration of very generous philanthropic support for the increasingly ground-breaking work of [Pill Testing Australia \(PTA\)](#).

These included:

- A large donation from a private philanthropic foundation to purchase the Acuity UPLC H-Class Plus System which will now continue to be utilised at CanTEST in order to provide a high degree of information for staff and patrons of the service. The UPLC is a sophisticated piece of equipment that our expert analytical team can use when required but particularly when samples present as problematic on the FTIR.
- A very generous donation from the Damien Trimmingham Foundation (DTF), to purchase another Bruker ALPHA-P FT-IR system to conduct pill testing at festivals for use by PTA. The new top of the line equipment has also been enhanced with the capability to allow our highly qualified analytical team to provide a level of information previously not seen in a festival environment from an FTIR.

Harm Reduction Australia President, Gino Vumbaca OAM, stated – *“Harm Reduction Australia & Pill Testing Australia are incredibly thankful for this support and the confidence it demonstrates in the skill and expertise of our medical, counselling, peer and analytical teams to provide and utilise this equipment and information.”*

- HRA & PTA unveiled a new Phone App that has been developed with donations received from the many people in the community that support the pill testing work we undertake to reduce drug related harms. Front of house pill testing has, and remains, a program that is particularly supported by families and friends of people who use drugs given their desire to see them be safe.

HRA & PTA will now be seeking further support to add a range of additional features to the Phone App so as to provide a greater level of information, advice and assistance at festivals and across communities.



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- HRA also announced the launch of its new online training course, which is free of charge and suitable for professionals, students, and anyone interested in understanding the development and application of harm reduction policies and programs. A specific pill testing module in the course will also increase the opportunity for the hundreds of PTA volunteers to achieve a level of understanding and knowledge of pill testing to participate in the service.

HRA acknowledges the one-off financial support of the NSW Government for the development of the new online training program.

Harm Reduction Australia Executive Director, Dr Annie Madden AO, said – *“This international networking event has also provided us the opportunity to also thank all our teams, supporters and volunteers working on the important issues of pill testing, treatment equity and medicinal cannabis and driving, all of which have seen some very recent and welcome breakthroughs.”*

HRA also thanked the many corporations that have provide HRA with financial support including Indivior, Camurus & Gilead, as well as the extraordinary level of in-kind support it receives from organisations across the financial, legal, corporate, government and non-government sectors.

The work of the HRA Board and all other volunteers was also celebrated at the event.

Contacts: Gino Vumbaca, HRA President on **0408-244-552**
Dr Annie Madden, HRA Executive Director on **0414-628-136**

To financially help HRA further develop these current and future initiatives please go to [Harm Reduction Australia Donations](#)

Harm Reduction Australia is a national organisation committed to reducing the health, social and economic harms potentially associated with drug use and drug policy responses. HRA takes a non-judgmental approach to drug use within society and recognises the key role people with lived/living experience of drug use must play in any effective drug policy solutions. HRA works collaboratively to ensure reform to current drug policy with the primary aims of ending imprisonment, stigmatisation, discrimination, and human rights violations against the people who use/have used drugs. We are dedicated to comprehensive drug law reform in Australia through the promotion of evidence-based, sensible, and safer drug policies.



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