

EMBARGOED until 5:00am on Wed 15th November 2023

MEDIA ALERT

11:00am on Thursday 15th of November 2023

Legislative Council Committee Room Victorian Parliament House

Given the numerous coronial reports highlighting the critical need for pill testing services to be available at festivals in Victoria an offer has been formally made to the Victorian Government to provide pill testing services at a festival this Summer.

The offer is a cost-free trial of a public health based pill testing service which is supported and endorsed by a variety of unions and organisations.

The offer includes:

- Liaison with relevant local service providers with whom Harm Reduction Australia (HRA) & Pill Testing Australia (PTA) have ongoing working relationships.
- Appropriately qualified professionals to participate in the delivery of the service – including experienced medical emergency physicians, chemical analysts, and specialist festival harm reduction peer educators.
- Our own insurance coverage and equipment.
- The provision of a series of policy, procedures, and training manuals in place to ensure the highest quality of service delivery.
- A willingness to provide the participating festival with a letter of indemnity.

Pill testing services have been shown to significantly reduce the harms from drug use by providing accurate information and advice directly to people contemplating the consumption of illicit drugs. Too many Australian young people lose their lives each year due to the use of unknown illicit substances at festivals and events, and pill testing, along with a range of other harm reduction strategies, can help reduce that risk.

HRA is aware that at times there is a misunderstanding that somehow our service will provide a “green light” to drug use. Our response to this is best encapsulated by the recent statement made by Pill Testing Australia Ambassador, Jen Ross-King, who tragically lost her only child to a drug related incident at a music festival:

"When MPs tell me about pill testing giving the green light to drug use, I correct them and tell them it actually gives a red or amber light because it asks people to pause and take time to discuss what they are about to do with qualified health professionals."

We await what we hope will be a positive response from the Victorian Government.

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Available for comment at Parliament House event:

Stephanie Tzanetis

Chloe Span

Stephanie Thuesen

Danny Hill

A/Prof Jenn Schumann

Aiv Puglielli

Tim Read

Nick Kent

Executive Officer, Pill Testing Australia

Board Member, Harm Reduction Australia

HACSU & HCSSV Representative

State Secretary, Victorian Ambulance Union

Vice President, Forensic and Clinical Toxicology Association

Greens spokesperson for Drug Harm Reduction

Greens spokesperson for Health

Co-National Director, Students for Sensible Drug Policy, Australia

Supported by:



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