

# HARM REDUCTION AUSTRALIA



Harm Reduction Australia  
is Australia's leading organisation  
advocating to reduce harms  
associated with drug use and  
drug policies.





## **We all know people who use drugs**

While many of us have different views on using drugs, we can all agree that keeping people safe – and alive – is the highest priority.





## Did you know?

- In 2019 almost half of Australians aged 14 and over – more than ten million people – admitted to having used a drug illicitly in their lifetime\*
- 16.4% admitted to using an illicit drug in the last 12 months
- If we actually arrested everyone who admitted to using an illicit drug in the past 12 months, we would have to arrest over one million people

And this is before we talk about the use of legal drugs like alcohol and tobacco.

\*National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 2019



## **Did you also know?**

- **Five people die every day from drug-related overdoses in Australia\***
- **In 2020 drug-related overdoses exceeded Australia's national road toll with over 1,800 drug-related deaths**
- **Attempts to eliminate drug use through prohibition and abstinence-only approaches have failed globally, resulting in tens of thousands of preventable deaths each year**
- **You could say that the 'war on drugs' is really a war against ourselves**

\*ABS 2021, AIHW website



**So, what is Harm Reduction?**





**Harm Reduction is  
both a philosophy and  
a pragmatic approach that**

- ✓ Saves Lives
- ✓ Values Human Rights
- ✓ Takes a Non-Judgmental Approach





## **Examples of Harm Reduction include**

- **Pill testing** – informing people of potentially dangerous substances that they didn't intend on taking
- **Needle & Syringe Programs** – preventing blood-borne viruses like HIV and hepatitis C
- **Opioid Treatment Programs** – supporting people who are dealing with drug dependency issues
- **Medically Supervised Injecting Centres** – demonstrated to prevent overdoses, save lives and reduce public drug use



## **Harm Reduction neither condemns nor condones drug use**

Instead, harm reduction accepts that drug use is a reality and seeks to meet people where they're at, right now...

...not where someone else would like them to be

Emergency Medicine Consultant  
Dr David Caldicott with a pill testing machine





## **Harm Reduction is highly cost-effective**

Every \$1 invested in harm reduction returns between \$5 – \$14 in saved public health costs.

Dollar for dollar there is no better public health investment.



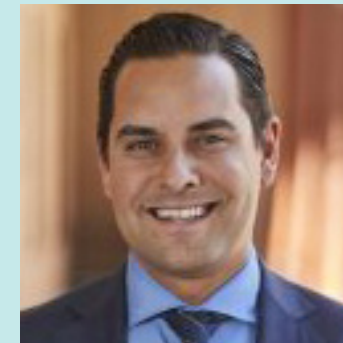




## Why Harm Reduction Australia?

Harm Reduction Australia is a trusted and authoritative voice on harm reduction.

Our high-profile advocates speak for themselves on the importance of our work. They include current MPs, former Premiers, Chief Ministers, Police Commissioners, Public Prosecutors and QCs, medical practitioners, leading community advocates and academics.



Alex  
Greenwich



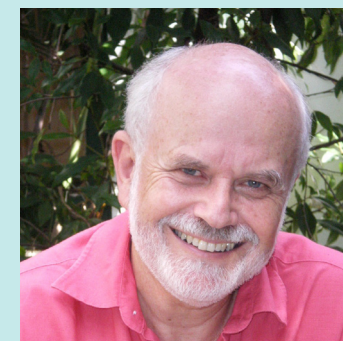
Alex Wodak



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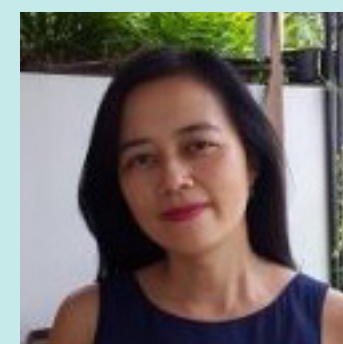
Scott Wilson



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Mick Palmer





## **What we've achieved**

- **Conducted Australia's first legal pill testing trial at a festival and secured the first fixed-site pill testing service in the ACT**
- **Successfully advocated for a high-level government review into problems with the quality and accessibility of opioid dependence treatment in Australia**
- **Advocated for take home naloxone (the overdose reversal drug) to be freely available over-the-counter saving thousands of lives**





## **What we're planning to do**

- **Expand frontline harm reduction services** by advocating for increased funding for harm reduction (currently at less than 5% of drug policy expenditure)
- **Reduce drug-related overdose deaths** by advocating for comprehensive overdose prevention approaches and the availability of pill testing services in all states and territories in Australia
- **Reduce barriers to opioid dependence treatment** by ensuring governments remove unfair and unregulated consumer fees that make drug treatment unaffordable for many vulnerable Australians



## You can help

Harm Reduction Australia is seeking new donors and partners to allow us to continue doing what we do best – reducing harm and saving lives.

Because, in the words of former Western Australian Premier and HRA advocate Geoff Gallop:

*“Harm reduction has been shown to be effective and enabling for all concerned – the drug users themselves, health workers and the wider community.”*







## **To support HRA contact**

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