

MEDIA RELEASE

7 April 2021

[starts]

Drug checking saves lives

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) supports the recommendations from Coroner Spanos relating to the implementation of a drug checking services and an early warning system to prevent fatal overdose.

The Coroner investigated five fatalities where a common thread was that the deceased did not know that the substances they were taking contained the novel psychoactive substances, 25c-NBOMe and 4-Fluoroamphetamine, which can be very harmful.

VAADA submitted to the Coroner that the drug checking service would need to have accessible means of drop off, provide a quick turnaround in reviewing the substances and have an efficient and informed means of delivering the information, accompanied by broader harm reduction messaging.

An early warning system would capture a range of drug data sources, such as substances tested at a drug checking service, amnesty bins, forensic data and ED presentations, and provide public messaging regarding the emergence of any high risk and volatile substances.

Mr David Taylor, spokesperson for VAADA, says, 'over the past decade, Victoria has experienced an unprecedented increase in fatal overdose. We would urge government to employ all evidence based measures, including drug checking and early warning systems, to reduce this toll.'

'The findings make grim reading, especially given that there are initiatives which could prevent these deaths.'

'We don't want to wait for more people to die. Victoria needs to join the increasing number of jurisdictions which are implementing these initiatives.'

[ends]

VAADA is the peak body that represents over 80 Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. On a daily basis these services are dealing with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact David Taylor on 0413 914 206.