

## PRESS RELEASE

30/11/2023

[starts]

### Drug checking saves lives

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) supports the drug checking pilot proposed by the Victorian Greens, along with the Legalise Cannabis Party and Animal Justice Party.

Drug checking (also called pill testing) is currently being supported by 78 agencies in Victoria including health providers, community service organisations, unions, peak bodies and professional associations.

Five coronial findings have recommended that the Victorian Government proceed with introducing drug checking in Victoria, following a series of preventable fatal overdoses.

ACT already has drug checking services, with Queensland soon to introduce them. 57% of Australians supporting this policy<sup>1</sup>.

Chris Christoforou, CEO of VAADA says, 'this Bill has popular public support, aligns contemporary evidence, enjoys a consensus across the community sector and will reduce harms as a health led approach.

Mr Christoforou continues, 'international evidence illustrates that up to 86% of people who check drugs and discover they are highly hazardous discard them. Drug checking allows people who are intending to use drugs to pause and consider the risks, while providing linkages to drug treatment and related supports.'

'Drug checking services can provide the community with an early warning system regarding the emergence of hazardous substances prior to consumption. Currently, hazardous substances are discovered too late through overdose, including fatal overdose. These deaths are preventable.'

'When this Bill is presented to Parliament, it should be supported'.

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

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Media stories on alcohol and other drugs may be traumatic for some people. Support is available and we ask that media agencies consider publishing the details below:

*If this story has raised issues about your own or others drug and alcohol use, please contact the national hotline for confidential counselling and referral on 1800 250 015*

**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.

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<sup>1</sup> AIHW 2023. Harm Reduction. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/harm-minimisation/harm-reduction>