

PRESS RELEASE

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[starts]

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) endorses the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pill Testing) Bill 2024

Pill testing (otherwise referred to as drug checking as these services are not limited to only testing pills) is an essential alcohol and other drugs (AOD) policy which will provide Victorians with an early warning system against the emerging threat of potent synthetic opioids.

There have been over 1000 fatal overdoses in the last 2 years in Victoria, highlighting that establishing a drug-checking service is critical to saving lives. It will allow people who have otherwise opted to consume a drug to apply a handbrake and reconsider their decision under the advice of a skilled AOD worker.

The drug checking service in the ACT, CANtest, continues to detect nitazenes which are 100 times more powerful than heroin, including in recreational drugs.

Harm reduction measures sit alongside prevention and drug treatment activities as a necessary approach to the use of alcohol and other drugs across our community. While there is a clear need for greater treatment capacity in Victoria, there is equally a pressing need for a significant uplift in harm reduction services.

That any one of these approaches can effectively address substance-related harms in the community in isolation is naïve. VAADA encourages all members of Parliament to heed the evidence and support this Bill accordingly. Moral panic will continue to fail us, costing the lives of more Victorians.

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. Daily these services deal with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.