

## **Australia**

### **[Medical Marijuana in Australia: What's Next after Legalisation?](#)**

*Vice (29/02)*

While the passing of the Narcotic Drug Amendment 29016 has legalised the cultivation and distribution of marijuana in Australia, there's still a long way to go before patients get access to pharmaceutical cannabinoids.

### **[Mass arrests part of NSW pill testing program proposal](#)**

*Sydney Morning Herald (29/02)*

Large-scale civil disobedience and mass arrests are being factored into a plan to rollout the first ever pill testing at NSW festivals before the end of the year, as the NSW Deputy Premier flagged organisers could be charged with drug supply and manslaughter.

### **[Parliamentary Drug Summit to Hear Case in Favour of Decriminalising Possession](#)**

*The Guardian (01/03)*

At an annual parliamentary hearing, senior doctors and researchers have called for a 'courageous' move towards harm reduction and decriminalisation, citing strong public support for the change in law. The Greens leader Richard Di Natale, Liberal MP Sharman Stone and Labor's Melissa Parke, convened the summit. Di Natale used the opportunity to call for the immediate implementation of pill testing at festivals.

### **[Richard Di Natale: We need to reclaim our courage and vision on drug policy](#)**

*The Guardian (02/03)*

I'm hosting a drug summit in Canberra to call for a renewed effort on harm reduction in drug policy that includes a trial of pill testing at music festivals and an end to sniffer dogs at public events.

### **[Voluntary drug-testing 'a priority' to save lives, say MPs](#)**

*The Age (02/03)*

Pressure is mounting on state governments to allow drug-testing trials of illicit substances at public events after a federal parliamentary group declared they were a "matter of priority". On Wednesday, experts from Australia, New Zealand and the US addressed cross-party MPs on the latest strategies for dealing with illicit drugs.

### **[Drug decriminalisation helps minimise harm](#)**

*The Age (02/03)*

The so-called war on drugs has failed, here and in every nation that embraced it. Former Victorian police commissioner and head of the National Ice Taskforce Ken Lay last year encapsulated the views of many informed people when he said "we can't arrest our way out of this". Former UN chief Kofi Annan made the same case in these pages only last Sunday.

### [End polarising stand-off and trial pill testing](#)

*Sydney Morning Herald (05/03)*

The best efforts of police, teams of sniffer dogs, the threat of arrest has failed to make a dent in Australia's love affair with "party drugs". We are many years into the relationship and use has not decreased. Meanwhile, the potency of ecstasy has shot up and new psychoactive substances are coming onto the market, increasing the risks for those taking illicit substances and making it harder for medical personnel to work out the best treatment for those who get sick.

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## **Indonesia**

### [Drug dealers will be executed by force feeding them their own supply under new rules being considered by government](#)

*Mail Online (01/03)*

A spokesman for Indonesia's National Narcotic Agency suggested force feeding drug dealers their own supply and strengthening laws that assign tough capital punishments for drug offenses, including death by firing squad. Critics say the proposals still crucially ignore a differentiation between addicts and suppliers.

### [Indonesia will maintain death penalty for drugs traffickers](#)

*Jakarta Post (05/03)*

The government will continue to hand out the death sentence to big players in the drug trafficking world despite criticism from foreign countries and human rights activists, arguing that consistency in law enforcement is the key to success in curbing the distribution of drugs.

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## **Iran**

### [Iran is about to execute another 100 prisoners for drug offences](#)

*Vice News (04/03)*

In the latest salvo of Iran's routine slaughter of narcotics offenders, some 100 prisoners jailed together for drug crimes in Iran have been informed of their impending execution. The prospect of this mass execution for drug crimes comes just months after the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) inked a new \$20 million deal with Iran to assist in its counter-narcotic efforts. Advocates against the excesses of the drug war have pilloried the UN for its dealings with Iran.

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## **Malaysia**

### [INCB report to be launched in Jakarta](#)

*Tempo (01/03)*

The 2015 annual report of the International Narcotics Board (INCB) reveals drug related trends in various parts of the world, which in Southeast Asia include new drug trafficking routes and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). The report will be launched by experts representing Indonesia and the United Nations.

[Study shows marijuana is safer than alcohol yet Malaysian authorities say now is not the time to review the ban](#)

*Malaysian Digest (07/03)*

During the National Anti-Drug Day, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi cautioned that other countries move to decriminalize marijuana cannot be used as a benchmark here, citing that out of 26,668 addicts in the country last year as many as 23.9 per cent were repeat offenders. "Although the proposal has not been officially rejected, personally I do not agree with it," he said.

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## **Myanmar**

[Anti-drug campaign in Myanmar abandoned after attack](#)

*UCA News (29/02)*

Around 30 members of the extremist Christian group Pat Jasan were injured in an attack by unidentified assailants, as they attempted to clear poppy field in the Kachin state, in the north of the country. The group has decided to suspend the operations, which began two years ago.

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## **New Zealand**

[ACT's call for drug prohibition debate rejected](#)

*Newstalk ZB (02/03)*

The Minister of Police is knocking back an ACT party call for a debate around the prohibition of drugs. ACT's Leader David Seymour said prohibition is helping generate drug revenue for gangs and if the market was stopped, gangs would be de-funded.

[Crossing the ditch for cannabis](#)

*Radio NZ (05/03)*

A law change in Australia means New Zealanders can now legally be prescribed a month's medicinal cannabis there and bring it back to this country, a legal commentator says.

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## **Philippines**

[US warned Philippines about becoming narco-state 20 years ago](#)

*Interaksyon (01/03)*

Former Interior secretary and senatorial hopeful, Rafael Alunan, said the United States warned the Phillipino government that the country was in danger of becoming a 'narco state' 20 years ago. Alunan claims a report he wrote in response led to the creation of the Dangerous Drugs Board, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency. Alunan reiterated his support for capital punishment for drug trafficking offenses.

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## Sri Lanka

### [Sri Lanka calls in troops to battle gangs and drug smuggling](#)

*News24 (07/03)*

Sri Lanka's president on Sunday announced plans to have the military join a crackdown targeting criminal gangs in the capital as police re-introduced war-time road blocks following a surge in gang-related shootings. Police spokesperson Ruwan Gunasekera said there was a surge in drug smuggling and shootings that prompted the authorities to take extraordinary measures.

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## Thailand

### [Law change may allow drug abusers to choose rehab](#)

*The Nation (03/03)*

Presiding over the opening of an ASEAN seminar on rehabilitation for drug convicts at the Thailand Institute of Justice, justice minister Paiboon Koomchaya said that Thailand was amending the laws to allow drug abusers serving less than four years in prison the option of volunteering for rehabilitation.

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## NOTABLE HEADLINES MISSED IN LAST WEEK'S DIGEST (22<sup>nd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

## China

### [China facing uphill battle in war on drugs](#)

*Deutsche Welle (26/02)*

"The drug situation in China remains severe and complicated. It will continue to expand, and narcotics enforcement will come under tremendous pressure and face grave challenges for a long time to come." These are the words of Liu Yuejin, vice commissioner of China National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC), speaking to reporters on February 18 about his organization's latest report on the drug situation in the world's most populous country.

## Indonesia

### [Inside Indonesia's Drug War](#)

*Al-Jazeera (26/02)*

With the government saying that more than 30 addicts dying from overdose everyday justifies a harsh punitive approach, critics complain that little is being done to prevent this eventually, especially as users are subject to the same harsh penalties as traffickers. 101 easts investigate Indonesia's war on drugs in a short form documentary.

### [Indonesia weighs controversial new drug crime penalties](#)

*Al-Jazeera (28/02)*

As Indonesia promotes a plethora of new punishments for drug addicts and traffickers in its war on drugs, including force-feeding drug traffickers their own narcotics until they die, critics say the government should focus on treatment.

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