

MEDIA RELEASE

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VICTORIA'S DRUG LAW REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS PRAISED

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) and Harm Reduction Australia (HRA) welcomes the report by the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee into drug law reform in Victoria.

The two not-for-profits commend the committee for listening to the evidence around some of the best ways to reduce and prevent drug-related harms and save Victorian lives.

If the recommendations are implemented, they would help to reduce stigma around people who use drugs, increase public awareness of the harms associated with legal and illegal drug use, and improve relations between young people and parents.

The ADF particularly praises the recommendations around primary prevention.

“Strengthening communities through education, enhancing people’s sense of belonging, and increasing access to healthy recreational and relaxation activities, are all vital in preventing drug-related harms,” said Dr Erin Lalor, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s Chief Executive Officer.

Dr Erin Lalor applauds the committee for recognising how negative language can impact on the health and wellbeing of people who use drugs.

“Stigma is a huge barrier for people needing to seek help for drug problems. Having respectful conversations with people who use drugs is essential to building a healthier Victoria,” Dr Lalor added.

HRA commends the committee for its recommendations around strategies to prevent fatal overdoses and for supporting evidence-based practices such as pill testing at festivals and events.

“Many people and their families are harmed when we fail to act on the evidence from different drug policies and programs. In an ideal world no-one would take any risks but in the real world we all do at times. Putting in place policies and programs that ensures that

risks associated with drug use are reduced is both common sense and humane,” said Gino Vumbaca, President of Harm Reduction Australia.

The ADF and HRA also congratulate the committee on recommending that an independent expert Drug Advisory Council be set up to guide the government around drug-related issues.

The two organisations encourage all Victorian politicians to use the recommendations as an opportunity to have open discussions around the reduction and prevention of drug harms across Victoria.

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Media enquiries: For media enquiries, please call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s Media Manager Carmel Green on 0430 948 380 or Harm Reduction Australia’s President Gino Vumbaca on 0408-244-552

About the Alcohol and Drug Foundation: Celebrating nearly 60 years of service to the community, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation is one of Australia’s leading bodies committed to preventing alcohol and other drug harms in communities around the nation. The Foundation reaches millions of Australians in local communities through sporting clubs, workplaces, healthcare settings and schools, offering educational information, drug and alcohol prevention programs and advocating for strong and healthy communities.

About Harm Reduction Australia: Harm Reduction Australia (HRA) is a national organisation for individuals committed to reducing the health, social and economic harms potentially associated with drug use. HRA is a membership-based organisation that represents the views of its members. Our members are primarily people working in the health, welfare and law enforcement sectors, but also include concerned family members, consumers, students and other individuals wanting to advocate for the continuation and expansion of harm reduction policies in Australia.