

Trans-Tasman Charter for Pill Testing¹

This Trans-Tasman Charter represents an agreement between all the signatories on a unified approach to working collaboratively to expand and develop best practice pill testing services in Australia and New Zealand, which are compatible with best practice standards across the world.

About the Founding Organisations

Harm Reduction Australia, the Australian Drug Observatory (based at the Australian National University) the Noffs Foundation, the DanceWize program (of Harm Reduction Victoria), and Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia are focused on the introduction of health-based pill testing services in Australia and delivered the first officially sanctioned pill testing program in Australia.

The New Zealand Drug Foundation supports drug checking services in New Zealand at festivals and advocates for law change to enable fixed location and one-off event checking as well as greater legal protection for clients.

Purpose

The purpose of this charter for collaboration is to establish a co-operative relationship between organisations in Australia and New Zealand with the intention of developing and delivering an appropriate and evidence-informed system of pill testing services at events, festivals and other suitable locations.

Shared Understanding:

The signatories to this document have a united view on the key principles that should underpin the delivery of any pill testing services, they are as follows:

1. Front of House Testing

‘Front of House’ is an adopted term from Europe, which refers to ensuring an interaction in real-time, and face-to-face between those testing pills and those presenting their pills for testing. It involves a direct exchange of information and delivery of services within a harm reduction framework. In contrast, ‘Back of House’ testing refers to the testing of pills that have been just seized, discarded or placed within an amnesty bin, and is delivered in partnership with law enforcement agencies as an intelligence gathering exercise and minimal, if any, direct interaction with people using pills.

¹ ‘Pill testing’, otherwise known as drug checking or safety testing. Pill testing is used here to refer to the use of sophisticated methods to determine information about the chemical composition of illicit drugs in press pill, powder, or other forms.

2. No fee for service

Pill testing services should be delivered as a universal public health and harm reduction measure. This means not constructing any barrier to participation by requiring any financial contribution from the people presenting their pills for testing, either by requiring payment from the consumer or from festival and event promoters.

3. Peer Driven

Pill testing services should involve peers and young people in all stages of its design, development and delivery. This is to ensure these programs are relevant, appropriate and able to attract and engage with people that should be utilising these services.

4. Information Sharing

As part of any proper approach to expand evidence informed public health and harm reduction policies and programs, it is vital that experiences, expertise and data be shared and wherever possible, be made publicly available.

5. Open Science

As an emerging intervention contributing to wider public health, it is appropriate for supporters of pill testing to embrace the concepts of 'open science'. 'Open Science' represents a commitment to making scientific research, data and dissemination accessible to all levels of an inquiring society, amateur or professional. It includes, but is not limited to, publishing [open research](#), advocating for the scientific process, and the communication of scientific knowledge independent of political imperative

Australian, New Zealand & International Partners

Signatories to the Trans-Tasman Charter also welcome the opportunity to collaborate with other organisations in Australia, New Zealand and internationally that adhere to the principles set out by this Charter as part of a potentially broader International Charter for Pill Testing.

The Signatories

Harm Reduction Australia
Noffs Foundation
Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia
NSW Users and AIDS Association (DanceWize)
Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health

Australian Drug Observatory
Harm Reduction Victoria (DanceWize)
New Zealand Drug Foundation
Yarra Drug and Health Forum