



MEDIA RELEASE

ANU Independent Evaluation of Pill Testing Australia Pilot Program Released

10th December 2019

An independent evaluation of the 2nd Pilot of Pill Testing Program at a festival in Australia has been released today by the Australian National University Medical School, Social Research & Evaluation team.

The evaluation confirms that the Australian front of house pill testing model developed by Pill Testing Australia reduces the harm for people that may engage in drug use at festivals. It also vindicates our own belief and confidence in the model we can deliver.

Just some of the key findings include:

- *...there was an increase in the proportion of participants who reported that they would, as a result of the pill testing service they received, be willing to use healthcare providers, brief intervention providers/peer counsellors, home pill testing kits, and written harm reduction materials.*
- *...all those who had a very dangerous substance detected disposed of that drug in the amnesty bin.*
- *Patrons felt more knowledgeable about how to prevent the potential harms of drugs after accessing the service.*
- *...follow-up data suggests that among those whose drug was identified to be what they expected, they still took the drug but reported using harm reduction knowledge to reduce their risks of harm.*
- *Stakeholders reported that the pill testing service was delivered as expected, and that all parties were supportive of the trial and of developing a pill testing program in the ACT*

The evaluation also confirms that our service does not give a so-called 'green light' to drug use and does not tell any patron that it is safe to use a drug

We welcome the commitment of the ACT Government and the ANU for what we understand to be the world's first independent evaluation of a pill testing service at a festival; and the first ever evaluation to assess the longer-term impact of a pill testing service by following-up with patrons.

Our thanks also go to all our volunteers and supporters that made the delivery of both Pilot Pill Testing Programs a reality – it simply could not have been done without them.

Pill Testing Australia and Harm Reduction Australia will continue to advocate for the pill testing services demanded and needed by patrons, families, festivals and the wider community.

We can only repeat our many offers to engage with all governments and their agencies on introducing similar trials across Australia and again make the offer for a free trial pill testing service to every jurisdiction.

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