



Submission to: Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement

Submission regarding: Australia's illicit drug problem: Challenges and opportunities of law enforcement

Submission from: Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia

Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
le.committee@aph.gov.au
13.01.2023

Inquiry into Australia's illicit drug problem: Challenges and opportunities for law enforcement

Dear Secretary,

Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia recognises the efforts of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement and embraces the decision by the Parliament of Australia to investigate the most important matters of Australia's illicit drug problem.

Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia is a national, youth-led community organisation that empowers, coordinates, and represents students and young people to bring change to drug policy. Young people are often the most likely age group to use illicit drugs and the most likely to want drug policy reform, yet they are the least likely to be involved in decision-making about drug-related policies and programs.

We neither condemn nor condone drug use. As an organisation, we understand the complexities associated with drug use and policy matters, and are informed by the evidence of what works and does not work, and the expertise of the communities with lived and living experience of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use. Students and young people who use drugs face challenges overcoming stigma and discrimination in accessing health, education, and platforms for advocacy. By empowering the collective capacity of students and young people to keep themselves safe and advocate for change, we hope to improve the lives of young people and shift political, policy, and community perspectives.

Given the contextual reality of these many intertwining factors, Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia acknowledges the effectiveness of collaboration and teamwork across separate organisations towards achieving meaningful systemic change. We have partnered with like-minded services that share similar values and mission statements that wish to support, and fully endorse the recommendations made by our corresponding Inquiry submission. We respond to the below Terms of Reference in respect to the Inquiry (ToR)

2. emerging trends and risks, such as new psychoactive substances, adulterated drugs and other new sources of threat;
4. the involvement of law enforcement in harm reduction strategies and in efforts to reduce supply and demand, including the effectiveness of its involvement;
5. the strengths and weaknesses of decriminalisation, including its impact on illicit drug markets and the experiences of other jurisdictions; and
6. other related matters.

More specifically, with reference to the above ToR, we make the below recommendations asserting that:

1. The Commonwealth Government recommits to its stated commitment to the balanced approach of harm minimisation
2. Law enforcement support the implementation of and access to drug checking/pill testing services and technologies
3. The Australian Government implement enabling legislation and legal frameworks that prevent people from being criminalised for accessing harm reduction services
4. The Australian Government commit to exploring opportunities to cease the use of drug detection dogs and invasive strip searching methods to police the use and possession of

- low quantities of illicit drugs
5. Law enforcement support the development of a national drug early warning system and actively participate in state and national early warning systems that share information with relevant services and the public
 6. Law enforcement support festival and event-based harm reduction programs, and that these programs receive increased funding to promote the health and wellbeing of communities
 7. The provision of currently available harm reduction services be expanded to promote the human rights of persons inside correctional facilities
 8. Drug information and awareness content developed and delivered by law enforcement agencies should be co-designed with affected communities
 9. The Australian Government review roadside drug testing to investigate alternative drug-driving regimes that use impairment limits/thresholds
 10. Roadside drug testing is reformed to allow drivers with a valid medical cannabis prescription the same rights as any other prescription medicine
 11. The Australian Government commit to depenalisation and decriminalisation of the use and possession of currently illicit drugs for personal use
 12. All criminal records for low-level offences related to use and possession are automatically expunged when any illicit drug is depenalised, decriminalised, or legalised
 13. The Australian Government work with state governments and affected communities to review existing drug diversion programs (diverting people who use drugs away from the criminal system and into relevant health, education, and social services)
 14. The Australian Government engage in community consultation, and adequately fund research to explore models for legalisation in Australia

The below organisations urge the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement to take up all recommendations.

Name	Position	Organisation
Tony Trimmingham OAM	Clinical Director	Family Drug Support
Patrick Lawrence	Chief Executive Officer	First Step
Dr. Annie Madden (PhD) AO	Executive Director	Harm Reduction Australia
Adrian Gorringe	Policy & Project Officer	Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League
Greg Chipp	Managing Director	Drug Policy Australia Limited
Mary Harrod	Chief Executive Officer	NSW Users & Aids Association
Sione Crawford	Chief Executive Officer	Harm Reduction Victoria
David Baxter	Programs Manager & Acting Chief Executive Officer	Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation & Advocacy
Chloe Span	Secretary	Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia the University of Melbourne
Jonah Allen	President	Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia La Trobe University
Helin Cimen	Acting President (current Vice President)	Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia Edith Cowan University
Daniel Roden	Secretary	Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia University of Western Australia

Finally, we would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit to this inquiry and welcome the chance to present oral evidence, and expand upon our organisational position on these vital matters.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Kent
National Director
E: nick@ssdp.org.au
M: +61 490 813 093



Baillee Farah
National Research Coordinator
E: baillee@ssdp.org.au
M: +61 450 811 5

Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia
E: hello@ssdp.org.au
W: <https://www.ssdp.org.au>