

Media Release

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A TEST WE MUST NOT FAIL

On International Drug Checking Day (31 March), Directions Health Services is calling for a permanent drug testing site to be established in the ACT.

“The ACT is leading the way on pill testing and we are very pleased it will again be available at next month’s Groovin’ the Moo (GTM) festival,” Directions Health Services CEO, Bronwyn Hendry praised.

“Arming people with knowledge about what chemicals and substances a drug contains enables them to make an informed decision about taking it.”

“However, it would be naïve to pretend the only time we have to protect our loved ones from the risk of taking a drug laced with a dangerous substance, or that is pure enough to potentially lead to an overdose, is at the occasional music festival.”

In Australia, eight and half million people aged 14 and older have taken an illicit drug at some point in their lives. The ACT 2017 Ecstasy Related Drug Reporting System found that two-thirds of people who use ecstasy use it fortnightly or more frequently.

“Any one of us could one day face the unimaginable tragedy of losing a loved one to drug use. Yet we can prevent more families from experiencing this grief,” Mr Hendry said.

The ACT GTM Pill Testing Pilot found that less than half of the pills people bought contained relatively pure MDMA and the rest were adulterated with other substances, some of which were dangerous.

“Evidence shows that accessing drug checking services not only equips people to make informed decisions by providing clarity around what a drug contains, it connects them with further harm reduction information and support services,” Ms Hendry explained.

“If we are serious about saving lives, then it is time to seriously work towards a wider roll-out of drug testing in the community.”

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