

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Ageing

Minister for Multicultural Affairs



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BRUNSWICK STREET HOME TO VICTORIA'S PILL TESTING SERVICE

Following a successful start to the mobile pill testing trial over summer, the Allan Labor Government has named the location of Victoria's first fixed site – giving more Victorian access to this life-saving service.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today announced the Victorian Pill Testing Service will open by August and be located at 95 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy – close to one of Melbourne's most popular nightlife hubs as well as public transport, health care and social services.

Set to operate Thursday to Saturday, it is part of the Labor Government's pill testing trial and will offer free, confidential, and non-judgmental harm reduction advice from health professionals.

Like the mobile service, the fixed site will reduce drug harm and save lives through the testing of most pills, capsules, powders, crystals, and liquids. It will be able to detect highly dangerous synthetic opioids like fentanyl and Nitazenes, which can be mixed with other drugs and cause death.

Pill testing also offers real-time surveillance – boosting Victoria's surveillance programs and helping provide early detection and rapid assessment of new synthetic drugs.

The fixed site will be operated by the same trusted and experienced consortium running the mobile testing trial – Youth Support and Advocacy Service, The Loop Australia, and Harm Reduction Victoria.

Melbourne Health, Youth Projects, and Metabolomics Australia (University of Melbourne) will partner with the consortium to deliver medical support, social services, and secondary and confirmatory testing of substances.

It follows successful mobile pill testing at five major music festivals over summer, where of the almost 1,400 samples tested, the main drugs detected were MDMA, ketamine and cocaine – with 11 per cent of samples not what people expected their drugs to be. The mobile service will continue at five more festivals this upcoming summer.

Other key insights from the trial so far include:

- For 65 per cent service users, it was their first time having a harm reduction conversation with a health professional and more than 30 per cent said they would take a smaller amount as a result
- 91 per cent of service users were aged between 18 to 30 years old
- Two statewide drug advisories issued for a high-dosage MDMA pill and high-risk 4-CMC sold as MDMA.

This is an implementation trial to see what model works best in Victoria because there is plenty of evidence that pill testing saves lives.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"This is about saving lives. No drug is safe – but with testing and open, health-focused conversations, we are helping Victorians make more informed and safer choices."

"Our pill testing trial has already shown young people want the information that could keep them safe and now we'll support even more Victorians with our fixed site service in Fitzroy."

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