

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Acting Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for WorkSafe and TAC



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PILL TESTING CONTINUES TO SAVE LIVES OVER SUMMER

The Allan Labor Government's fixed site pill testing service is continuing to reduce drug harm and save lives, with new data showing the service has been vital over summer.

Since opening in August, the service has now tested more than 2,030 samples and spoken with more than 1,100 people about harm reduction.

The free and confidential service opened for extended hours in the lead-up to Christmas and the New Year ensuring more Victorians could access the service.

During December, the service tested more than 600 substances including MDMA, ketamine and cocaine – with around 12 per cent of samples containing an unexpected psychoactive substance.

While the service seeks to save lives and reduce drug harm – it is also reducing pressure on emergency services by boosting early detection and rapid assessment of hazardous synthetic drugs substances.

Health teams at the site have issued eight drug notifications since August, compared with an average of around four alerts per year before pill testing was introduced – helping provide early warnings about highly dangerous substances to health authorities and the community.

Importantly, around one in four people who attended the fixed site said it was their first conversation with a health professional about substance use — highlighting the service's role in reaching people who may not otherwise engage with the health system.

These non-judgmental conversations are central to the service's harm reduction approach, providing people with clear information to reduce risk and prevent overdose.

The evidence shows that pill testing works. People often consume less or get rid of contaminated drugs based on the results and advice they get from pill testing services.

Victoria's mobile pill testing service is also returning to festivals and large events over the summer period following a successful trial last season. At the recent Spilt Milk Festival, staff tested 80 samples and held 144 harm reduction conversations – with MDMA, cocaine and ketamine among the most common substances presented.

The mobile pill testing service will also be available at Dangerous Goods 6XXL (24 January), the Pride Street Party (8 February) and Pitch Music and Arts Festival (6-10 March).

Quote attributable to Acting Premier Ben Carroll

"No drug is truly ever safe, but the evidence is clear – pill testing saves lives and reduces harm. Over summer we extended service hours so more Victorians can access the critical health advice they need."

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

"We established the fixed pill testing site in Fitzroy because we know the service saves lives – when you give people the opportunity to make informed, evidence-based decisions – they make safer choices."

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