



8.10

WARD:

GENERAL MANAGER:

PREPARED BY:

TRIM FILE NO:

ATTACHMENTS:

DRUG LAW REFORM 2017

WHOLE OF MUNICIPALITY

VANESSA SCHERNICKAU, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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42/11/117-05

1. City of Port Phillip Response Drug Law Reform

PURPOSE

To present Council with a draft City of Port Phillip Submission to the State Government of Victoria Inquiry into Drug Law Reform 2017.

1. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1.1 Endorses the City of Port Phillip Submission to the State Government of Victoria Inquiry into Drug Law Reform 2017 (attachment 1).
- 1.2 Supports the Victorian Coroner recommendations that the Victorian Government trial safe injecting facilities in North Richmond.
- 1.3 Commends the Victorian Government for expanding the availability of naloxone and other drug services following the recommendations of the Victorian Coroner.
- 1.4 Requests Council officers develop a City of Port Phillip Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Reduction Strategy in alignment with Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan commitments.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Reducing harms of alcohol and other drugs is a priority of the City of Port Phillip Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017.
- 2.2 The 2013-2017 City of Port Phillip Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan seeks to provide the conditions within which health and wellbeing is achieved through creating supportive environments, developing healthy public policy and facilitating access to health services and implementing harm minimisation strategies that reduce the harmful consequences associated with some forms of human behaviours.



- 2.3 Council is currently preparing the next Council Plan. Integrating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan requires Council to consider the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-2019 which includes reducing harms of alcohol and other drugs as a priority area for response.
- 2.4 Port Phillip City Council, at its meeting on 1 February 2017, Item 9.2 Pill Testing Facilities, resolved that Council:
- 2.4.1 Requests officers to assist in facilitating and advising on how this Council might work with the State Government to pilot the provision of pill testing facilities at consenting clubs, festivals and dance parties in the City of Port Phillip to minimise the harms associated with illicit drugs in a pill based form
 - 2.4.2 Calls on the State Government to pass the requisite legislation to enable these pilot facilities
 - 2.4.3 Communicates these proposed pilot facilities to all residents and visitors to the City
 - 2.4.4 Given this is a State responsibility, receives sufficient funding for the provisions of these pilot measures
 - 2.4.5 As this is a matter of urgency, finalise as quickly as practicable the strategic planning, legislative amendment and financial accommodation.
- 2.5 On November 11 2015, the Victorian Government Legislative Council issued an Inquiry into Illicit and Synthetic Drugs and Prescription Medication. The Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee has refined the terms of reference and amended the inquiry title to the Inquiry into Drug Law Reform. The Committee, in February 2017 announced that it will inquire into, consider and report, no later than March 9 2018 on:
- 2.5.1 The effectiveness of laws, procedures and regulations relating to illicit and synthetic drugs and the misuse of prescription medication in minimising drug-related health, social and economic harm; and
 - 2.5.2 The practice of other Australian states and territories and overseas jurisdictions and their approach to drug law reform and how other positive reforms could be adopted into Victorian law.

3. KEY INFORMATION

- 3.1 The City of Port Phillip has a strong history in leading local government responses to reducing the harms of alcohol and other drugs. With the development of a renewed Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, it is timely that our commitment to alcohol and other drug harm reduction is articulated into a strategy and presented to Council for endorsement.
- 3.2 The City of Port Phillip experiences illicit drug harms, as recorded through ambulance attendance, hospital admissions and crime rates at a significantly higher rate than other parts of Victoria¹.

¹ City of Port Phillip Background Report – MPHWP 2017 – 2021.



	CoPP	Vic
Illicit and pharmaceutical drugs		
Illicit ambulance attendances per 10,000 population	29.2	12.2
Amphetamines ambulance attendances per 10,000 population	2.6	1
Crystal Methamphetamine ambulance attendances per 10,000 population	6	2.7
Other stimulants ambulance attendances per 10,000 population	3.7	0.9
Pharmaceutical ambulance attendances per 10,000 population	22.2	16.9
Drug offences (rate per 100,000)	793.2	498.2

- 3.3 There is evidence from, both Australia and internationally that Pill Testing is an effective method for reducing harms associated with some illicit substances. Evidence includes:
- 3.3.1 “The Netherlands’ Drugs Information Monitoring System (DIMS) found that particularly dangerous substances identified through drug checking services and made the subject of public warning campaigns were eliminated from the market.”²
 - 3.3.2 “Evaluation of the Austrian project Checkit! found that when presented with a ‘bad result’, two thirds of people say they will not consume the drug and will warn friends.”³
 - 3.3.3 “The Netherlands’ Drugs Information Monitoring System also shows evidence of the capacity for drug checking services to engage with populations that do not engage with other government messages about drug use.”⁴
- 3.4 It is contended that there is sufficient evidence that there is a strong likelihood that Pill Testing would prevent harm and potentially save lives in Victoria. A well evaluated pilot program would establish a strong evidence base for local initiatives.
- 3.5 Increasingly, the State Government of Victoria is being called upon to provide the necessary legislation to trial a safe injecting facility in Victoria.
- 3.6 Local Drug and Alcohol Recovery service, Windana, have publicly supported the call on the Victorian Government to provide safe injecting facilities.

² Spruit, I. P. (2001). "Monitoring synthetic drug markets, trends, and public health." Substance Use and Misuse 36(1-2): 23-47.

³ Kriener, H. and R. Schmid. "Check Your Pills. Check Your Life. ChEck iT! High quality on-site testing of illicit substances. Information, counselling and safer use measures at raves in Austria.". Retrieved 3 August 2005, from <http://www.drugtext.org/library/articles/kriener.htm> Alison Ritter and Jacqui Cameron, 2005, Monograph No. 06: A systematic review of harm reduction. Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre.

⁴ Brunt, T. M. and R. J. M. Niesink (2011). 'The Drug Information and Monitoring System (DIMS) in the Netherlands: Implementation, results, and international comparison.' Drug Testing and Analysis 3(9): 621-634.

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- 3.7 The Victorian Coroner has recently provided recommendations that the Victorian Government trial safe injecting facilities in North Richmond. She also recommended that the Department of Health and Human Services expand the availability of naloxone, a drug used to reverse heroin overdoses, and review funding for services that support drug users in the region.



FURTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 4.1 Council, in adopted the Council Plan 2013-2017 committed to outcomes of Reducing harms of alcohol and other drugs supports the achievements of these priorities for all in our community.
- 4.2 Reducing harms of alcohol and other drugs is a priority of the City of Port Phillip Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017.
- 4.3 The 2013-2017 City of Port Phillip Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is underpinned by the principles of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (World Health Organisation 1986). This sees that health is achieved for all through enabling control over health and wellbeing. This involves supportive environments, healthy public policy, health services as well as harm minimisation strategies that reduce the harmful consequences associated with some forms of human behaviours.
- 4.4 The recorded data and the wealth of experience of our local services indicate that residents and visitors to the City of Port Phillip experience harms associated with illicit drugs at a relatively higher rate than for most other areas in Victoria.
- 4.5 Council is well placed, with both a legislative and leadership role, to ensure that we understand the health indicators and outcomes for our community and that we work collaboratively with other levels of government and local health services to form well evidenced policy and programs to improve health.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Council has sent a letter to Minister for Health, The Hon Jill Hennessy and Minister for Police, The Hon Lisa Neville re. Pill Testing - signed by Mayor Voss 22/02/2017 requesting that the Victorian Government pass legislation to enable piloting of pill testing facilities at consenting clubs, festivals and dance parties in the City of Port Phillip to minimise the harms associated with illicit drugs in a pill based form. The letter also requested the provision of a key Victorian Government contact with whom Council officers can work from each Department.
- 5.2 Consultation with the Local Government Gambling Alcohol and Other Drug Issues Forum (LGG AODIF) has strengthened support across local government. The MAV are preparing a submission to the Drug Law Reform 2017 on behalf of members that is aligned with the City of Port Phillip draft submission.
- 5.3 Engagement with local Alcohol and Other Drug Services including Inner South Community Health Service (ISCHS). ISCHS have indicated that they wish to support Council's Submission to the Drug Law Reform 2017.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The purpose of the Inquiry into Drug Law Reform is to ensure that laws, procedures and regulations relating to illicit and synthetic drugs and the misuse of prescription medication are effective in minimising drug-related health, social and economic harms.



6.2 Council does not propose any actions that pose legal and risk implications.

7. – Triple Bottom Line

7.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1.1 Harms of alcohol and other drugs impact our environment with regard to litter and toxicity.

7.2 SOCIAL & CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

7.2.1 Reducing harms of alcohol and other drugs is a shared responsibility of all levels of government.

7.2.2 Health inequalities are experienced at a heightened level by those in our community who face the greatest disadvantage.

7.2.3 There are many aspects that contribute to an individual's health and wellbeing, including access to quality education, stable employment and good working conditions, secure housing, freedom from violence, safe and sustainable natural and built environments, food affordability, respectful relationships, supportive social networks and services and opportunities to participate in community life.

7.3 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

7.3.1 Harms of alcohol and other drugs significantly impact our community in economic terms.

7.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.4.1 The research, development, implementation and evaluation of Council strategy to reduce the harms of alcohol and other drugs is within existing Council resources.

8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

8.1 TIMELINE

8.1.1 The City of Port Phillip Submission will be formally lodged with the State Government of Victoria Inquiry into Drug Law Reform 2017 on 17 March 2017.

8.1.2 Council officers will develop a City of Port Phillip Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Reduction Strategy in alignment with the development of the Council Plan. A draft Alcohol and Other Drug Harm Reduction Strategy will be presented to Council

8.2 COMMUNICATION

8.2.1 The City of Port Phillip Submission will be formally lodged with the State Government of Victoria Inquiry into Drug Law Reform 2017. All submission to the Inquiry are public documents.

8.2.2 Key community messages:



- 8.2.2.1 The City of Port Phillip is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our community. Reducing the harms of illicit substances is a health priority in our community.
- 8.2.2.2 Council supports evidenced-based, harm-reduction strategies. Council welcomes opportunities to work in collaboration with other levels of government and local health services to improve health and wellbeing in our community.
- 8.2.2.3 Council understands that working to reduce harms with regard to illicit substances is complex. The health needs of those experiencing harms, the impact of substance abuse on the broader community and working together with Victoria Police to uphold the law are all important considerations.

9. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 9.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.