

Media Release

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Minister for Mental Health
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PILL TESTING LEGALISED TO SAVE VICTORIAN LIVES

Legislation to enshrine pill testing – also known as drug checking – into law has now passed the Victorian Parliament, paving the way for the Labor Government to trial pill testing this summer.

The *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pill Testing) Bill 2024* means Victoria is the first jurisdiction in the country to have dedicated legislation to support pill testing.

This legislation allows both fixed and mobile pill testing services to operate in Victoria – meaning nobody is breaking the law by operating or using these services.

Pill testing is about saving lives and changing people’s behaviour by giving them access to the information they are asking for, and in an increasingly volatile and unpredictable drug market this has never been more important.

The Labor Government has worked closely with Victoria Police on the drafting of the Bill – ensuring the right balance between holding drug dealers to account, while not deterring people from using the service.

The mobile service will begin during this summer’s festival season and will attend up to 10 music festivals and events throughout the implementation trial period.

A fixed site will also open in mid-2025 – delivered in partnership with a community or tertiary health provider, operating with targeted hours, and located in an inner Melbourne area close to nightlife and transport.

The drug checking technology available at these services will be able to test the make-up of most pills, capsules, powders, crystals, or liquids and identify harmful chemicals that can lead to death.

Trained peer workers and technical experts will also provide personalised and confidential health information to help people make better, safer and more informed decisions when visiting the service.

This is an implementation trial to see what model works best in Victoria because there’s plenty of evidence that pill testing saves lives and data obtained through the trial will help better inform public health responses and campaigns.

The new legislation also supports increased access to naloxone, the overdose reversal medicine, through 20 vending machines across Victoria by mid-2025.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

“No drug is ever truly safe, but with this new legislation, Victorians can be better informed about their drug use.”

“We have made it clear since announcing this trial – these changes don’t make drugs legal, but by having pill testing services in place, we can help to keep more Victorians safe during busy summer festival seasons.”

“The passing of this nation-leading legislation paves the way for our implementation trial to begin – this will allow us to explore what model works best because there’s plenty of evidence that pill testing saves lives.”

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