

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Families Support Pill Testing Facilities at Music Festivals**

**January 4<sup>th</sup> - 2019**

Another festival death in recent days, 5 in the last 3 months, is proving yet again that the 'just say no' message of the past 40 years is not working. Human beings are curious and do risky things, but surely an informed choice is better. Let's put things in place to reduce harm and save lives.

The objective of Pill Testing is to reduce harm and save lives, not encourage young people to take drugs. Of course we would rather they didn't take them to begin with but the reality is that they will, and having their pills checked for dangerous ingredients that may be present will reduce the harm. Being able to talk directly to the person about to use a drug, before the drug is taken, is valuable. Being able to talk to them about why they are taking it, inform them of what it is they purchased and whether taking the pill is a smart choice, is a valuable opportunity provided by pill testing. Another benefit of pill testing is giving all of us an idea of what drugs are circulating. What it is exactly we are dealing with at different points in time and different locations.

Evidence from overseas has shown that once a potential drug user has found their drug to be dangerous or lacking the drug they had intended to buy, they often dispose of the pill. Recent evidence from the UK shows pill related harm is reduced with hospital presentations falling by 90% since pill testing was introduced at some festivals.

The Premier's stance on pill testing is confusing. She supports injecting facilities believing them to reduce harm and save lives. Yet somehow she cannot see that having pills checked at festivals is very similar. Sending sniffer dogs through lines at festival entrances just encourages young people to take all their drugs in one hit, surely this practice is far more dangerous!

I would like to meet with the Premier and plead with her on behalf of the families. Put yourself in our shoes, how would it feel to lose a loved one and know that something could have been done to help reduce this outcome?



For more details please contact FDS on 02 4782 9222 or Tony Trimmingham on 0412 414 444

With each of these deaths, another family is in pain. We would rather people did not take drugs but more importantly we don't want them dead.

Tony Trimingham  
Founder and CEO  
Family Drug Support

### About Family Drug Support

- Established by Tony Trimingham in 1997, Family Drug Support volunteers take around 38,000 calls to their support line every year.
- The Service provides 24/7 support (Phone: 1300 368 186) and support groups in capital cities and a growing number of regional centres.
- FDS also offers the Stepping Stones course for families/friends supporting someone with drug and/or alcohol problems.
- Every year, on or around the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, International Family Drug Support Day is held with events around the country as well as internationally.
- For more information, visit: [www.fds.org.au](http://www.fds.org.au)



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