



The NSW Drug Summit Report: CRC's reflections and call to action

This month, NSW Health published an awaited [Report](#) on the [NSW Drug Summit](#) held in late 2024. The government has 6 months to respond. The Report made a range of important recommendations, including trialling pill testing at music festivals, increasing funding for services (with a focus on unmet need), harm reduction training for police and first responders, including equipping them with Naloxone, and enabling more than one medically supervised safe injecting centre in NSW.

Overall, CRC is supportive of the recommendations made in the Report. However, we call for each recommendation to be analysed and implemented through the lenses of culture, diversity, inclusion and accessibility to ensure they are tailored to the breadth of communities CRC supports, including First Nations peoples, trans communities and people with disabilities. We were disappointed that the strong voice in support of the legalisation of personal drug possession at The Summit was not adequately explored in the Report. Legalising personal drug possession is a major way to reduce the prison population in NSW. We were also disappointed that there wasn't a recommendation for access to AOD treatment in prison to be equal to that available in the community, given equal access to healthcare is a right stipulated in The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Mandela Rules). Finally, we felt the report could have focused more on diverting people from the criminal legal system at the earliest opportunity.

Following the release of the report, we call on government to:

- Prioritise the development of a co-designed, whole-of-government NSW Drug Strategy
- Implement recommendations through the lenses of culture, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and an equitable healthcare approach to AOD use, rather than a legal one.
- Distribute more funding to the AOD sector in the upcoming state budget.
- Ensure action is not limited to the recommendations made in the report: ensure policy and investment are focused on diverting people at the earliest point of involvement from the criminal legal system, and access to AOD services in prison is equal to that available in the community.
- Support calls to raise the age of criminal responsibility in NSW to at least 14, recognising incarceration is linked to higher rates of harmful AOD use.

We call on our followers to:

- Write to your MP about how you'd like to see NSW drug policy and services improved.
- Support the [NSW Raise the Age Campaign](#) to raise the age of criminal responsibility in NSW to at least 14, recognising that people's involvement with the prison system is linked to a higher incidence of AOD-related harms.
- Follow the work of organisations campaigning for more equitable AOD policy and services, like the Fair Treatment Campaign and NADA
- Reach out to people you know who may need support with their AOD use. [PeerLine](#) by NUA (1800 644 413) or [ADIS](#) (1800 250 015) can connect people with services if desired.
- Check out [YourRoom](#) by NSW Health to learn more about common drugs, their effects, and drug warnings.