

Resolution of Council

15 December 2025

Item 12.8

Pill Testing Not Sniffer Dogs

Moved by Councillor Worling, seconded by Councillor Thompson –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the NSW Government released the [Drug Summit 2024 Co-Chair Report](#) in October 2025, acknowledging the significant impact of drug use on individuals, families, and communities;
- (ii) of the 56 recommendations outlined in the Report, Recommendation 12.10, which relates to ending the use of sniffer dogs and strip searching for suspected drug possession during the current trial of drug-checking services, was entirely unsupported by the NSW Government in their formal response to the summit recommendations; and
- (iii) several recommendations, including those relating to integrated health services, mental health, custodial drug programs, increased funding for treatment and prevention, Aboriginal-led initiatives, and reforms to diversion programs, were only supported in principle. Others, such as expanding medically supervised injecting centres and youth diversion programs, were merely noted, while legislation for medical cannabis driving defence requires further consideration;

(B) Council further note that:

- (i) while the NSW Government's commitment to reducing drug-related harm is commendable, further reforms are needed to protect the dignity and integrity of all individuals;
- (ii) the current 12-month trial of drug checking services is limited to a maximum of 12 selected music festivals, excluding other major events, such as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras; one of Australasia's largest LGBTQIA+ events;

- (iii) pill testing saves lives: studies show 10 to 20% of people discard drugs after testing reveals harmful substances;
 - (iv) the use of sniffer dogs at music festivals and the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras undermines safety and generates mistrust within an already marginalised community, while failing to prevent health risks; and
 - (v) drug detection dogs have a poor success rate: Data from 2013 to mid-2023, of 94,000 interactions between event goers and sniffer dogs nearly 71,000 found no drugs on the person searched;
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to:
- (i) the NSW Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and the Minister for Health requesting the removal of sniffer dogs and strip searches at all music festivals and at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, based on evidence that shows their ineffectiveness and the loss of personal dignity;
 - (ii) the NSW Minister of Health urging the expansion of the pill testing trials to include the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, as part of a community health and harm-reduction strategy; and
 - (iii) the NSW Premier advocating for urgent action on the recommendations marked as noted, for further consideration, and not supported in the Drug Summit 2024 Co-Chair Report, in particular Recommendation 12.10; and
- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to liaise with relevant organisations such as ACON and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras about opportunities for the City of Sydney to support harm reduction initiatives by appropriate organisations with suitable expertise and experience, at major events in our area.

Carried unanimously.

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