



Media release: ATODA reaffirms support for drug checking

22 September 2025

The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) expresses deep concern over the Queensland Government's rushed amendments to the *Medicines and Poisons Act* to ban drug checking. This move, ahead of the 2025–26 festival season, follows the closure of the CheQpoint drug checking sites in Brisbane and the Gold Coast earlier this year.

ATODA CEO Anita Mills said: "We commend the ACT Government for prioritising health and wellbeing through its commitment to drug checking. These services save lives and connect people with healthcare in ways that are proven to reduce harm."

Canberra's fixed-site health and drug checking service, CanTEST, is a vital public health initiative. The service provides real-time warnings about dangerous substances such as fentanyl and nitazenes and tracks emerging risks in an unpredictable drug market.

"Drug checking empowers people who use drugs to make more informed choices about their health and wellbeing. Evidence shows it reduces harm, connects people to health workers, and prevents overdoses," Ms Mills said.

A 2023 review of CanTEST found that:

- For 70% of clients, it was the first time they had spoken to a healthcare worker about their drug use.
- 10% of clients discarded their drugs after testing.

ATODA recognises the continuing efforts of individuals and organisations in Queensland working to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug harms. We stand alongside our state and territory partner organisations to urge governments across Australia to invest in evidence-based drug policy, not punitive measures that put lives at risk.

"Queensland's decision is a step backwards. We call on governments across Australia to learn from the ACT's success and put health and safety first," Ms Mills said.

For more information or comment, please contact Anita Mills, CEO, ATODA on 0431 504 805.

ATODA is the peak body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT. Its purpose is to advocate for a strong and sustainable alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT, using best practice policy, research and evidence. ATODA's vision is a healthy ACT community with reduced alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms, served by a high-quality treatment and harm reduction sector.

Advice for media: Communicating about alcohol and other drugs

Mindframe is funded by the Australian Government and supports safe media reporting, portrayal and communication about suicide, mental ill-health, alcohol and other drugs. Relevant resources include:

- Mindframe Guidelines for communicating about alcohol and other drugs: <https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs/communicating-about-alcohol-other-drugs/mindframe-guidelines>
- Mindframe guidelines for image use in communicating about mental ill-health, suicide and alcohol and other drugs: <https://mindframe.org.au/images-matter-mindframe-guidelines-for-image-use>
- Adding help-seeking information: <https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs/communicating-about-alcohol-other-drugs/adding-help-seeking-information>