

Political Briefing

Media Briefing

Community Briefing

Media Release

**Subject: Pill Testing
– Permission, not
Prohibition
Continuing to Put
Lives at Risk!**

July 2019

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Former Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Noel Ashby, APM, a member of the DACA executive, has repudiated claims by former Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Mr. Mick Palmer, APM, that pill-testing should be legalized.

Mr. Ashby, who has extremely broad operational policing experience in drug law enforcement and violent crime in Victoria, (much of it drug related), claims Mr. Palmer's view, while viewed as typically 'progressive', ignores the impact of illicit drugs on the Australian community.

Mr. Ashby does not accept the evidentiary based claims for pill-testing success by Mr. Palmer. Rather, he questions the evidence which he regards as being open to interpretation and categorised by selective claims of success.

Mr. Ashby also is concerned that the legalisation of pill-testing sends the worst message that authorities have surrendered to drug-barons and organised crime. He questions how the support of pill-testing by Mr. Palmer will reduce the incidence of drug-related crime in Australia. He also questions how every State and Territory government in Australia, and the Commonwealth Government, can approve of pill-testing as a viable public policy option, when their (various) criminal statutes criminalise such actions.

Mr. Ashby is also concerned that rogue cabals could penetrate pill-testing proposals and establish fronts for the distribution of drugs, rather than meekly accept that such regimes are incorruptible and always focussed on community-best outcomes.

Mr. Ashby also asks, whether such ad-hoc, unregulated and uncertain arrangements for pill-testing ensures that those using illegal drugs, whom may have consulted pill-testing tents and the like at festivals, public parks and public events, can guarantee that legal action against state and federal authorities will not occur as a consequence of governments surrendering to drug use by citizens and, all the while, keeping possession and use of drugs as crimes in law. In other words, what happens when a purportedly safe tested pill-test fails, and death or serious injury of a user occurs? Mr. Ashby says, one answer is certain; the drug-trafficker will still make their profit from the words, 'use' and 'abuse'. Those terms can only be applied to prescribed pharmaceuticals because they have a prescribed safe dose. I have asked each jurisdiction in Australia if the legal amount of alcohol when driving, up to 0.49, is considered safe for driving. All said no - they would not state that."

Media Liaison – Drug Advisory Council of Australia (DACA).