

# Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP  
Premier



Sunday, 24 November 2024

## FIRST FESTIVAL CHOSEN FOR PILL TESTING TRIAL

Pill testing saves lives – and the first of ten festival events in Victoria to take part in the Labor Government’s pill testing trial has been selected.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt visited Melbourne Showgrounds to announce the service will be available to an estimated 35,000 festivalgoers at *Beyond The Valley*.

The four-day event takes place in the Golden Plains Shire from 28 December until 1 January 2025, making it the largest-ever event in Australia to provide access to pill testing.

The Labor Government also announced the consortium that will deliver the mobile pill testing service.

It is an experienced consortium led by Youth Support and Advocacy Service, in partnership with The Loop Australia and Harm Reduction Victoria.

Melbourne Health, Youth Projects and Metabolomics Australia (University of Melbourne) will partner with the consortium to deliver medical support, social services and secondary and confirmatory testing of substances.

The service will be completely confidential, and the world-leading technology used will be able to test the make-up of most pills, capsules, powders, crystals, or liquids and identify harmful chemicals that can lead to death.

The service will be staffed by a multidisciplinary team of experts that will not only test substances, but also provide confidential health information to help people at the festival make better, safer decisions.

The pill testing service will boost Victoria’s existing drug monitoring capabilities, allowing real-time surveillance and rapid alerts, while also increasing our ability to detect and assess new synthetic drugs hitting our streets.

A fixed pill testing site will also be established and open by mid-2025 in inner Melbourne, close to nightlife and public transport.

This is not a trial to decide if Victoria will implement pill testing. It’s a trial understand how to implement it.

The trial follows the recent passing of the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pill Testing) Bill 2024*, which made Victoria the first jurisdiction in Australia to have dedicated legislation to support pill testing.

The Department of Health will also work with agencies and major events to develop a *Safer Music Festivals Framework*, helping organisers and providers understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping patrons safe.

The trial is just one of the health-led drug harm initiatives being delivered by the Labor Government, with the state’s \$95 million Statewide Action Plan to reduce opiate drug deaths and harm now underway.

### Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

*“This is a simple and common-sense way to save lives.”*

*“Let’s be clear: no drug is safe, but people deserve to know if that one pill will kill.”*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

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*“Honest, open, health-focused conversations and advice is how we reduce drug harm and help Victorians make safer, more informed decisions.”*

**Quote attributable to The Loop Australia CEO Cameron Francis**

*“Our drug-checking service will test the make-up of most substances, providing people with vital information, confidential health advice, and honest conversations to help them make safer choices.”*

**Quote attributable to Untitled Group Director of Festivals & Major Events Pete Sofo**

*“Untitled Group have always prioritised the health and safety of our community, and we’re excited to offer an extra layer of support for patrons to better understand the risks and make informed choices around drug use.”*