

DRUG USE IS A HEALTH ISSUE

REMOVING STIGMA AND BARRIERS TO CARE SAVES LIVES

Every Canberran should have access to free, high-quality healthcare when they need it, to live a safe and healthy life.

People take drugs and that's why we need to ensure support is easily accessed, free to the individual and treats people with the respect and care we all deserve.

But decades of stigma about drug use means people face numerous social barriers to seeking health advice and care. Too many people then miss out on honest conversations about their health and find themselves at a crisis point which results in hospital admissions or being institutionalised in the justice system.

With the Greens in the ACT Government we have started to remove the stigma and criminalisation of drug use. We now have more health responses to drug use including the decriminalisation of cannabis and other illicit substances, the nation's first fixed drug-testing site and delivery of needle and syringe programs.

We will go further, faster and bolder to truly treat drug use as a health issue and ensure people have access to services that literally save lives.

THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Establish a supervised overdose prevention service
- ▲ Permanently fund Canberra's fixed-site drug testing service, CanTEST
- ▲ Establish a peer-oriented care program for events and festivals
- ▲ Support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver harm reduction programs
- ▲ Establish a peer support service in Canberra's south
- ▲ Identify how to improve availability and diversity of opioid dependency treatments
- ▲ Establish a Harm Reduction Taskforce
- ▲ Support community health promotion activities

AN OVERDOSE PREVENTION SERVICE

People do drugs and we need a health approach to literally save lives.

Deadly opioid-based contaminants such as nitazenes and fentanyl have been found across Australia in a wide range of substances including MDMA, cocaine, methylamphetamine, heroin and even black-market vaping products.

With increasing incidents of contaminated drug supply, we need an urgent health response to prevent overdoses and save lives in the ACT region.

That's why the ACT Greens will establish an onsite, supervised overdose prevention service. It will be integrated with peer support and other harm reduction programs that are identified in the ACT Government's harm reduction policies and services review. The review will highlight where and how this service can be delivered to best support our community.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$3m over four years

PERMANENTLY FUND CANBERRA'S DRUG TESTING SITE

The ACT Greens have advocated for pill and drug testing since 2016. Over the years we have successfully advocated the ACT Government to establish Australia's first fixed drug testing service.

Following a successful two years of the site, CanTEST, we will go further and permanently fund the service, beyond its current funding to June 2027, and support them to expand services to keep Canberrans safer.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$3m over four years

SOUTHSIDE PEER SUPPORT SERVICE

The ACT Greens will deliver peer support service in the south of Canberra to make it easier for people to access care across the ACT.

The ACT Government already funds a peer-based health service for people who use drugs and other substances, located in Belconnen. But it can be hard to get Belconnen when you live in the south. Whilst some community outreach exists, we need to do more to meet the demand and ensure people have access to the services they need to live healthier, close to home.

The Belconnen location is a drop-in centre which provides primary healthcare, peer education sessions, a needle and syringe program and case management. The ACT Greens will replicate this service on the southside with a second site.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$3m over four years

MORE SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS SERVICES

First Nations people have better outcomes when we support self-determination.

That's why the ACT Greens will work closely with First Nations communities to better understand and provide more support to community harm reduction programs led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- To be delivered within existing resources

CARE AT FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Many people choose to use alcohol and other drugs at events, parties and festivals. We need to make sure that people have support around them in case they have a bad experience.

The ACT Greens will establish a peer-oriented festival and event care program, similar to the Red Frogs service. The program will care for people using drugs in festival settings to help people check their gear at testing services, get first aid care and have a safer experience.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$2M over four years

OPIOID TREATMENT REVIEW

Currently, there are long waitlists, geographical limitations on community dispensing options, and a limited number of GPs who prescribe opioid pharmacotherapy.

The ACT Greens will commission a review to identify how we can increase availability and diversity of treatments for opioid dependence.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$300,000

HARM REDUCTION TASKFORCE

The ACT Greens will establish a dedicated policy and research team within the ACT Health Directorate to focus on the health, social and economic benefits of harm reduction.

The team will progress policy and legislative reform to improve coordination and integration between harm reduction, addiction treatment, mental health, social support and housing services.

Studies show that for every \$1 the ACT Government invests in evidence-based harm reduction measures, \$50 is saved by reducing pressure on ACT Government-led health and social services.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$3m over four years

HEALTH PROMOTION

The ACT Greens will increase community awareness about the risks of contaminated drug supply by delivering targeted health promotion campaigns to at-risk groups and the wider community regularly over the next four years.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

- \$400,000