

Drug policy, harm reduction and drug checking: Blind faith?

Anna Olsen¹

¹*ANU Medical School, ACT, Australia*

Much of the debate circling around drug checking focusses on three main arenas: whether checking technology is accurate; whether providing drug information to people impacts on their drug taking behaviour; and the social implications of delivering services where people can receive information about drugs. As with all drug policy debates, science and values are interwoven in these discussions and opposing sides cannot agree. Yet, with the trialling of drug checking at festivals and in a fixed site service in Canberra, and the announcement of a new drug checking service in Queensland, Australia is slowly adding drug checking to the drug policy landscape. How does drug checking fit into this landscape? What are the social meanings of providing drug checking within a prohibitionist system? How will the broader project of harm reduction be impacted by the introduction of drug checking? These questions urge us to consider the path of drug policy reform beyond whether drug checking is right or wrong, towards our broader aims as a sector and society in reducing harms from drugs.