

Incorporating experiential reports of people who use drugs into drug monitoring and early warning systems; a co-design project

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APSAD Conference 2025

No conflicts of interest to disclose.

NCCRED

National Centre for Clinical
Research on Emerging Drugs



AIVL

Australian Injecting &
Illicit Drug Users League

Acknowledgement of Country



Acknowledgement of community



Drug-related Early Warning Systems

Coordinated systems that proactively **monitor** for, **identify**, **respond to** and **mitigate drug-related harms** close to real time are often collectively described as early warning systems.

Early warning systems (EWS) are an important part of our response to unregulated drugs because they help us **prevent or reduce emerging harms**.

Contemporary illicit drug markets are complex, involving new, more **potent and unknown/unpredictable compounds**, which can **emerge within and disappear** from drug supply rapidly.

Co-designing a Community Drug Reporting System



Data collection

Interviews (*n=20 stakeholders*)

- Explored experiences and perspectives related to community drug reporting and EWS.
- Discussions examined the feasibility and value of developing a national community drug reporting system.

4 Co-Design Sessions (*with n=14 co-designers*)

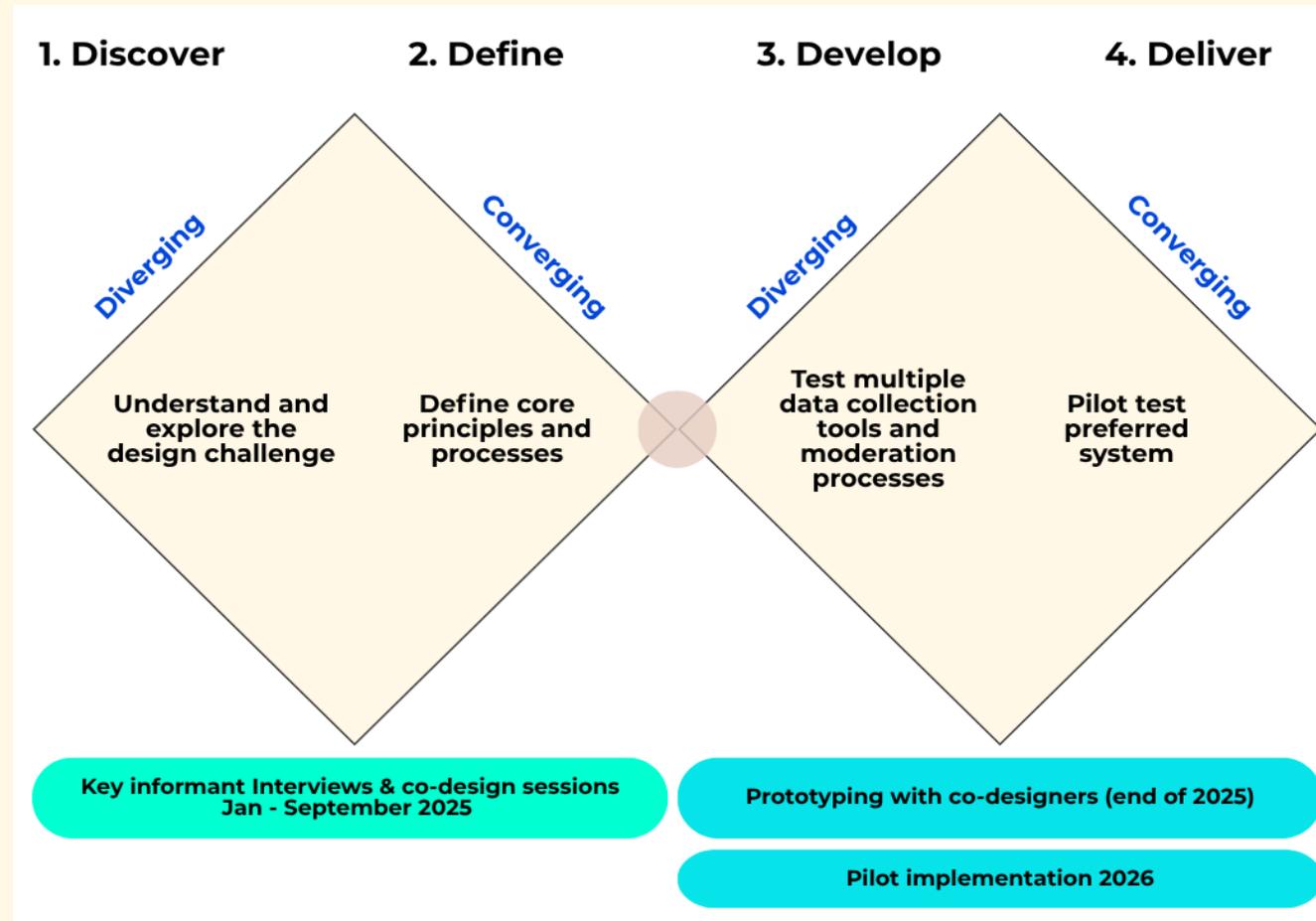
- Identified principles, strategies, and approaches for establishing a community drug reporting system.
- Sessions explored data moderation, interpretation, and communication & system outputs

Table 1: An overview of n=20 interviewees and n=14 co-designers

Jurisdiction	Interviewee (n=20)	Co-designers (n=14)
▪ National	4	1
▪ New South Wales	3	3
▪ Australian Capital Territory	2	1
▪ Western Australia	2	2
▪ Queensland	1	2
▪ Tasmania	2	1
▪ Northern Territory	2	1
▪ Victoria	2	2
▪ South Australia	2	1
Organisation and role types		
▪ Peer-based community-led organisation for people who use drugs	4	14
▪ Government public health (<i>jurisdictional drug and alcohol portfolio leads</i>)	5	0
▪ Forensic toxicology	3	0
▪ Drug checking service	3	0
▪ Advocacy based organisation	2	0
▪ Emergency department toxicology	1	0
▪ Police	1	0
▪ Drug and alcohol treatment services	1	0

Co-design Process

Co-Design Framework



Aims:

- i) explore the potential value of a community drug reporting systems targeting PWUD;
- ii) identify the risks associated with such a system;
- iii) generate key principles and approaches to design and implementation.

Benefits & Risks

Faster detection of risks



Added context and information



Enhanced EWS communication



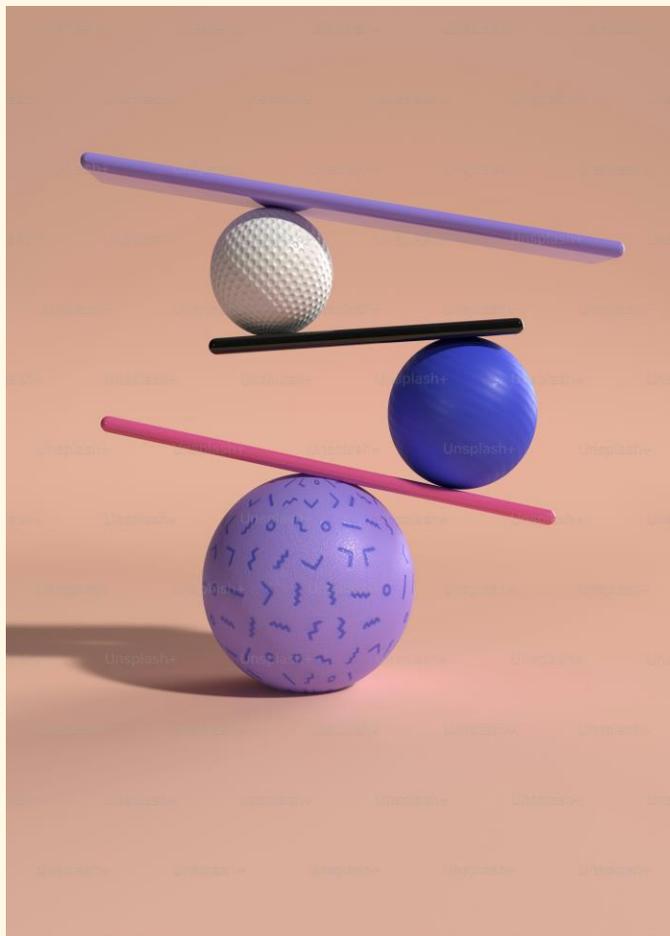
Inclusion of diverse perspectives



Bridging knowledge gaps about NPS



Opportunity for education and communication



Data reliability and false/misleading reports



Barriers to reach and equity (engagement and diversity)



Intersectoral trust



Differing views



Privacy and data security



Community Drug Reporting System

Overview

The co-design group devised four overarching aims:

1. Establish a **sustainable, scalable & safe** model for community drug reporting,
2. **Enhance engagement with and quality of EWS** by integrating the experiential knowledge of PWUD
3. **Increase visibility of real-world drug experiences** within EWS, and
4. **Improve the harm reduction responses** of EWS and their stakeholders

Early findings: 7 Key Principles

Led by PWUD

Safe & confidential

Equitable & accessible

Open to reports of pleasures and harms

Integrated with state / territory based EWS

Responsive moderation

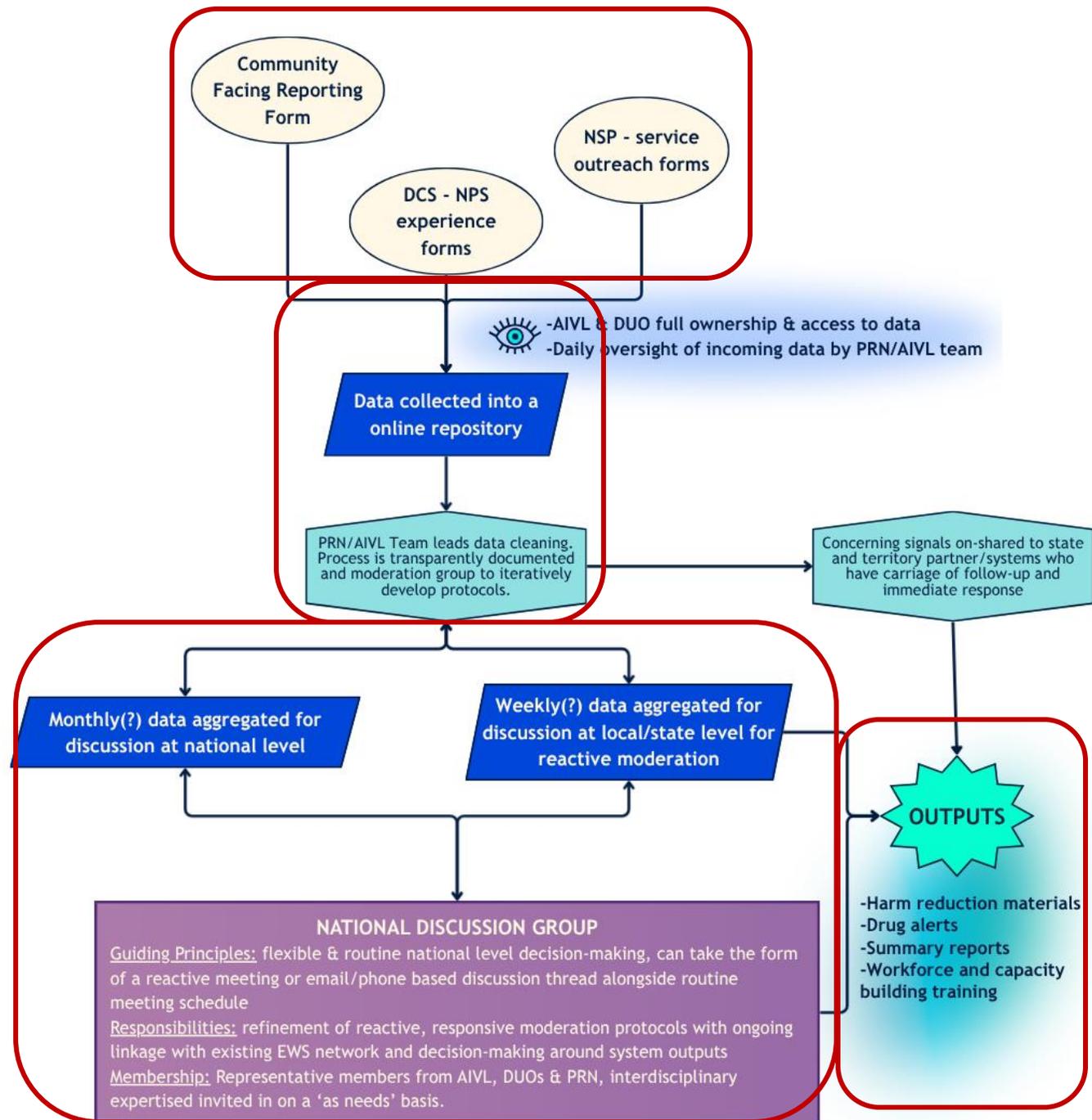
Informing multiple outputs, not just drug alerts

System Prototype

Currently we are developing a system with:

- Community facing data collection tools
- Data collected into an online repository
- Oversight from the PRN & AIVL but EWS decisions at a state or territory level
- Supported by a national 'community of practice' or discussion group

This is all still in development, aiming to run a small pilot in 2026



Acknowledgements

The CDRS Advisory Group

- Jack Freestone
- Cilla Zhou
- Molly Howes
- Mitch Lamb
- Paul Dessauer
- Peta Gava
- Sonya Weith
- Brittany Chapman
- Laura Purcell
- Clancy Beckers
- Megan Stanfield
- Emily Ebdon
- Jane Dicka
- Peter Sidaway
- Baillee Farah
- Rebecca Kavanaugh

Other co-authors and investigators

- Monica Barratt
- Amy Peacock
- Brendan Clifford
- Rachel Sutherland
- Krista Siefried
- Nadine Ezard
- Jess Doumany

NCCRED receives core funding from the Department for Health, Disability and Ageing

Thank You

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