

## **'Stop the harm: Let's decriminalise illicit drugs for medical and recreational use across Australia!'**

### **Chair:**

Sione Crawford

### **Chair's email:**

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This panel will be chaired by Sione Crawford, AIVL Board Member and CEO of Harm Reduction Victoria. The panel will consist of AIVL member organisation representatives from different jurisdictions.

### **Aim:**

Decriminalisation is a contested concept. The term is used to refer to many different interventions and concepts. This panel will present the view of this issue from the drug user organisations (DUOs) of the AIVL network. We will discuss the barriers and opportunities to achieving the decriminalisation of all drugs for medical and personal use, what that might mean in practice and why it is so important to put an end to the criminalisation of our community members. The recent changes in the ACT will be reflected upon by CAHMA, who along with their community and sector partners were central to the process. Peer leaders from the different DUOs will share their reality, barriers and opportunities for changing how people who use drugs are criminalised.

**Panellist 1:** Chris Gough

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### **Detailed Description of Topics to be Discussed:**

What decriminalisation could look like based on the expertise of the community of people who use drugs, the difference in the landscape (policy, legislation, and political will, etc.) between states and territories across the country, the steps to achieve decriminalisation and

multi-sectorial partnerships, and the impacts on justice, equity, and reducing stigma and discrimination.

There will be discussions about impacts of criminalisation; medical and recreational use and decriminalisation, and also about the structural racism of prohibition.

In addition to these areas of discussion we will discuss what an advanced model of decriminalisation and legalisation might bring, including concepts such as social supply and user/supply dynamics, and Community Regulated Supply.

### **Discussion Section:**

The discussion with the audience is essential as AOD sector partners hold a range of views and is key to achieving any long-lasting drug policy reform related to supporting people who use drugs to prevent harm, and ensuring self-determination related to decriminalisation is embedded in policy and practice.

After the engaging panel presentations, there will be an interaction section with Q and A between the audience and the panellists with the mics in the room, but also through the conference app.