

## Drug policy, harm reduction and drug checking: community perspectives

Chris Gough<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA), ACT, Australia*

Australia is slowly embracing drug checking as a life-saving harm reduction strategy, with 1 fixed site drug checking service in the ACT, and QLD announcing another drug checking service in planning. Additionally, harm reduction experts are advocating strongly for further drug checking services across the country. So what does this mean for the diverse communities of people who use drugs in Australia? Is drug checking being utilised by all people who use drugs? Or are their communities that have taken up drug checking to a greater extend than others? If some communities are not utilising drug checking services, what is the reason? This talk will outline some of the broader community issues that have emerged in Australia through the recent drug checking service advancements over the past 5 years. It will explore whether affected communities have embraced drug checking where it has been rolled out and looks at what drugs are being checked and whether there are any drug types which are not being checked. It also asks the question “is the service being utilised by our most marginalised community members and if not, how can we make drug checking services fit for purpose for those consumer groups”.