



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA  
Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **Drug law reform report emphasises health and community safety**

A comprehensive parliamentary committee report into drug law reform has called for a more effective drug response framework in Victoria that recognises health and community safety as key areas of focus.

In its 18 chapter report, the Victorian Parliament's Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee has made 50 recommendations, after an extensive inquiry that received more than 230 submissions and held nine days of public hearings.

"The report comprehensively explores the key areas of prevention, law enforcement, treatment and harm reduction," said Committee Chair, Geoff Howard MP.

Mr Howard thanked all those people who shared their personal experiences, expertise and ideas during the inquiry.

"The report and recommendations reflect the outcomes of the open and honest discussions during the inquiry, recognising that while people continue to use substances, whether illicit or pharmaceutical, more should be done to make treatment and support readily available and to keep people safe," he said.

Mr Howard said a reorientation to a health-based framework does not suggest going soft on crime.

"Rather it emphasises that law enforcement responses to illicit drug use should focus on trafficking and criminal behaviour arising from use, while people apprehended solely for use and personal possession be directed to a range of treatment and support options, where necessary," he said.

In its report, the Committee acknowledged that substantial funding is necessary to ensure the availability of treatment and support services to address substance use issues and reduce reoffending.

"The Committee believes that investment in these services will also enhance the effectiveness of early intervention efforts," Mr Howard said.

The Committee recognised the current commitment of the Victorian Government to address substance use issues in the community, including through increased investment in alcohol and other drug treatment services, the trial of the medically supervised injecting centre in North Richmond, the introduction of a real-time prescription monitoring system and the ongoing efforts of law enforcement agencies in targeting the illicit drug market.

“These efforts will be complemented by the various recommendations proposed throughout the report,” Mr Howard said.

A number of these refer to the need to have an expert advisory council undertake more analysis of local and overseas trends and policy approaches to advise government on the effectiveness of varied approaches.

“Strengthening Victoria’s approach to drugs requires acting on the best evidence available from around the world and taking new directions where appropriate,” Mr Howard said.

The report is available from the Committee’s [website](#).

### **Media queries**

Contact the Committee’s Executive Officer, Yuki Simmonds on 8682 2845.

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