

Queensland Injectors Health Network (QuiHN) Ltd
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Queensland's first ever drug-checking service gets green light.

CheQpoint, Queensland's first fixed-site drug-checking service, is set to launch in Brisbane on April 19th, with a second site to follow in July.

The new service is a multi-agency partnership between *QuiHN*, *QuiVAA*, and *The Loop Australia* and is funded by Queensland Health. It will be located alongside existing [QuiHN services](#) in Bowen Hills, Brisbane.

As well as providing professional drug checking services, the CheQpoint initiative is designed to encourage people thinking about taking drugs to have honest conversations with health professionals about ways to stay safer and to make more informed decisions.

QuiHN, *QuiVAA*, and *The Loop Australia* have been campaigning for the introduction of drug-checking and other harm-minimisation strategies for many years. They have warmly welcomed the [Queensland Government's recent announcement](#) about the commencement of the program.

Background

Drug checking has operated successfully around the world for decades. Here in Australia, the ACT has seen drug checking at festivals since 2018, and more recently through the fixed site, "CanTest" service, which has been independently evaluated. Drug checking provides a vital opportunity for people to access accurate, relevant information to make more informed decisions about drugs. People will provide substances to the service, which are later destroyed, for laboratory analysis by chemists. Test results are provided back to the service user through a consultation with a health professional, which includes a discussion about the risks of drug use. Test results will also be used to develop community alerts for when particularly dangerous substances are identified.

Quotes attributable to Geoffrey Davey, QuiHN Chief Executive Officer

"I commend the Queensland Government for their commitment to evidence-based responses to drug use. We must be proactive to safeguard the health and well-being of our community. This funding is a significant step forward toward building a safer and more informed community. We are confident that our drug-checking service will empower individuals to make safer choices."

Quotes attributable to Cameron Francis, Chief Executive Officer of The Loop Australia.

“Drug-checking through fixed sites can reach large numbers of people in the community. We know that for many people accessing a drug checking service, it will be the first time they speak to a health professional about their drug use. It’s a great opportunity for people to learn about the risks, and how to be safer.”

Quotes attributable to Emma Kill, Chief Executive Officer of QuIVAA Inc.

“Safety is at the heart of drug checking. Harm Reduction public health measures such as these increase safety and decrease the number of avoidable fatalities. It’s based on evidence rather than prejudice.”

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Notes to editors:

About our organisations:

QuIHN Ltd is a not-for-profit charity providing a range of specialist social and health services relating to alcohol and other drug use and mental health since 2005. Operating Queensland-wide, QuIHN provides programs across a continuum of care comprising of harm reduction programs, therapeutic programs, and primary medical care. At QuIHN we envision a world where all people who use substances can reach their full potential and the health and well-being outcomes of our communities are maximised.

The Loop Australia is a charitable organisation established in 2018 to deliver drug-checking services in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. The Loop Australia is the sister organisation of The Loop UK, which have been conducting drug checking services since 2013.

QuIVAA Inc is a charitable organisation with a mission to advocate, educate, and raise awareness about the issues facing people who use drugs to enable them to live healthy lives, free from stigma and discrimination. QuIVAA also aims to develop, support, and promote policies, training, and programs that support and advocate for equal health and human rights for people who use drugs in Queensland.

How will the drug-checking service work?

Service users take a small sample of their substance to QuIHN. The sample is photographed and catalogued, before undergoing chemical analysis. No samples are ever returned to service users. After around 15 minutes, a health professional will provide the result of the chemical analysis back to the service user, through a brief health consultation. The health consultation includes a discussion on the risks of substance use and strategies to reduce risks.

Drug-checking services operate in more than 20 countries around the world including New Zealand, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, and more. Evaluations of drug-checking services have found they produce positive changes in patron behaviour, including increased use of risk-reduction strategies. A significant proportion of people who find their sample contains an unexpected substance, choose to dispose of those drugs.

We encourage Editors to consult *“Language Matters: A guide to appropriate language when reporting on alcohol and other drugs and the people who use them”*:

<https://nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/>

We encourage Editors to include the following text after any article that addresses alcohol and other drug use:

“If you need help with alcohol and other drug issues, please call ADIS 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support: 24-hour, 7-day a week confidential support for people in Queensland with alcohol and other drug concerns, their families, and health professionals. Ph: 1800 177 833”.

END
