

Resolution of Council

16 December 2024

Item 3.5

Action Must Follow 2024 Drug Summit

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

On 20 November 2023, Council unanimously resolved to support my [Lord Mayoral Minute](#) calling on the Premier to set a date and timeline for his proposed Drug Summit.

Council wanted to ensure that the Summit brought together Members of Parliament, experts in the medical and social aspects of drug use, including young people, police, community representatives, families, and people with experience of drug use and its effects.

Council also wanted the Summit to prioritise developing recommendations for action that would reduce the risk of drug-related deaths and contribute to reducing and ending the harm from illicit drug use. These should include drug checking/pill testing and the reform of the policing of drug use.

Disappointingly, unlike the groundbreaking 1999 Drug Summit, the Drug Summit on 4 and 5 December 2024 provided no opportunity to consider motions from participants or make formal recommendations.

While the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Kings Cross was the most high-profile outcome of the 1999 Summit, as a result of a motion I moved, it also made over 170 recommendations relating to young people and drugs, treatment services, drug education, law enforcement, breaking the drugs and crimes cycle and community action.

It appears instead that the Summit's Co-Chairs, Carmel Tebbutt and John Brogden, will prepare a report on the Summit's outcomes. Even more concerning are statements made by the Premier and NSW Minister for Health which appear to pre-empt the Summit's outcomes, including ruling out decriminalisation.

Given the lack of opportunity to formally put forward proposals for reform, a group of Summit participants released an open letter to the Premier requesting action. They include medical and health care professionals, representatives of community organisations and Members of Parliament. The letter is provided at Attachment A to the subject Minute.

The letter:

- notes Unharm has created a plan for a drug checking implementation pilot that NSW can adopt and stresses the need to act ahead of this summer's festival season;
- requests legislative amendments to allow NSW Health to work with drug and alcohol service providers and communities to deliver additional supervised injecting facilities in other locations in the state;
- notes that application of the drug diversion program is open to inequity; and requests that eligibility criteria should be based on set quantities of drugs found on a person;
- requests NSW adopt a strategy to protect people from developing and sustaining dependence on prescription drugs; and
- requests medicinal cannabis to be treated like any other prescription drug in driving laws with offences based on driving under the influence and not the detection of traces of the substance.

The letter expresses hope that these issues will be considered by the NSW Government as a priority and concludes:

"We cannot wait for more reports, reviews and delayed government responses when we know we could be saving lives now. We call on the government to urgently adopt these key reforms."

I agree. Accordingly, I am recommending that Council endorse the Open Letter from Delegates of the 2024 Drug Summit.

I also understand that the NSW Minister for Health has asked the Co-Charis of the Drug Summit to prepare an interim report ahead of the upcoming music festival season, which may include recommendations for a pill testing trial, which I support.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor), seconded by Councillor Miller –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorses the Open Letter from Delegates of the 2024 Drug Summit as shown at Attachment A to the subject Minute;
- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to sign the Open Letter on behalf of the Council of the City of Sydney;

- (C) if the NSW Government commits to a pill testing trial, the Chief Executive Officer be requested to work with relevant stakeholders to help facilitate the trial including appropriate temporary location in our area;
- (D) Council also notes the City's harm reduction community gathers annually on International Drug Users Remembrance Day at the memorial tree planted in Lawrence Hargrave Reserve, Elizabeth Bay to remember the people whose lives were unjustly cut short due to the criminalisation and stigmatisation of people who use drugs;
- (E) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to provide a report to Council in 2025 outlining a plan to better acknowledge and signpost the memorial tree in Lawrence Hargrave Reserve; and
- (F) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the NSW Government, noting that the majority of attendees at the Drug Summit support decriminalisation, and encouraging the NSW Government to approach drug policy as a health issue, rather than a criminal one.

The Minute, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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