

Resolution of Council

29 June 2026

Item 15.2

The City of Sydney Celebrates 25 Years of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre and Calls for Further Drug Harm Reduction Reform in New South Wales

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

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) this year marks 25 years since the establishment of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Kings Cross, which commenced operation in 2001 as Australia's first medically supervised injecting service and the first in the English-speaking world;
- (ii) the Centre has become an internationally recognised public health initiative and has provided supervised care, overdose response, over 27,000 referrals to health and social services, and support pathways for people who use drugs;
- (iii) the Centre has treated more than 1.35 million injections and managed over 12,000 overdoses without a single death occurring at the facility;
- (iv) the current legislative framework restricts NSW to a single supervised injecting centre;
- (v) evidence from Australia and internationally demonstrates that harm reduction measures save lives, improve engagement with health services and reduce pressure on emergency and acute care systems – further, supervised injecting facilities reduce the impact of street-based drug use and reduce discarded syringes in public;
- (vi) in response to recommendations of the 2024 NSW Drug Summit the NSW Government has announced reforms to strengthen harm reduction and health-based approaches to drug policy;

- (vii) measures announced or implemented in response to the Summit include the commencement of a drug checking trial at selected music festivals and reforms to expand the Early Drug Diversion Initiative (EDDI) for eligible people found in possession of small quantities of illicit drugs; and
 - (viii) the NSW Government has also announced reforms to cannabis driving laws for drivers using prescribed medicinal cannabis who are not impaired while driving, as part of a broader shift toward evidence-based responses to drug use and harm reduction;
- (B) Council acknowledge:
- (i) the contribution of clinicians, peer workers, community organisations, researchers and advocates involved in establishing and sustaining the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre over the last 25 years;
 - (ii) the event held at NSW Parliament on 27 May 2026 celebrating the 25th anniversary and the whole Uniting NSW team;
 - (iii) the importance of evidence-based public health policy and harm reduction in improving community safety and health outcomes;
 - (iv) the recent police raids of LGBTQI+ venues on Oxford Street, including Universal on Saturday 13 June 2026, as well as subsequent strip searching, use of sniffer dogs and intimidation of individuals, which have caused serious distress in the community and raised questions about discriminatory policing;
 - (v) that local governments have a responsibility in reducing harm, preventable deaths and improving access to health services for our citizens;
 - (vi) the Lord Mayor's longstanding advocacy for a compassionate evidence-based approach to drug use, including:
 - (a) as MP for Bligh, moving the motion at the 1999 Drug Summit which led to the establishment of the Kings Cross Medically Supervised Injecting Centre; and
 - (b) hosting a practical demonstration of drug testing by medical professionals at Sydney Town Hall on 12 June 2019, attended by health, community and government representatives, including a current NSW Government Minister;
 - (vii) Council's advocacy for action on drug law reform and other measures, including calling on the NSW Government to:
 - (a) immediately start drug checking with an implementation pilot in the summer 2023/24 festival season; and
 - (b) take urgent action on the recommendations marked as noted, for further consideration, and not supported in the NSW Government's response to the recommendations of the Drug Summit 2024;

- (C) Council call on the NSW Government to:
- (i) extend and expand the current drug checking trial beyond its initial trial settings and establish a pathway for ongoing operation at festivals and establish fixed sites;
 - (ii) review the operation of the Early Drug Diversion Initiative (EDDI) to remove discretionary police decision-making regarding eligibility and replace it with a more consistent statutory diversion pathway where legislative and operational advice supports this approach;
 - (iii) end the use of strip searches and sniffer dogs by NSW Police for suspected drug possession offences; and
 - (iv) amend the relevant legislation to remove the restriction limiting NSW to a single supervised injecting centre to allow future consideration of additional services, backed by evidence and health need. The use of existing harm reduction infrastructure should be considered, specifically Needle Syringe Programs across NSW where injecting equipment is already supplied to people who inject drugs;
- (D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to Chris Minns MP, Premier of NSW; Ryan Park MP, Minister for Health; Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Mental Health; Yasmin Catley MP, Minister for Police; Jenny Aitchison MP, Minister for Roads and John Graham MLC, Minister for Transport, Music and the Night-Time Economy conveying Council's position; and
- (E) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to Dr Marianne Jauncey and Tracey Burton, CEO, Uniting NSW/ACT thanking them for their leadership, care and commitment.

Carried unanimously.

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