



# THE Fence Builder

THE FENCE OR THE AMBULANCE

## Really!?

"Nationally, the rate of drug-related deaths was 13.5 per 100,000 people. The Northern Territory was the worst-performing state, with a rate of 41.5 deaths per 100,000."

Herald Sun 6/5/21

In 2020 online sales of alcohol tripled – alcohol sponsored posts on social media every 35 seconds – Key Message 'helping you cope'. (Remember all this promotion is self-monitored by this addiction for profit industry)

FARE

"Alcohol use is the sole cause of 85,000 deaths annually in the Americas region. (2013-15)"

PAHO/WHO study

Alcohol leads to 2500 deaths a day in Europe – almost 1 Million Deaths Annually: Alcohol is classified as a Group 1 human carcinogen, along with other cancer-causing substances such as asbestos, radium and tobacco. It is recognized as a cause for more than 200 diseases and injuries

W.H.O. Europe 2020

USA: Over 1.5 million women are assaulted by a partner or loved one each year.

Addiction Resource

## Pill-Checking/Testing, Helping or Harming – What is the Subtext?

The phenomenon of *semantic contagion* is a fascinating one, and it has been used relentlessly in propaganda measures to recalibrate thinking around fixed ideas in all sorts of arenas.

A brief (and one aspect) take on this is, a process of reframing a word, term, phrase or principle for purposes of harnessing it for another focus, other than its intended specificity. It is often not necessarily a blatant misuse of the term, rather a *re-tasking* to suit an agenda not originally meant for the term.

*Harm Reduction* is just such a term that has been so engaged and recalibrated over recent years.

This *important Pillar* of the National Drug Strategy was set in place in an attempt to reduce the burden of disease, disorder and/or death of those [caught in the tyranny of drug addiction](#), whilst simultaneously assisting them to **exit the drug use** that is causing said dysfunctional states.

A useful meme employed by many proponents of this framework is, 'You cannot rehabilitate a dead drug user.' Again, a useful linguistic tool for a semantic contagion strategy, because whilst it is true, and using absolute and dramatic terms like 'death', lends a certain urgency (as it should), that is not the final agenda of the pro-drug advocate.

Of course, no Harm Reductionist who hates drugs and wants drug users off these life diminishing toxins wants a user to die. However, the pro-drug use proponent will hide behind the hijacked nomenclature of

'preventing death' (only one of many other *life destroying* harms of drug use), not for the purpose of exiting drug use and develop full humanity, instead it is to continue drug use whilst managing as many 'harms to the high' that can be mustered.

Again, the important *Harm Reduction* platform was set up to assist those current drug users, reduce the activity that is causing harm, not just the 'harm' of the self-destructive activity they are now – if dependant – trapped in. The intent of this was always, reduce use, reduce harm, and exit drug use.

However, this well-meaning platform, when employed by those who not only want to, by deliberate design, move into illicit drug use, but endeavour to normalize their 'recreational' choices, have – used semantic contagion – (among other strategies) to give their agenda some traction.

Nowhere is this more evident than with **Pill Checking** program promotion.

You will note there have been [zero harmful incidents over the consumption of illicit substances at any music festivals](#) for around 18 months. This is confirming at least one fact, that these events are a contagion in and of themselves for the potential of the Non-Communicable Drug Disease (NCD) of substance use. These events heighten and do not diminish both the exposure and susceptibility factors in aetiology that exacerbates this NCD.

That aside, the well-meaning agenda of the genuine Harm Reductionist, may be to...

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# What's Up at Dalgarno?

## Education: New culture

**Conversations: The AOD Dilemma 2021** – in consultation with our licensee we have crafted a template for a incursion program that specifically engages a smaller student cohort in a conversation on the AOD issue. The advantages of this offering are a) it ticks a learning and teaching mode that is becoming more commonly used b) it works with a small cohort and can be better targeted within school contexts c) perhaps most importantly: it better enables us to engage the Recovery Alumni in these settings. Less subject matter expertise is required by them and less training as it is a conversation not a presentation. The lived experience and learned resilience of these recovered addicts is an imperative in demand reduction and prevention education. We have conducted a focus group with a year 11 student cohort to ensure we are getting the right mix for this education vehicle for our network.

**ECOSOC Status:** Consultative Status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)) is the highest status granted by the United Nations to non-governmental organizations (NGO's), thereby allowing them to participate in the work of the United Nations. As you may be aware our application has been in for some

time. We were advised during the past month that our application has progressed to the next phase, but further deliberations will not happen until March 2022 – Stay tuned.

## Advocacy for Demand Reduction & Prevention:

During the past 6 months or so, we have continued to not only challenge the ever increasing 'creep' of pro-drug permission policies, but actively advocating for best-practice prevention in both alcohol and other drug arenas.

1. Collaborate with other national groups to lobby for [amendments to liquor laws](#) in both NSW and Victoria to rein in the 'galloping' emergence of online sales and home delivery of alcohol
2. Our Executive Director and Communications Officer, Eleni Arapoglou, presented to The Parliamentary [Inquiry Into The Use Of Cannabis In Victoria](#). Our submission was robust and effective – along with Drug Free Australia, Dalgarno took out a large newspaper ad on calling the Victorian Premier to keep his word to block the recommendations to legalise cannabis.
3. Successfully represent Croydon residents and Dalgarno Institute at public hearing on Liquor licence review City of Maroondah.
4. Continue as a founding member of Action on Alcohol Flagship (Eastern

Metropolitan Region) Various alcohol harm reduction projects in jurisdiction.

5. Continue to post our various articles, commentary, and research onto *International Society of Substance Use Professionals* ([ISSUP](#)) and Vienna Non-Government Organisation Marketplace ([VNGOC](#)) online platforms.



## Board & Staff News:

This year we are saying farewell to our Board Member and *Communications Officer*, Mrs Eleni Arapoglou. Due to big move out of Melbourne, and family/ business commitments, she has had to step away. We are incredibly grateful for her amazing contribution and wish her every success in the future. However, Eleni will continue to consult with us from time to time on key research issues when her schedule permits. Eleni, you will be missed.

We have a new staffer (unpaid) **Tracey Butler**, who joined us earlier this year and is stepping up in our education space. It's great to have her on board and we look forward to her growing contribution.



## Cannabis Conundrum Continues



For extensive and up-to-date research, information and data on the growing 'Cannabis Conundrum' put the following Dalgarno online resources into your Bookmarks.

- ✓ [Cannabis As Medicine](#)
- ✓ [Cannabis Conundrum](#)
- ✓ [Cannabis & Your Community](#)
- ✓ [Cannabis Conundrum Blog](#)



# Prevention & Demand Reduction: YOU CAN'T SAY NO TO DRUGS???

**You Can't Say 'No' to Drugs!...Is that right? I am free to choose...right?**



## Prevention & Demand Reduction: Permission Models Which Deny Best Practice Decision Making for the Developing Brain.

There has been a consistently running diatribe coming from the pro-drug lobby ranks. Much like the other standard mantra of 'the war on drugs has failed'. It seeks to create a meme that will stick in the psyche of the uninformed. We repeat here again – Australia has not had a 'war' on drugs since 1985 and the introduction of the Harm Minimisation platform, which ostensibly accepted drug use as 'part of community' (though not affirming it as valuable at that point). However, what we have now is an even more obvious war 'for' drugs, with not only a constant undermining of our National Drug Strategy priorities, but also messaging which denigrates best-practice abstinence for the developing brain cohort – 12-28 years of age!

The relatively new mantra (last 5 or so years) is that 'Just saying NO to drugs Doesn't Work!'. More than that, the option of refusing to take up substance use by exercising the very best practice of abstinence, is now mocked, ridiculed and maligned. Not only is it made fun of by some key leaders in community and youth health and well-being in the sub-cultural context of community teens, but undermining tactics are also being levied in the policy space.

Of course, any aware stakeholder in the Alcohol & Other Drug arena sees this

clearly, but little is said, as pushing back in the sector which has diverted more funds to Harm Reduction, rather than Primary Prevention and Demand Reduction, is fiscal suicide for that program.

Not only is funding for that best-practice and first priority of the [National Drug Strategy](#) ever shrinking, it is the narrative behind that, which is driving this sentiment. It is parroted *ad nauseum* that 'Harm Reduction is the way to go, because kids are going to use – you can't stop it, and prevention programs don't really work'. (Facts, evidence and best-practice don't matter in these conversations, it is creating a self-fulfilling prophecy that is the key.)

The following equation emerges:  
**Fail to really fund and fully back Demand Reduction holistic vehicles, just mere token measures + This leads to an under performing or even failed prevention enterprise + This reinforces the pre-determined outcome = Prevention 'doesn't work' or is 'too hard to implement', thus removing what little demand reduction is left.**

Of course, this only builds the narrative of a tacit 'permission', which in turn only adds to demand, and thus supply increase: And there you have it! The **only** option left, is 'damage management' = *Harm Reduction*.

## The 'clueless' Nancy Regan?

The mocking line of "you can't just say 'NO' to drugs!" was an attempt to malign First Lady Nancy Reagan's Anti-drug programs. However, the facts, not the pejorative meme, tell a different story...

*When the Reagans moved into the White House on Jan. 20, 1981, drug use, particularly among teenagers, was hovering near the highest rates*

ever [measured](#). Of that year's graduating class, 65 % had used drugs in their lifetimes and a remarkable 37 % were regular drug users.

*Eight years later, when the Reagans left Washington, only 19.7 % of 1989's graduating class were regular drug users, a 47 % reduction. And the trend that began under their leadership persisted until it reached an all-time low of 14.4 % in 1992, 61 % lower than 1981.*

*While it is too simplistic to credit Nancy Reagan alone with this downturn, it is impossible to ignore her leadership and the massive shift she led against the drug culture. Her off-the-cuff response to a young Oakland girl who asked her what to do if confronted with drugs became a clarion call: "[Just say no.](#)"*

We here at Dalgarno have been sitting on this project for about 18 months, but we are about to launch our own little campaign challenging this **Gen Now** undermining meme. We are seeking to empower and equip the current and emerging youth cohort, with the ability to chose best practice, and not simply be herded like sheep into the pro-drug pen, with its child potential, and capacity sabotaging enterprises.

As you can see with the two 'bookend' message theme images, the Audio-visual messaging vehicle will focus on not only exposing the not so subtle 'con', but more generate awareness that denying, or even delaying uptake of illicit substances, and even the legal ones of nicotine and alcohol, are indeed the very best practice for the positive development and well-being of the emerging Generation. **More to come.**

**"You serious?  
Drug use now only  
has one option...  
'Yes'?"**



## Pill-checking/Testing, Helping or Harming – What is the Subtext? Continued from page 1

1. Minimise adulterants to the illicit psychotropic toxin being *courted*
2. Even advise of the risks of 'uncut' pure illicit psychotropic toxins

It is the more potent and tangible messaging of such a (if permitted by law) mechanism that undermines the other two priority pillars of the [National Drug Strategy – Demand and Supply Reduction](#). This vehicle tacitly affirms the act of seeking out a 'party enhancement' substance – undermining Demand Reduction. This demand consequently only adds to the *supply driver* – undermining Supply Reduction. Both actively undermining these priority pillars of the National Drug Strategy.

You do not 'extinct' a behaviour by endorsing, equipping and enabling it. However, that no longer seems to be a focus with illicit drug use by a small, but noisy cohort. Yet in the same National Drug Strategy, the cessation focus is the only model for tobacco, and with remarkable success.

So, why is this actively avoided in the illicit drug use space? We'll let you investigate this incongruence at your leisure.

Those permission models, particularly for *punters* who wants to experiment, is a green light hard to resist, especially when 'nestled in' among other

contagions, such as peer pressure, '[psycho-naut](#)' [propaganda](#) and the parochial permission of this now 'drug law free' arena called a Music Festival.

All of this does not eliminate the risk of drug use harm – even of the now 'checked and permitted' variety, if for no other reason than illicit substances are toxins and unpredictably idiosyncratic in nature and impact.

Death, whilst a drastic and instantly permanent outcome of substance use is tragic, there are other harms that can be incurred, some of which are also not only debilitating, but can be permanent; and 'endorsement' mechanisms that permit activities that can facilitate those harms is not good public health practice.

Governments of civil society are supposed to provide safe, healthy and productive environments for their citizens. Environments that are protective, not mere 'risk mitigating' spaces.

Whilst some citizens may seek to live counter to such priorities and expect to create a culture that not only undermines best health and well-being practice, but extol its 'virtues', they still continue to look to the same government for assistance when things go 'pear shaped'. Often with a view to

maximize their well-being whilst choosing to *remain in a drug use* – and a consequently self-harming – context.

Legislatively endorsed pill-checking is incongruent with best-practice health strategies and clearly current illicit drug laws. The simple mantra, '*they're gunna do it anyway*' has never been a credible precedent for best practice strategies, at least in an ethically focused civil society.

It is important that all the *semantic* texts and subtexts are investigated.

For further reading.

- ☒ [Pill Checking & the National Drug Strategy](#)
- ☒ [What Every Australian Young Person Needs to Know About Ecstasy Deaths](#)
- ☒ [Pill Testing: Russian Roulette as Drug Policy?](#)
- ☒ [Why Drug Testing is a Bitter Pill to Swallow – QC Perspective](#)
- ☒ [Scoring the Pill Test](#)

**Research Team @ Dalgarno Institute**

### SUPPORT OUR WORK!

HELP US MAKE IT EASIER TO SAY... 'NO THANKS!'

Name

Address

Postcode

Email  Phone

Please debit \$  from my credit card: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Card No  CW

Expiry Date  /  Signature

☐ Schools ☐ Education ☐ Fence Building ☐ Bounce (Parent Night)

### LEAVING BEQUESTS

Many long time and faithful supporters have and will choose to leave a portion of their estate to the work of Temperance. Whilst over the years, the labour and passion of our movement has not changed, its name has.

Consequently we have had recent experiences of Estates leaving bequests to our work, but under a previous name. As you can imagine, this creates some legal issues and often delays or denies our movement receiving the gracious gift.

To avoid this, we would like to simply request that if you have, or intend on, leaving a bequest to the work of Temperance that you stipulate it be given to DALGARNO INSTITUTE (C.O.A.D.E Inc.) This will ensure your gift contributes to the continuation of helping Australians have a better chance of a safer and healthier future.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

