

nsw@alhr.org.au www.alhr.org.au



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Human rights lawyers welcome NSW ‘2 Strike Diversion Scheme’ for all drugs

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (**ALHR**) welcomes the NSW Government’s announcement of a proposed two-strike diversion scheme for all small quantity drug possession as a step in the right direction.

If implemented, people found in possession of small amounts of any illicit drug will receive a fine or access to health programs, rather than face criminal charges.

ALHR NSW Convenor Sophie Leaver said, “Diverting low-level drug possession away from the courts will reduce the burden on our criminal justice system and direct people towards health services. This is a vital step in harm minimisation.”

“As has been noted by the [UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health](#), the criminalisation of drug possession for personal use drives those most in need away from health interventions, fuels incarceration rates and intensifies discrimination.

“It disproportionately impacts already vulnerable members of our community, leaving them in conflict with the law, lowering their chances for employment, education and other opportunities.

“ALHR commends the scheme’s evidence-based approach, recognising that personal drug use is best managed as a health issue, rather than a criminal justice issue,” she said.

Ms Leaver also noted that further reform towards the decriminalisation of personal drug use and possession is needed in NSW.

Consistent with international standards such as the 2019 [International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy](#), ALHR supports the decriminalisation of the possession, purchase, or cultivation of controlled substances for personal consumption.

Further, ahead of its promised drug summit, ALHR calls on the NSW Government to commit to implementing all of the February 2020 recommendations of the [Special Commission of Inquiry into the drug ‘Ice’](#), including the urgent introduction of mobile pill testing at festivals and ceasing the use of drug detection dogs.

Contact: Michael Salmon, ALHR media manager: 0417 495 018

ALHR was established in 1993 and is a national association of Australian solicitors, barristers, academics, judicial officers and law students who practise and promote international human rights law in Australia. ALHR has active and engaged National, State and Territory committees and specialist thematic committees. Through advocacy, media engagement, education, networking, research and training, ALHR promotes, practices and protects universally accepted standards of human rights throughout Australia and overseas.