



# QUEENSLAND COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

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*Watching Them While They're Watching You*

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **When should we test for drugs ? - Dr Wodak and Mr Mick Palmer**

*This is the title of a discussion that will be hosted by the QCCL on Tuesday, 30 July 2019 at the All Saints Convention Centre 330 Ann Street, doors open at 5:30 for a 6 pm start.*

*In the opinion of the Council the so-called "war on drugs" has failed. Tonight's discussion will examine two responses to the drugs issue: Pill testing at music festivals and random roadside drug testing.*

*Our speakers will be Dr Alex Wodak and Mr Mick Palmer, former Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police.*

Mick Palmer says of pill testing, "There is no silver bullet but the evidence is overwhelming that the current approach to drug use at festivals is neither reducing drug use nor the potential consequent harms. Our whole emphasis should be on protecting the health and safety of those who choose to use drugs in these circumstances- not punish them. Trailing pill testing is a fundamental part of this approach."

On roadside drug testing, "We must not let the fact that certain drugs are illegal be the driving factor in our policy- if we are to be effective the driver has to be impairment not simply consumption and illegality" says Mick Palmer

Mick Palmer say on random roadside drug testing, "The law is supposed to be about road safety. It should only create offences when road safety is affected. This creates a new precedent for Queensland by making the mere consumption of a drug an offence."

Mr. Cope says, "The problem the law has is that so far science has been unable to establish a clear relationship between the amount of a drug in your system and your ability to drive. It is quite a different situation with alcohol where there is a clear correlation between the level of alcohol in your bloodstream and your capacity to drive. The government then is forced to introduce draconian legislation."

The Council accepts that the police should be entitled to take drug tests but they should only be entitled to do so where the police are able to point to evidence that a person has been driving unsafely and they cannot find any other reason for it such as alcohol. So that if the police observe a wandering driver on the road and cannot detect alcohol they should be entitled to take a drug test. However, the onus of establishing the drug test is accurate should remain on the police.

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More broadly, Mick Palmer says “Legalising cannabis as is being evidenced in an increasing number of international jurisdictions would be a positive step in the right direction.”

**Media conference:** Dr. Alex Wodak and Mick Palmer, 11am Tuesday 30 July Level 26, 10 Eagle Street, Brisbane, P (07) 3223 5939

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