

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NT  
TABLED DOCUMENTS

Committee: RAB

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Tabled By: Prof. Fred Aust.

In reply to your interest in more detail concerning the medical and scientific evidence not supporting pill testing, Drug Free Australia has put the evidence into a single comprehensive document where that evidence is displayed with citations and web addresses for verification.

In this document we demonstrate that:

1. The existing evidence base indicates no deaths in Australia from impurities in ecstasy pills
2. The existing evidence base indicates purity is not an issue, otherwise a batch of high purity tablets would hospitalise or kill most users who bought that batch, which is not happening in Australia
3. The existing evidence from medical literature indicates that overdose from MDMA is rare, and that Coroners' reports listing overdose are more likely the result of combined MDMA/polydrug use toxicity rather than overdose.
4. The existing evidence base roundly shows that MDMA itself is responsible for almost every ecstasy pill death within Australia and deaths are from normal recreational doses of MDMA, which unfortunately pill testing wrongly declares as safe
5. The existing evidence base shows that MDMA used with other legal and illegal drugs is responsible for most of those deaths, but pill testing fails to test for polydrug use
6. The existing evidence base shows that many die of an individual allergic-like reaction to MDMA, and pill testing cannot test for that
7. The existing evidence base has very few deaths from other drugs cut with MDMA in an ecstasy pill
8. The existing evidence base indicates that pill testing equipment at festivals is not capable of detecting the other drugs mixed with MDMA that killed the three Melbourne users in January 2017, and indeed is not capable of detecting most of the fast-evolving other substances that could potentially be used in ecstasy pills in the future
9. The existing evidence base indicates that a scraping from a pill cannot guarantee that it is representative of what is in the pill

All of the above make pill testing dangerous because it may lull prospective users into a false sense of security if their pill is found to be normal. If the user has used drugs before there is no guarantee a normal MDMA pill will not cause that user's death.