

9 June 2022

## MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA WELCOMES GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DRUG LAW REFORM INQUIRY

Today the ACT Government has tabled its response to the Committee Report into the *Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021*.

I welcome the ACT Government's response to my proposal to decriminalise the possession of small amounts of illicit drugs for personal use in the ACT.

The response today vindicates what drug law experts have been saying for many years. All governments must look to a more sensible and measured approach to addressing drug use in the community.

This proposal seeks to reduce the number of people that use drugs proceeding through the criminal justice system. Instead, those who are found in possession of a small quantity of illicit drugs will have the substance confiscated and receive a fine or be diverted to an appropriate health service.

Drug use is a public health problem; I know this and Canberrans know this. I believe that the proposed model is a sensible one that the overwhelming majority of Canberrans will support.

As a community, we need to encourage people who use drugs to seek the medical help that they need. I want to see people getting help from doctors, not being put in handcuffs.

The response today is a significant step towards harm minimisation. I'm looking forward to working with my parliamentary colleagues to schedule this bill for debate in the Assembly.

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