



POSITION STATEMENT MARCH 2019

DRUG TREATMENT SUMMIT

POSITION

Wayside Chapel is calling on the NSW Government to commit to a holding a drug treatment summit within its first year of office, bringing together politicians, experts, health services and people with lived experience with drug-related issues.

The current approach to drug-related issues is not working. Drug-related issues should be recognised primarily as a health issue and treated like any other chronic health condition. They are often linked to complex social circumstances including trauma, abuse, poor mental health and social disadvantage. Effective responses to harmful drug use must address these underlying causes.

Wayside has played an important historical role in affecting change to improve the lives of people with drug-related issues. Twenty years ago, Wayside took action to stop people from dying on the streets from heroin overdoses. Wayside opened the Tolerance Room and allowed visitors to safely inject drugs on the premises.

This act of civil disobedience drew significant media attention and resulted in the discussion of a safe injecting centre at the 1999 Drug Summit, and the subsequent approval and opening of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) on Darlinghurst Road in 2001.

Drug use and drug-related issues have changed significantly over the past 20 years and we need to once again call on the NSW Government to take action to save lives.

Wayside Chapel is supporting Uniting's campaign for fair treatment for people with drug-related issues. Uniting manages MSIC in Potts Point.

For more information, go to waysidechapel.org.au/advocacy

Uniting