

## AIVL Position Statement

### 'Support. Don't Punish' Day 2023

---

AIVL wholly endorses the Support. Don't Punish. Global Day of Action on the 26th of June. The theme for 2023 is 'Reclaiming people power for sustainable alternatives to the 'war on drugs.'

Support. Don't Punish. is a global grassroots campaign that calls for jurisdictions to implement drug policy that prioritises the health and wellbeing outcomes of people who use drugs (PWUD) and end cruel sanctions that target the PWUD community.

On this Global Day of Action, AIVL calls for Australia and governments across the Asia Pacific to abandon laws that stigmatise, target and harm PWUD. Researchers, law enforcement experts and community advocates across the world consistently demonstrate how drug law reform and implementing effective peer-led harm reduction services including non-medical drug consumption rooms and drug checking services would save lives and fortify the region's public health response against communicable and non-communicable diseases. Regardless, many countries including Australia are lagging behind the evidence, while many in the Asia Pacific continue to penalise drug-related activities with draconian sanctions. Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia maintain the death penalty for certain drug offences. These punitive laws entrench and increase harms associated with drugs, create barriers to service access, disempower PWUD from advocacy, and freeze health policy innovation.

This year on 'Support. Don't Punish' day, AIVL calls for Australia and governments across our region to:

- Abolish the death penalty and remove mandatory minimum sentences for drug offences;
- Empower PWUD to lead the development and implementation of laws, policies and programs that concern drug use;
- Provide adequate funding to organisations that offer evidence-based harm reduction and other services for PWUD;
- Empower PWUD to have agency and choice in making their own decisions about what services they want to access, if any; and
- Eliminate stigma against drug use and PWUD.

## AIVL Position Statement 'Support. Don't Punish' Day 2023

AIVL calls on Australia to support the Global Day of Action and advocate for better measures to strengthen health equity for PWUD in Australia and in the Asia Pacific. Australia should implement best-practice drug policy, including the legalisation of drug use, and empower PWUD to lead the community in how we respond to drugs. More information about opportunities for legislative change in Australia can be found [here](#).

This Global Day of Action serves as a reminder that effective drug policy and services enable communities to be safe and healthy. PWUD are ready to lead the development and implementation of policy in Australia, the Asia Pacific and beyond. AIVL looks forward to working with governments and other partners to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the PWUD community as well as the general public.

John Gobeil, AIVL CEO



Supported by:

