

Media Release

6 December 2017



Drug testing removed from Welfare Reform Bill

UnitingCare Australia joins other organisations, doctors, health professionals and addiction medicine specialists in endorsing the removal of the drug testing provisions in the Welfare Omnibus Bill before the Senate in the Australian Parliament today.

UnitingCare Australia joined community and health sector partners in strongly advocating against the trials, because there was no evidence to indicate the effectiveness of drug testing in effecting positive behavioural change or supporting people affected by drug and alcohol addiction. This was laid out in our [submission](#) to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee on the Social Services Legislation Amendment Welfare Reform Bill 2017.

We welcome the removal, from the Bill, of the harmful provisions that sought to introduce the drug testing trial. However, we are concerned that the minister still plans to pursue this initiative in the future.

We reiterate that drug addiction is a serious health issue and that overcoming addiction requires tailored treatment options that provide people with the services and supports they need to recover, as with any other serious health condition.

Resourcing is better directed towards prevention, early intervention and treatment strategies that can assist people to overcome addiction and related health issues, in what is currently a chronically under-funded service area.

UnitingCare Australia's National Director is available for interviews on the removal of the drug testing measures from the Welfare Reform Bill.

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