




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 28 August 2025

PRIVATE MEMBER STATEMENT

Drugs, Pill Testing

 **Mr J KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.18 pm): I want to start by thanking Queensland Health for using its social media channels to highlight the danger posed to people by nitazenes. These are a group of synthetic opioids that are 500 times more potent than fentanyl. As Queensland Health said in its post, even tiny amounts can cause serious harm and pose a very high risk of overdose. They said that the real danger is that you cannot see them, smell them or taste them; you may not have any idea they are there until it is too late. In short, if you take these drugs because they have been mixed in with other drugs by criminals for God knows what reason you are highly likely to die. You cannot see them, taste them or smell them but, until recently, there was a way to detect them. You could go to a government funded pill-testing clinic or visit a mobile unit at a festival and tests would reveal nitazenes. In fact, in the very week that the CheQPoint clinic in Bowen Hills shut down, they detected nitazenes in drugs brought in by community members. This detection saved those people's lives.

When we started the needle exchange program back in the nineties we heard all of the same tired arguments against their establishment that we are now hearing against the pill-testing clinics. They do not encourage or increase drug use. In fact, they do the opposite. They provide health professionals with an opportunity to engage with drug users and each engagement provides an opportunity to steer the user to a healthier decision. There is a mountain of clinical evidence to back this up. Amongst the saddest meetings I have ever had in my electorate were meeting parents whose kids went off to a weekend festival—doing something lots of young people like to do—and did not come home. These were regular young people making regular young people mistakes who tragically paid for those mistakes with their lives. We did have things in place to prevent that, and we should have things in place to prevent this from happening in future.

Like many young people, my daughter will soon be heading off to schoolies. Of course my wife and I are nervous, but we want her and her friends to have fun and we accept they are going to take some risks. When my other daughter went to schoolies I was impressed at how many things were in place to keep young people safe while giving them some space to have fun. What an absolute disgrace that there will not be a mobile pill-testing clinic at schoolies week. There will certainly be some young people using drugs, so I am calling on the health minister and the Premier to provide a mobile pill-testing clinic at schoolies. The Premier said he would keep people safe where they are. Why not keep young people safe at schoolies.