

TRANSCRIPT

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Transcript: AMA Queensland President, Dr Nick Yim, *Sunrise with Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington*, Wednesday 13 November 2024

Subject: Pill testing at Schoolies

MATT SHIRVINGTON: AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim joins us live from Hervey Bay in Queensland. Great to have you with us. So can you talk us through how it will work at Schoolies, this pill testing?

DR NICK YIM: Firstly, we'd like to congratulate all school leavers. They've gone through a tough couple of years and it's the time to let their hair down. But at the same time, this is a period of their life where there's temptation, curiosity and peer pressure, and illicit substances, drugs, they might be available. So AMA Queensland does support pill testing from that perspective. It gives them an opportunity to present voluntarily, confidentially to a free service to get their illicit substance tested. But at the same time, it's an opportunity to have that discussion about drug use, alcohol use, any other health issues that might be on their mind with the health care professional.

MATT SHIRVINGTON: There's two sides to this, right? I mean, there's that assumption that some kids, some young adults will try it, and this will keep them safe. But what about encouraging others in a safer environment, I guess you could say, to experiment themselves?

DR NICK YIM: Absolutely. Obviously we know that drug use is not good, we shouldn't be doing it, but we know that it does happen within our community. And I guess this service, the initial statistics already show that people who do present to a pill testing centre, 16 per cent actually dispose of those pills after getting it tested and 25 per cent actually on-refer to another healthcare professional to discuss health, drug use, alcohol use and also any other health issues they may have.

MATT SHIRVINGTON: David Crisafulli, the newly appointed Premier, doesn't like it, wants to scrap it, says it sends the wrong message, implies that drug use is okay. What do you think of that?

DR NICK YIM: It's one of these challenges. At AMA Queensland, we always work with the government of the day and also the opposition. We do have evidence out there backing the use of pill testing. It does create a safer environment for people who do choose to use drugs. We must acknowledge that drugs are within our community and it's something where, if we continue to educate and support, I think that is the key message.

MATT SHIRVINGTON: Okay, doctor, thanks for your time. Appreciate it.

Contact: AMA Queensland Media: +61 419 735 641

media@amaq.com.au