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PRESS RELEASE

Trial pill testing: Safety concerns

The Police Association of NSW (PANSW) today expressed concerns regarding a plan to rollout the first ever pill testing at NSW festivals before the end of the year.

The pilot program will reportedly be carried out inside a mobile laboratory-grade drug testing van staffed with toxicologists.

Police Association President, Scott Weber, said, "We have real apprehensions concerning the safety for all involved.

"You will have large numbers of people being encouraged to use the service and additional supporters who have said they will create a buffer between them and police.

"It's a situation fraught with danger and heightened emotional responses, the last thing we want to see is young people caught up in a civil disobedience campaign thinking it's a game to elude the police.

"Police will be put in an untenable position in that they are sworn to uphold the law and if they turn a blind eye they are themselves committing an offence.

"They have a sworn duty to enforce the law and young people could be looking at drug possession charges.

"The testing regimes being put forward will not tell a potential drug user whether a substance is "safe" or "unsafe".

"This raises questions about duty of care risks over giving advice on pills that lead to a death or serious injury. Deputy Premier Troy Grant has rightly identified issues around the logistics of large scale pill testing and legalities for all involved.

"We don't want to be on a collision course with festival goers - we want to keep them and police safe."

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