Evidence suggests there is broad support for diverting people with drug problems into the health system, as opposed to the criminal justice system, especially those in possession of small amounts of drugs deemed to be for personal use. Further, PhA notes that only about 2–3% of people who are in police custody are drug related, and that drug-related criminal charges are often brought because of drug use and not as a consequence of drug sales or drug trafficking.

PhA notes in particular the negative societal impacts on individuals arising from the application of a criminal justice approach, including the undue hardship caused to families and communities, the failure to address the underlying social and mental health needs, and the failure to implement a range of evidence-based treatment and support services.

A true harm reduction approach must include access to treatment for those with problematic drug use. The vast majority of whom have not had contact with criminal justice systems. This includes access to a comprehensive public health education campaign and by increasing the availability of well-designed evidence-based interventions. A priority for any year is improved access to and representation of police and other government agencies at conferences and workshops.

PhA believes the best way to tackle the problems of drug use is through a harm reduction approach. This includes access to treatment and support services, as well as policies that reduce the harms caused by drug use. PhA also supports the decriminalization of drug use and the decriminalization of drug users.

PhA supports the Australian Government’s出台 Proposals to Legalize and Regulate the Cannabis Industry in Australia. This will help to reduce the harms caused by drug use and promote public health outcomes. The Australian Government is committed to reducing drug-related harms and promoting public health outcomes. This includes access to treatment and support services, as well as policies that reduce the harms caused by drug use. PhA also supports the decriminalization of drug use and the decriminalization of drug users.

PhA is committed to promoting harm reduction and by increasing the availability of well-designed evidence-based interventions. A priority for any year is improved access to and representation of police and other government agencies at conferences and workshops.

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20 November 2013

Public Health Association of Australia

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

PHAA (ACT Branch) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Reduced Alcohol and Drug-Related Harm) Bill 2013 and trusts that the information provided is of assistance.

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Australasian community

Prevention

PHAA's support for this important initiative is evident in our submission to the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 and in our commitment to implementing strategies that are consistent with these submissions.

PHAA supports the overarching approach of harm minimisation - which has guided the National Drug Strategy since its inception in 1991 - encompassing the three pillars of demand reduction, harm reduction and policy strategies. PHAA encourages the retention of key elements of demand reduction strategies, including drug use is a public health issue, acknowledging the law has an important role.

PHAA appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 and trusts that the information provided is of assistance.