

# Researchers back call by world leaders for end to criminalisation of drugs

September 10 2014, by Ben Mostyn

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The Australian Drug Law Reform Initiative (ADLaRI) has welcomed a new report by the Global Commission on Drug Policy that calls for the decriminalisation of drug use and possession, alternatives to incarceration, and a greater emphasis on public health approaches to the problem of drug addiction.

In a report released in New York overnight, the Commission has called on the United Nations to consider seriously these alternatives to the War on Drugs.

Dozens of world leaders including the former presidents of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Poland, Portugal and Switzerland have signed their names to the report, joining with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Virgin Group founder Richard Branson, former US Secretary of State George Shultz, and former Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Paul Volcker.

The recommendations would represent a major paradigm shift in global [drug policy](#) and will be presented at the UN Special Session on Drugs in 2016. The approach is outlined in Taking Control: Pathways to Drug Policies that Work.

"Such a call by some of the world's most prominent current and former leaders is unprecedented. Australian leaders in New South Wales and Canberra must now seriously consider the report's recommendations," said ADLaRI spokesperson Ben Mostyn.

"In particular, we call on the Australian Government to set up a Parliamentary Inquiry to consider Australia's stance at the upcoming UNGASS 2016," Mr Mostyn said.

ADLaRI is a project formed in the UNSW Faculty of Law to pursue pathways towards [drug](#) law reform, drug policy education, and the achievement of social justice.

The Parliamentary Inquiry must investigate whether:

- Penalties of imprisonment should be abolished for minor drug offences;
- All drugs should be decriminalised by the Commonwealth;
- Marijuana should be decriminalised by the Commonwealth to bring it in line with three States and Territories;
- Prison causes more harm to individuals than use of the drug

itself;

- More money needs to be directed towards a public health approach instead of a punitive approach to drug addiction; and
- Doctors should be able to prescribe medical marijuana to patients.

**More information:** *Taking Control: Pathways to Drug Policies that Work* is available online: [www.gcdpsummary2014.com/](http://www.gcdpsummary2014.com/)

Provided by University of New South Wales

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