

Most Australians support supervised injecting facilities, study finds

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[New research](#) examining changes in public opinion over time reveals most Australians support supervised injecting facilities, with opposition to the facilities having steadily declined during the past 20 years. The findings are published in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Review*.

Supervised injecting facilities reduce [overdose deaths](#) and harms related

to injecting [drug use](#).

These services allow individuals to inject pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of trained professionals in a way that minimizes harm.

Australia currently has two supervised injecting facilities, one in Melbourne and one in Sydney, where staff provide clean injecting equipment, harm reduction advice, referrals to treatment, health and [social services](#) and respond to overdoses.

These services could be crucial as overdose deaths are steadily rising in parts of Australia.

Zachary Lloyd, Burnet research assistant and first author of "Attitudes towards supervised injecting facilities in Australia," said public support for the facilities had increased since 2001.

"The rising rates of harms and deaths due to injecting drug use are a serious public health concern," he said.

"Growing evidence from Australia, Canada and Europe has demonstrated that supervised injecting facilities reduce some of the risks associated with injecting drug use and help prevent the spread of infectious diseases, while also providing significant benefits to the communities where these services are located."

Public stigma has been a barrier to opening more supervised injecting facilities.

Despite strong evidence showing the health benefits of these facilities, calls for additional sites have been rejected in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

"Evidence shows governments are more likely to pursue [policy options](#) when they perceive [public opinion](#) as supportive and our study shows there is public support for supervised injecting facilities," Mr. Lloyd said.

"Our study is the first to explore data on Australians who are ambivalent or unsure about supervised injecting facilities.

"Understanding this group is crucial, as they may be persuaded with clear, plain language information about the facilities and their benefits, in turn increasing public support.

"Addressing public stigma about supervised injecting facilities is key to building support for the introduction of more facilities and helping to reduce the rates of overdoses in Australia."

More information: Zachary Lloyd et al, Changes in Australians' attitudes towards supervised injecting facilities, *Drug and Alcohol Review* (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/dar.13937](https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.13937)

Provided by Burnet Institute

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