

MEDIA RELEASE

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Drug diversion changes a blow to mental and preventive health in Queensland

The Queensland government's move to repeal the state's drug diversion program is short-sighted and a blow to mental and preventive health.

If passed in parliament this week, the *Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and AntiSocial Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026* will replace Queensland's three-strike program with a framework targeting first-time and low-risk drug offenders.

AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim said it fundamentally misunderstood why the tiered system was necessary.

"A University of Queensland report into the program – which has now been [tabled](#) – showed of the 17,644 diversions between May 2024 and March 2025, 62% were warnings, 8% were first diversions and 30% were second diversions.

"It's this second diversion cohort that benefits most from the program, as people who regularly use drugs are often struggling with other social, health or mental health challenges.

"Treating these people as criminals instead of patients will not reduce drug use in our community."

Dr Yim said the cost of ongoing drug use would ultimately cost the health system more.

"Timely intervention helps prevent other consequential issues including dementia, cognitive decline, seizures and chronic liver disease.

"The UQ report also shows 17% of those diverted were First Nations, who already have higher rates of adverse health outcomes."

Dr Yim said the current program also excludes people who committed another indictable offence alongside illegal drug use, showing there is no basis for the idea the scheme was letting people 'off the hook'.

"AMA Queensland is disappointed not to have been called to appear before the parliamentary committee inquiry into the program, despite lodging a written submission and making an express email request to the committee," he said.

"We maintain illegal drug use should be treated as a health issue that needs compassionate and appropriate treatment and support to give people the best chance of recovery and a healthier future."