



**ANZCA**  
FPM

*Te Whare Tohu o  
Te Hau Whakaora*

16 June 2026

Health Committee

Tēnā koe

### Drug Overdose (Assistance Protection) Legislation Bill

Te Whare Tohu o Te Hau Whakaora | The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), which includes the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM) and Chapter of Perioperative Medicine, thanks you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the above. ANZCA is the professional organisation responsible for postgraduate training programs of anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians, and for setting the standards of clinical practice throughout Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Our collective membership comprises around 10,000 fellows and trainees in anaesthesia and pain medicine, 1300 of whom work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The college has consulted with the chairs of our national committees (National Committee NZ and FPM NZ). ANZCA **supports** the proposed legislation which aims to ensure that those who call for life-saving help when they are with someone who is experiencing a drug overdose or adverse drug reaction, are protected from being charged for low-level drug offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975. The bill is generally in keeping with current clinical practice in dealing with emergencies where a drug overdose is suspected, as clinicians do not routinely report suspected drug overdose to Police.

ANZCA's view is that the bill is necessary for the reasons described in the general policy statement, that lives are being lost to drug overdose and that delayed medical attention due to apprehension about potential police involvement is a preventable risk. As doctors, we uphold ethical values that are central to saving lives. The bill is specific about the limited circumstances in which protection from prosecution will apply, including that the caller must be acting in good faith. We note that the bill does not legalise drug use or protect anyone from charges for more serious or violent offences, but rather prioritises saving lives by removing a barrier to the immediate action needed in response to a suspected drug overdose.

Nāku noa, nā

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