David Littleproud MP
Federal Member for Maranoa

Media statement

May 10, 2017

Federal Budget's welfare overhaul includes drug testing: Maranoa MP

THE message is clear: If you use illegal drugs and claim welfare, the government will intervene to help you kick addiction in a tough new approach to target welfare-fuelled drug use, Maranoa MP David Littleproud said.

"If you're affected by drugs, you're obviously not making good decisions so that's why this new drug-testing regime – and other jobseeker compliance measures – is integral in this overhaul of our welfare system, as outlined in last night's Budget," Mr Littleproud said.

"Hard-working Australians don't expect their tax dollars to fund a welfare recipient's drug habit and this Coalition Government will ensure our welfare system provides strong incentives for people to tackle any barrier which stand in their way when looking for a job.

"These new measures will not only ensure people who are addicted to drugs get the help they need but also gives us the confidence that our taxes are not being used to fund illegal lifestyles."

A key Budget welfare initiative is that under the trail – which start from January 1 next year – 5000 New Start or Youth Allowance recipients will be selected for random drug testing.

"Job seekers who test positive will be immediately placed on welfare quarantining and will be required to undergo further drug testing to help curb the devastating effects of their drug abuse on themselves, their family and our community," he said.

"If a jobseeker is selected for a drug test and refuses, they will lose access to welfare."

Under the new compliance measures – which will come into effect from July 2018 – a demerit point-based system could see noncompliant jobseekers stripped of their payments for up to one month.

"About 100,000 people continually fail mutual obligation requirements and the government will no longer accept excuses from repeat offenders," he said.

"Australia has a strong welfare safety-net to support those who need it most but we must maintain its integrity to ensure it will be affordable and sustainable in the future."

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