



**METHODIST  
ALLIANCE**  
NGĀ PURAPURA WETERIANA

**Submission to the Health  
Committee  
on the  
Drug Overdose (Assistance  
Protection) Amendment Bill  
June 2026**

**This submission is from:**

The Methodist Alliance  
PO Box 9932  
Te Aro  
Wellington, 6141



## **Ko wai tātou | Who we are**

The Methodist Alliance is a formal alliance of Methodist Missions, parishes and community based social services and trusts, including cooperating ventures. This grouping constitutes a major provider of a range of services for tamariki/children, rangatahi/young people, and their families/whānau.

The Methodist Alliance brings together a number of large and medium social service providers such as Lifewise in Auckland, Methodist City Action in Hamilton, Palmerston North Methodist Social Services, Wesley Community Action in Wellington, Christchurch Methodist Mission, Methodist Mission Southern in Dunedin, as well as local community services provided by individual parishes. It includes new social service organisations, such as Siaola Vahefonua Tongan Methodist Mission; Puna’Oa - the Samoan Methodist Mission that operates within the Samoan Synod of the Methodist Church; and Te Taha Māori.

Ka whakahōnore mātou i tō mātou whakahoatanga Tiriti – we honour our Tiriti partnership. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the covenant establishing our nation on the basis of a power-sharing relationship. It is the foundation for social, economic and political equality in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Methodist Alliance is grounded in our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the bi-cultural journey of the Methodist Church of New Zealand - Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, where Te Taha Māori and Tauīwi work in partnership. We claim the right bestowed by Article Four of Te Tiriti o Waitangi:

“E mea ana te Kawana ko ngā whakapono katoa o Ingarangi, o ngā Weteriana, o Roma, me te ritenga Māori hoki e tiakina ngatahitia e ia.”

“The Governor says the several faiths of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome, and also the Māori custom shall alike be protected by him.”

The Methodist Alliance and our member organisations work collaboratively to achieve our vision of a just and inclusive society in which all people flourish, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

## Tirohanga Whānau | Overview

The Methodist Alliance supports this bill, due to the importance of prompt and life-saving care for those experiencing harm due to drug overdoses. As drug use rises due to multiple societal factors, so does the harm experienced by those using substances. As organisations committed to the safety of our communities, we feel it is imperative that any roadblocks in the way of giving support to people experiencing an overdose are lifted.

### Main Points

- 1. Prompt and life-saving care for drug overdoses is necessary, and the current settings do not ensure this.**
- 2. Potential to reduce drug driving.**
- 3. A harm-reduction approach should be taken to drug policy going forward.**

### Taunakitanga | Recommendations

**Point 1:** Prompt and life-saving care for drug overdoses is necessary, and current settings do not ensure this.

As noted in the explanatory note for this legislation, associates or those who call for emergency assistance in the case of an overdose are not routinely prosecuted in relation to the harm that has been experienced. Unfortunately, this is due to the discretion of police and the justice system rather than as a result of explicit protection from legislation.

It is important that if someone is experiencing an overdose, anyone who is with them feels they can call emergency services for assistance without fear of legal repercussions. If all parties present are under the influence of drugs the clarity of this point is especially important, as they are both in an altered state of mind and may feel that they will be held responsible for the harm caused to the person experiencing an overdose.

Explicit protection for those seeking assistance will ensure that even those under the influence of drugs and in possession of small amounts of drugs for recreational use will feel able and willing to seek assistance for themselves and others even in an altered state of mind.

**Point 2:** Potential to reduce drug driving.

As explicit protection is extended to those seeking medical assistance for someone experiencing an overdose, these people will feel more comfortable calling for

emergency services to attend the scene rather than dropping the person at an emergency department to avoid blame and prosecution.

Under the current settings, people who see themselves as at risk of prosecution but still intent on seeking help for someone experiencing a drug overdose can take the option of dropping this person at an emergency department. If they are also under the influence of drugs this constitutes a significant risk for further harm, which calling for an ambulance would not.

**Point 3:** A harm reduction approach should be taken to drug policy going forward.

Drug use in Aotearoa has not reduced under current settings, and in fact the use of more harmful drugs has spiked in recent years despite massive investment in the combatting of the importation and sale of methamphetamine among other substances.

It's clear that the socio-economic and mental health situation of many people in Aotearoa is driving them to abuse substances to escape from the difficult reality they are living through. Without massive investment in our nation's economic support and mental health systems we will continue to see this rise.

Punishing people for using or being around drugs is not the answer, and alongside the investment previously mentioned we need to ensure our policy settings moving forward are focused on reducing the harm that drugs cause, rather than further ostracising people for using them.

**Recommendation:**

The Methodist Alliance Recommends that the Drug Overdose (Assistance Protection) Amendment Bill be passed in its entirety, and that further legislation in the drug space similarly focus on reducing the harm that drugs cause to individuals and communities.

For further information or questions regarding this submission, please contact:

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