

Media release



27 February 2019

Penington Institute's Annual Review now available online

Penington Institute has launched its 2018 Annual Review, which is now [available online](#).

Penington Institute's CEO John Ryan said that the Review showcased a year of real progress in campaigning for better drug policies in Australia, but there exist serious obstacles to change.

"The significance and scope of drug overdose in Australia is unprecedented.

"In 2016, there were a total of 2,177 drug-related deaths in Australia, a massive increase from 15 years ago (1,231 in 2002).

"Prescription opioids now account for 45 per cent of all accidental drug related deaths in this country. Of concern is the fact Australia has the third greatest increase in the rate of accidental opioid overdose deaths in the developed world – behind Estonia and the United States. It is on the same trajectory to follow the opioid crisis in the US," Mr Ryan said.

The organisation's work has regularly focused on the tragedy of overdose in Australia and world-wide, with an increasing number of these deaths implicating prescription medicines.

"Internationally, our stewardship of International Overdose Awareness Day achieved the campaign's most successful results to date – with close to 750 registered events and activities held in 38 countries.

"I'm pleased to report that our 2018 edition of *Australia's Annual Overdose Report* has become the 'go-to' reference point for government, health professionals and the media wanting to know the latest statistical information.

"The launch of our latest report *Saving lives: Australian naloxone access model* by the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt at Parliament House illustrates the central role Penington Institute plays in advocating more effective approaches to preventing drug deaths.

"We are advocating a new model for distributing naloxone, the life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication, which has the potential to save hundreds, if not thousands, of Australian lives," Mr Ryan said.

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About Penington Institute

Officially launched in 2014, Penington Institute grew out of the work of Anex and its 20 years' experience working with people directly affected by problematic drug use. Penington Institute's mission is to actively support the adoption of approaches to drug use that promote safety and human dignity. It does so through independent, non-partisan thought leadership, community education, training, research and policy formation.