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**VAADA Conference 2017**

The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wall or ceiling, with numerous small, dark, irregular spots and marks. Two hands are silhouetted against a bright, circular light source in the upper right. The hand on the left is reaching up with the index finger pointing towards the light. The hand on the right is also reaching up, with fingers spread. The overall mood is one of reaching for light or a solution.

***‘Illicit drug consumption rooms: a straight forward solution in a complex policy environment’***

# National Drug Strategy

## HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction works to reduce the adverse health, social and economic impacts of drug use on communities, families and individuals.

## SUPPLY REDUCTION

Supply-reduction strategies are directed toward enforcing the prohibition of illegal drugs and regulating and enforcing access to legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceuticals and other drugs.

## DEMAND REDUCTION

Demand reduction includes strategies to prevent the uptake of drug use, delay the first use of drugs, and reduce the misuse of alcohol, and the use of tobacco and other drugs.

# HARM MINIMISATION

*'...the path to success does not lie in giving in to the drug barons; it does not lie in giving in to the harm minimisation philosophy...'*

*'...heroin trial would send a very bad signal...it would say to the community it represents the first step...towards a far more liberal approach to drug activity and the drug trade...'*

*John Howard – Australian Prime Minister*

# **Total spending in the Australia's drug budget in 2009/10:**

**\$1.7 billion with two thirds of this spent on law enforcement.**

**Treatment received about a fifth, prevention one tenth.**

**Harm reduction just 2%.**

**This is reflected at the local level where City of Yarra (particularly North Richmond and Abbotsford) continues to experience the kinds of conditions that have led to the establishment of Supervised Injecting Facilities in other locations but has met with strong resistance at the political level.**

- The City of Yarra has a well-established history as a regional focal point for illicit drug trafficking and consumption, particularly around North Richmond, Victoria Street and the Housing Estates.
- Coroner's Court of Victoria, - an average annual rate of 23.7 overdoses between 2009-2015, the highest for any LGA in Victoria, with pharmaceuticals and illicit drugs constituting the bulk of overdoses in this period.
- Ambulance attendances rates per 100,000 persons highest rate for both heroin and benzodiazepines.

- There were 172 heroin related overdose deaths in Victoria in 2016.
- Of these, 19 people died in North Richmond and a further 15 died after apparently obtaining heroin in the City of Yarra.
- Despite the best efforts of current services, people are still dying.



North Richmond needle exchange distributes 70,000 syringes each month.

If all the people using this equipment had instead injected drugs in a supervised facility, none would have died from a drug overdose.













Ambulance



1BM 3WU  
.VIC - STAY ALERT STAY ALIVE

# Trial of a SIF

- Trialling a facility would help some of Melbourne's most vulnerable. It would introduce them to health and social services, including drug treatment, and will help some get their lives back on track.
- Today people inject drugs on streets, in car parks, doorways, lanes and toilets. Many are homeless, have severe physical and mental health problems, are very isolated, while some are suicidal and estranged from their families.
- Providing a Medically Supervised Injection Centre also helps residents and businesses in some of our more troubled neighbourhoods by improving amenity. It will also reduce pressure on police, ambulance services and emergency departments in hospitals.
- Leading health and medical organisations, Yarra Council and most residents in the proposed trial area support a trial. According to the most recent National Drug Strategy Household Survey, a majority of Australians favour this type of facility.

# Evidence from Consumption Rooms

- **no fatal overdoses**
- **reduced public injecting**
- **improved amenity**
- **cost effective – reduction in emergency service responses**
- **no increased crime**
- **provide a bridge to treatment**
- **reduce demands on emergency services**

***‘This is about human beings and we need to stop treating users like criminals and help them find a way to live in the best way possible.....I believe it would help users, who primarily feel so terrible about themselves, not be treated like lesser human beings than non-users.’***

*Moreland Hall client 2011*





**Thank You.**

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