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Residents back council push for injecting facility

'In a space you consider your own, you have to constantly consider your own behaviour'

THE establishment of a supervised injecting facility is a "long-term project", Yarra mayor Alison Clarke told a community drugs forum last week.

Despite the state government's rejection of the controversial idea, Cr Clarke said the council would continue to advocate for it.

"They've been pretty clear [about their position], but we'll keep asking them," she said.

Cr Clarke announced the council's intention to seek support from the Municipal Association of Victoria, and to continue to try to canvass support from the opposition, which does not support a safe injecting facility.

About 35 residents attended the Yarra Drug & Health Forum last Thursday night. All residents who spoke at the meeting supported an injecting room. Michelle, from Abbotsford, told the forum it was a daily stress for residents who see and hear drug users in their streets.

"In a space you consider your own, you have to constantly consider your own behaviour."

Michelle, who did not want her surname disclosed, said she supported an injecting room as it would decrease the dangers associated with drug use from local streets.

The forum was the first opportunity residents had to discuss the council's decision in May to support introducing an injecting room.

Father Dennis Webster, from St Stephen's Anglican Church in Richmond, congratulated the council on its stance. He said the issue was a law and order one, something that the government campaigned on strongly during November's election.

Parts of Yarra, especially Richmond, have become notorious for their drug trade. Earlier this year, police and the Richmond Asian Business Association asked the council to install CCTV along Victoria Street. The council deferred the idea, instead asking for more research on its effectiveness.

YDHF executive Greg Denham said model was being discussed, with the option of a mobile injecting room being considered.

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