

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) is urging Victorian MPs to show leadership and compassion by voting in favour of piloting a medically supervised injecting centre (MSIC) in North Richmond.

A parliamentary committee report released today outlines compelling evidence in support of an MSIC in North Richmond, which had 34 preventable deaths around the area last year alone.

“Failure to support a pilot medically supervised injecting centre in North Richmond would be bewildering given the indisputable evidence that it would save many lives, and the overwhelming expert support for a trial,” ADF CEO John Rogerson said.

An MSIC is urgently needed in North Richmond. Too many lives are being lost – the evidence is incontrovertible, overdose victims could still be alive today if they had access to a medically supervised injecting centre.

The MSIC in Sydney’s Kings Cross has been a huge success. Since opening in 2001, staff have successfully managed around 6,000 overdoses without any fatalities.

The parliamentary committee heard about the important role an MSIC in North Richmond would play in referring users to health and social services. Many users struggle with mental health issues and take drugs to deal with traumatic events like abuse, family problems or the loss of a loved one.

“A medically supervised injecting centre in North Richmond would play a key role in providing support for people going through a really hard time, kick-starting their recovery journey,” Mr Rogerson said.

The parliamentary committee was also given evidence that an MSIC would improve the safety of Richmond. Crime has not increased in the Kings Cross area since the establishment of the MSIC there. A medically supervised injecting centre in North Richmond would see fewer used syringes lying on the streets.

“The evidence shows that a medically supervised injecting centre would not just help people battling addictions, it would also improve the lives of local residents. It’s a win-win situation,” Mr Rogerson said.

“Failing to trial a medically supervised injecting centre in North Richmond ignores the wellbeing of drug users, the concerns of residents and the advice of many health experts.”

“Enough is enough! Richmond’s drug problem has been going on for decades. Our politicians need to show leadership and get on with fixing the problem. We’re merely asking for a trial of a medically supervised injecting centre. Why not try something that we know saves lives?”

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation has created an executive summary of evidence that was put to the Inquiry into the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pilot Medically

Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2017: <https://adf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Alcohol-and-Drug-Foundation-Exec-Summary.pdf>

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About the Alcohol and Drug Foundation: Celebrating nearly 60 years of service to the community, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation is one of Australia's leading bodies committed to preventing alcohol and other drug problems in communities around the nation. The Foundation reaches millions of Australians in local communities through sporting clubs, workplaces, healthcare settings and schools, offering educational information, drug and alcohol prevention programs and advocating for strong and healthy communities.