

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Organisation: Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre
Name: Dr Craig Rodgers
Position: Service Operations Manager
Date Received: 5/08/2015

SYDNEY MSIC



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3rd August 2015

Mr Alister Henskens SC, MP
Chair
Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels
Parliament House, Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Henskens,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels on behalf of the Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC).

Sydney MSIC is located in the centre of Kings Cross, where for many years there has long been an established sex industry. I have attached an MSIC fact sheet which briefly describes our objectives and operations, and more detailed information about us is available on our website at www.sydneymsic.com.

As a reasonable proportion of our clients identify as sex workers, as well as people who inject drugs (PWID), we feel that we are in a good position to comment about decriminalisation of sex work in NSW because of the contact we have with sex workers at MSIC and because of the role we see that decriminalisation has played in achieving current high levels of positive public health outcomes.

Sex work has been decriminalised in NSW since 1995 and NSW is world-renowned as having a best practice model with extremely low rates of STIs and HIV amongst sex workers, broad access to STI testing services as well as excellent access to health promotion information.

Removal of decriminalisation of sex work may result in decreased access to established health services by sex workers with potential increased rates of HIV and STIs in this group, which may then impact on HIV and STIs in PWID.

We would therefore currently support the current NSW system of decriminalisation of the sex work industry in NSW.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Dr Craig Rodgers.

Dr Craig Rodgers
B Med MPH FRACGP FACHAM
Acting Medical Director
Sydney MSIC



SYDNEY MEDICALLY SUPERVISED

INJECTING

CENTRE |



Objectives

The service works to:

- Optimise health by saving lives and reducing injury from drug use.
- Effectively intervene in the event of drug overdose.
- Provide access to health and social welfare services for a marginalised and difficult to reach population.
- Uphold and promote the dignity of all people who use the service and promote awareness and understanding in the community.
- Contribute to the amenity of the local community, for example by reducing injecting drug use and syringe disposal in public locations.
- Contribute to the body of public health knowledge around injecting drug use.

The facts are *



MSIC has supervised more than **930,000 injections** and **managed 5,925 overdoses** without a single death.



About 70% of the people registered had never accessed any local health service before.



There have been **ZERO fatalities** onsite since MSIC opened



More than **11,678** referrals have been made, connecting people to health and social welfare services.



A total of 15,054 people have registered to use the service.



Each year more than 2,000 individualised nursing and support services are provided onsite.

* As of May 2015

Client Comments

“Without this place I would be dead. Simply, the MSIC saves lives.”

“The staff and the centre have been fantastic to me and helped me through some really bad times.”

“It’s a great service provided to help both users and non-users by keeping injecting equipment and people overdosing off the streets.”

“MSIC has put a stable routine in my out of control life.”

“I think they are great people and have saved me and my friends lives. I have the highest regard for all the staff who have saved my life and helped me in every way that they can.”

“A totally indispensable service that has cleaned the Cross up, reduced street crime and the general sanitation of the neighbourhood streets.”

“Without this facility, I’m sure my overdose would have killed me as I wouldn’t have had access to first aid.”

“Staff are extremely professional and take great care, and give the proper care that overdosed patients need. The aftercare is exceptionally good – a lot of lives have been saved here at the MSIC.”

“Once I overdosed and if I was anywhere else, I would not still be here.”

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Fact Sheet Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre



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Edition

A practical, compassionate and effective response to drug use and addiction

The Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) recognises drug addiction is a chronic, relapsing condition. MSIC works to minimise the harm the associated with injecting until a person is ready and able to address their problem. MSIC does not support or promote drug use; rather it works to prevent injury and death and connect people with help.

The service is staffed by both registered nurses and counsellors who supervise clients while injecting. Staff offer immediate medical assistance when required and work with people over time to link them into treatment services.

Evidence published in national and international literature shows supervised injecting centres offer significant benefits to both individual clients and the community.

Supervised injecting centres all have common goals; to improve the health and social welfare of their clients, to reduce deaths from overdose, and to reduce injecting in public.

The first official supervised injecting centre opened in Switzerland in the 1980s. Today, there are approximately 100 services around the world and they continue to increase in number and geographic spread.

Sydney’s MSIC is currently the only supervised injecting facility in the Southern Hemisphere.

In 2001 MSIC opened its doors under trial conditions. Almost a decade later, the NSW Parliament passed legislation to lift the trial status. The service now operates as any other health service.



Peter Worland,
Executive Director,
UnitingCare
NSW.ACT

“Following a Drug Summit in 1999, the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre opened its doors in 2001. It was a first for Australia, today it is still the only service of its kind. The centre has saved countless lives, and has helped many onto the path of recovery and rehabilitation. It is a true expression of Christian service and I am proud of our involvement.”

