INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Organisation:Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting CentreName:Dr Craig RodgersPosition:Service Operations Manager

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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 <u>www.sydneymsic.com</u>.

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

Dr Craig Ródgers B Med MPH FRACGP FAChAM Acting Medical Director Sydney MSIC





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.



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



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



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



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



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

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."

Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre

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Fact Sheet Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre



UnitingCare

NSW.ACT

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."

The research shows*



Number of ambulance call-outs to Kings Cross reduced by 80% after MSIC opened.



70% of local businesses and 78% of local residents support MSIC.



MSIC had no negative impact on crime in the Kings Cross area.

* Key references available at www.sydneymisc.com

The evidence is clear

Sydney MSIC has been independently evaluated. Twelve evaluation reports produced by five organisations over fourteen years confirm MSIC is meeting its aims, has no adverse outcomes and is cost effective. There have also been over 110 peerreviewed publications in the medical literature showing the benefits of supervised injecting facilities.legislation to lift the trial status. The service now operates as any other health service.

"There is widespread support for supervised injecting facilities from the medical and scientific communities. The weight of evidence is clear."

Royal Australasian College of Physicians

Connection to health services and support

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Each time a client visits MSIC, they are treated with dignity and respect. Everything possible is done to help people in their fight against drug addiction. Unfortunately, there is no quick and simple solution.

Independently evaluated as

discarded needles and syringes

approximately halved in Kings

Provided over 62,000 medical

and support services onsite

Cross after MSIC opened.

The number of publicly

cost-effective.

Staff offer assistance to all clients, including coordinating referrals to connect clients with health and drug treatment services. These referrals may never have occurred without the MSIC.

MSIC has one of the highest rates of successful referral of any supervised injecting centre in the world, with 80% of frequently attending clients ultimately accepting some form of referral for addiction treatment, as well as for support for mental illness, acute medical issues and other social issues.



"Successful treatment and rehabilitation is only possible if someone is still alive. My son died in 1997, before the MSIC opened, and I will always wonder what may have been."

Tony Trimingham OAM, founder and CEO of Family Drug Support and author of 'Not my family, never my child'. His son Damien died of a heroin overdose aged 23.

Police support

MSIC does not supply any drugs or support drug dealing. Local Police are supportive of MSIC and the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force oversees the Licence for the service to operate.

Kings Cross has seen no impact on crime as a result of MSIC operations. This fact has been repeatedly confirmed by NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, most recently in 2010.



"MSIC has my full support. MSIC is a good example of policy based on pragmatism and wisdom. We must continue to think globally and act locally and we can teach others on the basis of our experience."

Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG

Community support

Regular random surveys of the Kings Cross community have found consistent and increasing support for MSIC among the majority of businesses and residents. Nationally, 55% of Australians surveyed actively support supervised injecting facilities, measured by National Drug Strategy Household Survey in 2013.



Adrian Bartels, local resident and business owner

"I remember the needles in the gutter and the constant ambulances before MSIC opened. MSIC helps to contain the injecting of drugs in Kings Cross in a medically supervised environment, where users are offered assistance in placement to addiction rehabilitation programs."



"In my back yard please! I am very grateful this facility will continue to operate just down the road from where I live. Long may it continue."

Margaret Harvie, local resident

Looking forward



"After 14 years of successfully connecting people to treatment and care we look forward to operating in Kings Cross as long as we're needed.

I am delighted there is such widespread public support for MSIC. I look forward to perhaps one day soon another supervised injecting centre opening in Australia. These centres value life, improve lives and save lives."

Dr Marianne Jauncey, Medical Director, MSIC

MSIC over the years

| \bigcirc | 1990 | Businesses on Darlinghurst Road renting rooms known as 'shooting galleries' for purpose of injecting illegal drugs |
|------------------------|------|---|
| | 1997 | Royal Commission into NSW Police Service recommends a supervised injecting centre in Kings Cross |
| \bigcirc | 1999 | Three people a day dying in Australia as a result of accidental opiate overdose NSW Drug Summit recommends a medically supervised injecting centre be trialled NSW Government invites Uniting Church of Australia to apply for licence to operate a supervised injecting centre |
| \bigcirc | 2001 | MSIC opens under trial conditions. It is the first supervised injecting centre in English speaking world |
| \ominus | 2002 | NSW Parliament votes to extend trial of MSIC |
| | 2003 | First independent evaluation of MSIC published by National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre shows positive results, including lives saved NSW Parliament votes again to extend MSIC trial |
| | 2006 | NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics finds no adverse impact on crime in Kings Cross resulting from operation of MSIC |
| \bigcirc | 2007 | National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research releases further independent evidence showing beneficial impact of MSIC and support from majority of local Kings Cross community NSW Parliament votes again to extend trial of MSIC |
| | 2010 | KPMG report released showing positive impacts of MSIC NSW Parliament finally votes to overturn trial status of MSIC, nearly a decade after opening |
| $\left \right\rangle$ | 2011 | MSIC marks ten years of successful operation |
| \bigcirc | 2015 | MSIC continues to successfully operate as an integral health service and part of the Kings Cross local community |
| | | No overdose deaths at MSIC since opening |