



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 2

MEDIA RELEASE

MORE TO BE DONE TO TREAT DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 August 2013

A Parliamentary Inquiry has found that more needs to be done if New South Wales is to better respond to the needs of individuals seeking drug and alcohol treatment.

The Inquiry by the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 was established last November to inquire into and report on the effectiveness of current alcohol and drug policies with respect to deterrence, treatment and rehabilitation.

Committee Chair, the Hon Marie Ficarra MLC, said, "It goes without saying that substance abuse is one of our most pressing social issues. The Committee believes that as a community we must continue to think about how we can respond to the scourge of drug and alcohol abuse more effectively."

"The Committee has made seven recommendations all aimed at improving the lives of those with substance abuse issues. These recommendations relate to the development of a national approach to alcohol, expanding the treatment options available to treat opioid dependence, increasing the evidence base concerning the use of naltrexone implants, and encouraging the use of education in preventing substance abuse issues from developing" Ms Ficarra stated.

Ms Ficarra continued: "We have also recommended that the scope of the criminal justice system to effect positive change for offenders with substance abuse issues be increased and that funding levels keep pace with the growing demand for drug and alcohol treatment services".

In regard to naltrexone implants, Ms Ficarra said "They show promise as part of a treatment program. Naltrexone implants have not yet been approved for use in Australia. However, I am keen for the evidence base regarding naltrexone implants to continue to develop. I am hopeful that in the future it will be practicable to conduct a randomised control trial comparing naltrexone implants with other licensed treatments used to treat opioid dependence, and thus expand the treatment options available".

A list of the Committee's recommendations is attached. The report is on the Committee's website: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc2. Hard copies are available on request.

-ENDS-

For further information please contact Committee Chair Hon Marie Ficarra MLC, on 9230 2894