

**Submission
No 9**

INQUIRY INTO DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT

Organisation: The Drug Advisory Council of Australia Inc

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Drug Advisory Council of Australia Inc.

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The Secretary,
General Purpose Standing Committee No 2
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
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REVIEW OF DRUG POLICY SUBMISSION

Thank you for your invitation to make a submission to your enquiry on the effectiveness of current drug rehabilitation policies.

This submission is aimed at illicit drugs however the rehabilitation programs can equally be used for abuse of alcohol, prescription medications and volatile substances.

We offer to your committee the resources of our Council and recommend our web site at www.daca.org.au

KEY PRINCIPLES

Our Council recommends that the key principles of illicit drug policy should be-

- That the integration of narcotic drugs into society is not accepted and that the society be as drug free as is possible. This takes a positive view of humanity and that the onslaught of illicit drugs can be restrained and that drug users can be rehabilitated.
- That New South Wales is bound by United Nations conventions on illicit drugs that mandate it to reduce the demand for illicit drugs.
- That New South Wales is bound by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which states at article 33 that children must be protected from the illicit use of narcotic drugs.
- That illicit drug use is illegal because the scientifically proven harms to humans from the use of these substances.
- That illicit drug use has substantial impacts on all levels of New South Wales society and therefore that drug use be not considered a health issue but all costs be included in any assessment of the impacts of illicit drug use.
- That your committee recommend that it be drug policy that New South Wales adopts world's best practice in prevention and rehabilitation. That is, that the most effective policies that reduce the number of illicit drug users and the extent to which illicit drugs are used.

SWEDEN

We strongly recommend that your committee visits Sweden to investigate the drug rehabilitation system that they have used to successfully reduce drug use in their country. In order to precipitate a visit to Sweden we recommend that your committee thoroughly investigates the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime report "*Sweden's Successful Drug Policy: A review of the Evidence*" issued in September 2006 which is available at www.unodc.org

This review studied the drug policies of most of the countries in Europe and concluded that the Swedish policy is the most effective. There has been no change in the position.

USA

In fact the drug agency of world's most powerful president, Barack Obama, has signed a 5 nation joint statement in Stockholm Sweden in May 2012 in support of a humane and balanced drug policy. The position of the Office of National Drug Control Policy agency is supportive of the Swedish programs and is available at www.whitehouse.gov.

We recommend to your committee that it discusses with the Australian Crime Commission the effect of organized crime on drug distribution in New South Wales in order to evaluate the source and impact of the supply of illicit drugs.

DRUG REHABILITATION

With regard to specific term of reference we advise-

We support the thrust of The Hon Fred Nile's bill to adopt efficient and effective drug rehabilitation based on the Swedish model of mandatory detoxification followed by rehabilitation to get users free of drug use.

Your committee should recommend-

- That there be an annual survey of children of comparable age to those in Sweden in order to compare the drug use rate of school children in both countries and this survey should be tabled in both houses of Parliament to inform the MP's of the comparison.
- That funding of current drug maintenance programs be diverted into long term rehabilitation and that multiple programs be funded based on effectiveness in rehabilitating users.
- That drug rehabilitation programs be expanded in order for the known illicit drug using population to be reduced in a timely program.
- That in order to determine the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programs that all programs in New South Wales providing drug rehabilitation be audited annually in order to determine their effectiveness and that these audits be available to all MP's in order for them to make informed decisions.
- That all identified illicit drug users from any source be diverted into programs designed to educate them on the effects of illicit drugs and to rehabilitate them to cease using these drugs.
- That the New South Wales Police provide your committee with the road trauma statistics of identified illicit drug drivers particularly illicit drug drivers that cause deaths and trauma.
- That public hospital emergency services and ambulance services would be spared considerable costs by diverting identified illicit drug users into rehabilitation so as to reduce the occasions of harm reoccurrence from continuing drug use.

- That consistent public opinion survey's carried out in Australia indicate clearly that the public wants drug rehabilitation to be a priority.
- That rehabilitation programs offered to New South Wales illicit drug users be predicated on abstinence of use.
- That successful drug rehabilitation be defined as total abstinence of use for a period of 5 years after rehabilitation has ceased.
- That support programs for former illicit drug users be supported.
- That the government set clearly identified targets and timetable for the reduction of illicit drug users aimed at matching world's best practice.
- That a Minister which is not the Minister for Health be responsible for the illicit drug use reduction targets.
- That prisoners with known illicit drug usage be provided with drug rehabilitation during imprisonment and that the rehabilitation continue after release in order to complete the rehabilitation program.
- That current medical research from health harms from the use of each illicit drug be publicized in particular the link of modern cannabis with psychosis and schizophrenia.
- That the rehabilitation of illicit drug users policy be reviewed after 4 years in order to review the effectiveness of the above recommendations.

Our Council would be happy to provide your committee with any further information that you require.

Yours Sincerely,

David Perrin.
Executive Officer