



Date: July 5<sup>th</sup> 2016

## Issue: 'ICE Room – Bad Policy Narrative that promotes community endorsement of illicit drug use'

*["Permissibility, availability and accessibility - all increase consumption." Dalgarno Institute.]*

Yet another, ill-conceived proposal for a government sanctioned illicit drug taking facility, is not only bad policy interpretation and management, but its counter-intuitive to the foundational keys of the National Drug Strategy. Besides all that, the overwhelming vast majority of illicit drug users who are trying to exit drug use or have done so find the idea utterly absurd.

When it comes to already existing illicit drug use enabling facilities in play i.e. Kings Cross Injecting Centre (MSIC), Drug Free Australia, has pointed to the lack of success by this facility in reducing overdose deaths in the Kings Cross area, *"Tracking of overdose deaths in the Kings Cross area from 5 years before the injecting room opened compared with the 9 years after the injecting room was opened showed no change whatsoever in the percentage of deaths in the area as compared to the rest of NSW. The KPMG review showed that Kings Cross had 12% of NSW opiate deaths before the commencement of the MSIC, and in the 9 years after it remained at 12%, such has been its failure to make any difference."*

Evidence given to the NSW Parliament indicates that overdoses in the Kings Cross injecting room are 32 times higher than the overdose histories of those entering the injecting room, indicating that clients are experimenting with higher doses of opiates and cocktails of drugs knowing that if they should overdose in their experimentation, someone will bring them around. NSW Hansard records testimony from ex-clients of the injecting room who were rehabilitating from drugs that experimentation with higher doses of drugs is the reason for the inordinately high overdose rate in the room. There is not evidence to suggest an identical experiment with an different psychotropic toxin will produce any better results.

Spokes-person for The Dalgarno Institute, Mr Shane Varcoe said, *"Any enterprise that inadvertently enables, empowers or equips ongoing illicit drug use has already breached best health care practice. Harm Reduction can never be about the support of on-going, health diminishing substance use. Caring, responsible and civic minded clinicians and policy makers will always be focused on movement toward exit from, and cessation of drug use. Mechanisms that enable any government agency to send a message to the community that we are not only supporting, but enabling tax payer funded illicit drug use, not only breaches care for the illegal drug user, but breaches international conventions. It also demonstrates a lack of concern for the wider majority of the non-drug using community."*

It's time caring, tax payer funded, drug policy practice was used to *empower, equip and enable drug users to exit drug use*. Funds would be better used in quality recovery programs and more so in the very much neglected Demand Reduction arena to protect families, communities and the young from the scourge of illicit drugs.

The Dalgarno Institute recommends:

- Both legislation and education as key foundations of culture shift away from permissive drug use ideologies.
- Increase focus and investment in Demand Reduction and Recovery policies and programs is imperative.

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***"Resilient communities don't use drugs - Resilient families don't want drugs!"***

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