Supervised injecting centre is welcome first step to reduce drug related harm in Victoria

cohealth, provider of community health and support services in Melbourne’s northern and western suburbs, has welcomed the Victorian Government’s decision to trial a medically supervised injecting centre in Richmond, as a critical first step in reducing drug related harms.

“We have evidence from more than 100 medically supervised injecting centres across the world which shows that not only have thousands of lives been saved, but that engagement with these kinds of services provides an opportunity for people using drugs to access medical help, ongoing support, and referral to counselling and treatment,” said cohealth Chief Executive, Lyn Morgain.

cohealth has consistently advocated for the introduction of medically supervised injecting centres at key drug use hotspots around Victoria as a human rights and health issue. In September cohealth joined with 43 leading health, community, specialist and AOD organisations and prominent individuals who signed a statement supporting such a trial in Richmond.

“These services are vital for ensuring that people who use drugs have dignity, safety and improved health, and can serve as an essential bridge to other health and support services,” said Ms Morgain.

There have been 34 deaths from drug overdose in the City of Yarra local government region in 2017 and more than 900 deaths in Victoria in the past two years.

“These deaths were preventable,” Ms Morgain said. “We have no doubt that the proposed trial will serve to confirm the effectiveness of supervised injecting facilities in reducing the harmful impacts of drug use both on the user and on the community, and we look forward to supporting the implementation of the trial.”

“It is our hope that this trial will ultimately lead to the establishment of other supervised injecting facilities at other key hotspots around the State,” said Ms Morgain.

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About cohealth

cohhealth, a not-for-profit health organisation, provides vital local health and support services including medical, dental, allied health, mental health, drug and alcohol, aged care and counselling, and many specialist health services across Melbourne’s CBD, northern and western suburbs, including some of Victoria’s most disadvantaged and fastest growing.

cohhealth responds to people’s needs by delivering a wide range of low cost, high-quality, accessible health care and support services. cohealth promotes health and wellbeing, works to prevent ill-health and better manage health conditions, and is a keen advocate for improved access to health care for all.

For more information about cohealth go to cohealth.org.au

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