

### Safe injecting room announcement will save more Victorian lives

*Quotes attributable to Mr John Ryan, CEO of Penington Institute and member of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room Independent Review Panel:*

**Penington Institute** congratulates the Victorian Government for showing it is serious about saving lives by announcing a second medically supervised injecting room in Melbourne's CBD and continuing the trial of the North Richmond injecting room.

As the original two-year trial of the North Richmond Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) nears its end, "a great deal has been learned about how to provide a responsive and compassionate service."

The Coroners Court of Victoria recommended a MSIR trial. Many doctors, nurses and local community members were calling for an MSIR, because inaction was inevitably going to lead to more trauma and deaths.

"It is clear an extension of the trial was an appropriate outcome to the overdose crisis that has enveloped Richmond and resulted in a record number of overdose deaths in Australia."

"At the same time, announcing a second injecting room in the Melbourne CBD is the right and sensible way to continue reducing overdoses while also responding to community needs and concerns."

Crucially, by also announcing money for community upgrades in Richmond, "this announcement recognises that safe injecting rooms alone are not enough to end our overdose and drug crisis. It is only by investing in communities that we will succeed in saving Victorian lives."

Since first opening, the North Richmond injecting room has safely managed more than 119,000 client visits and safely managed 3,200 overdoses.

"There's no silver bullet to solving the overdose crisis. But the closest thing we have is joining up different evidence-based responses: safe injecting rooms, effective community policing, and enough funding for our Needle and Syringe Programs and drug treatment services. Today's announcement is a big step toward that."

"Announcing a second safe injecting room will help health professionals care for more vulnerable Victorians while helping to improve community safety and amenity in Richmond."

"Too many Victorians are dying alone and afraid. They're dying in the city and in the country. And they're dying from different types of drugs."

"But although overdose does not discriminate, there was a clear need to respond to a crisis that has been enveloping the Richmond area. The Melbourne and Richmond postcodes have some of the highest rates of overdose in Victoria."

**John Ryan is available for media relating to this announcement and the work of Penington Institute.**

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