Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) position statement – 2003

The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD), having considered the 18 month evaluation of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) in Sydney, makes the following observations:

- Kings Cross presents a unique set of community circumstances and the particular MSIC model used may be inappropriate for other locations;

- whilst the evaluation itself is a careful analysis of the work and outcomes of the MSIC, it is recognised that the estimates of lives saved and reduction of harms from the MSIC evaluation are difficult to quantify, and that there are many issues involving the work and outcomes of MSIC that warrant further investigation; and

- initiatives that save lives, reduce the risk of HIV, other blood borne infections and diseases, and lead to improvements in community safety and well being, are deserving of support.

Given the limitations and difficulties in interpreting the MSIC evaluation results, and noting the decision of the NSW Government to continue to operate the MSIC as a trial, the ANCD will be referring the MSIC report to a specialist committee for further review.

It is hoped that further evaluation will focus on the current MSIC model’s capacity and appropriateness to engage with and potentially refer clients to other health and welfare services, including drug treatment agencies.

The ANCD also acknowledged that some members do not support injecting centres because of a number of significant concerns, including a view that such centres give a perception to the community that drug use is condoned or accepted, and that there are cheaper and more effective ways to engage those clients targeted by the MSIC.

Finally, the ANCD acknowledged the independent nature of the evaluation and commended both the evaluation team and the staff of the MSIC for their work in this difficult area.

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The ANCD is the principal advisory body to Government on drug and alcohol issues.

For further information, please contact:

Major Brian Watters (Chairman)
0400 780 509

Mr Gino Vumbaca (Executive Officer)
0408 244 552 or 02 6279 1650