

Govt should not start up irrational needle exchange program

ems completely irrational that a nment responsible for the pun- ent and rehabilitation of prisoners d even contemplate a proposal to risoners illegal drugs, or allow to inject themselves whenever can get them.

claims expressed by Greens' Caroline Le Couteur ("Injecting or jail put to Govt", July 29, p1) A needle and syringe program run the health centre will not only e a decrease in blood-borne viru- amongst detainees but is also likely d to a decrease in drug use ... " outrageous that one wonders n intelligent person could express with absolutely no evidence and ess reason to support them.

hopes that the Chief Minister, s quoted as welcoming public ck, will receive plenty, so that oposal to tolerate illegal drugs in

prison will become impossible to implement.

At the moment we seem to be dependent on the opposition from prison officers. What do the rest of us think?

David O'Sullivan, Bruce

I assume that if the ACT Government is going to support an illicit drug program in our jail then it will also return the disqualified or suspended drivers' licences to repeat drink-drive offenders.

Arguably they are no less a victim of their substance abuse (albeit legal drugs) than those in jail.

But if the real concerns are related to public health, I would suggest there are far more deserving public health issues that could be addressed in the ACT that affect the majority of its law-abiding citizens ahead of those who have

shown little regard for their fellow citizens, hence their current predicament!

G. Whitfield, Macgregor

There is a saying that you never ask a question if you don't already know the answer; similarly you never engage a consultant if you have not briefed him on his task (that is, the answer).

Thus the needle and syringe exchange program in the Canberra jail - or, should I say, the proposed injecting room recommendation.

It is against the law to administer illicit drugs in the community, so why should it be ignored, encouraged and presumably legal in jail?

There is no difference in needle-sharing inside or outside jail; the risks are the same and everyone knows what they are. I have not heard of any other jurisdictions that are considering

shooting rooms in jails. The only thing Michael Moore seems not to have recommended is that the Government supply the drugs to further reduce the risks.

Steven Hurren, Macquarie

Outsourcing polities

The editorial of July 30 (p22) mentioned the "apparently unstoppable process" of the "convergence of power in an increasingly unaccountable executive".

Terry Moran, lately of Prime Minister and Cabinet, is represented as voicing this concern when he delivered the annual John Paterson Oration.

That's a turnaround. Moran was previously dedicated to the centralisation of power.

The core concept in his 2010 blueprint is the 2004 whole of government

report. The editorial admits that such concerns "are not novel". It's a pity they were not aired when Allan Hawke's plan for the ACT was released in February. Its title, *Governing the City State*, is reminiscent of Machiavelli and the Medicis.

The plan effectively outsources politicians. The Chief Minister becomes the only elected representative with even nominal power to give directions to the public service. Departments become "directorates" with a single chief executive answering to her.

It is equally a pity that these concerns were not aired when the newly elected Barry O'Farrell implemented the Hawke blueprint in NSW. This model for the removal of power from Parliament is an enticing prospect for down-trodden mandarins and megalomaniacal parliamentary leaders.

Gary J. Wilson, MacGregor

OUR SAY

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