Govt should not start up irrational needle exchange program

It is completely irrational that a government responsible for the punishment and rehabilitation of prisoners even contemplate a proposal to provide needles and syringes to prisoners illegally. Any government that has 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 is not required if it is not needed.

Steven Hurcen, Macquarie

Outsourcing pollies

The editorial of July 30 (p23) 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 Gandel Oration.

That's a turnaround. Moran was previously dedicated to 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 Medici.

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 downgraded mandarins and megolomaniacal parliamentary leaders.

Gary J. Wilson, MacGregor

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