

How do BYO drugs fit with punishment or reform?

I am astounded by the needle program being proposed for the prison. So many issues are apparent.

Prisoners are there to be punished or reformed, depending on your view. Perpetuating their drug addiction is doing neither. The process makes the prison and/or the Government complicit in the purchase and use of illegal drugs, and if a prisoner injects a bad batch or overdoses and dies I expect the duty of care would have been breached, with all the consequences that come with that.

Those who dismiss the guards' concerns over prisoner access to a plentiful needle supply and the inherent danger it presents are not those having to deal with the problem and risk their lives or health.

To most of the public, the Maconochie Centre already has the air of a holiday camp rather than a prison and adding a BYO drug program just makes

it worse. What's next, booze and strippers?

Jevon Kinder, Murrumbateman, NSW

S. W. Davey, Torrens

faster, staying longer, not indulging in the various activities already mentioned, it is increasingly easy to work by mobile computer or phone, so the argument, already weak, is becoming steadily weaker. So I'm afraid I see your argument as just another example of the irrelevant but politically correct mud-slinging that is so common these days. Any stick will do to beat a perceived public enemy, especially if surrounded by an angry crowd. It is simple bullying of a despised minority.

Your editorial on the increasing intolerance of smoking in the workplace for errands ranging from a doctor's appointment to shopping. Furthermore, ironically, the further smokers have to go to lag, the longer it takes. Criticising someone for the time it takes them to jump through hoops that you have set up, and owe as much to form as to substance, is taking discouragement to a vindictive level. Certain employers, at least, have it in their power to protect the workplace and minimise time-wasting by providing a suitable area close at hand. If smoking is less costly than fitting out one or two rooms in an office block then, frankly, it is not that significant. But my real objection to this time-wasting complaint is that it is always framed in the populist but specious context of the time spent outside the office. If it was couched in terms of large numbers of smokers not being able to complete their duties, it would be a lot more convincing. Quite apart from the various ways of making up time spent lagging (working

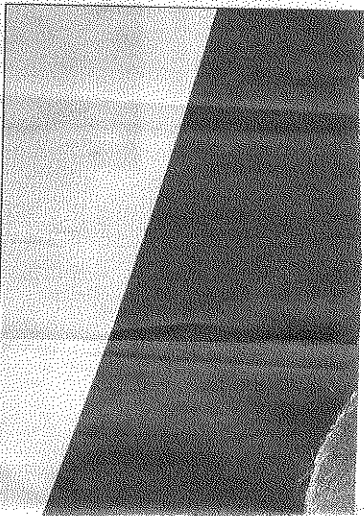
phone calls, dawdling and nipping out for errands ranging from a doctor's appointment to shopping. Furthermore, ironically, the further smokers have to go to lag, the longer it takes. Criticising someone for the time it takes them to jump through hoops that you have set up, and owe as much to form as to substance, is taking discouragement to a vindictive level. Certain employers, at least, have it in their power to protect the workplace and minimise time-wasting by providing a suitable area close at hand. If smoking is less costly than fitting out one or two rooms in an office block then, frankly, it is not that significant. But my real objection to this time-wasting complaint is that it is always framed in the populist but specious context of the time spent outside the office. If it was couched in terms of large numbers of smokers not being able to complete their duties, it would be a lot more convincing. Quite apart from the various ways of making up time spent lagging (working matches, gasbagging, making personal

YOUR SAY

Keep your letter to 250 words or less. References to Canberra Times. Email: letters.editor@canberratimes.com.au. Send from the mess

Easy to throw mud at smokers, but it is just a bullying action

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Drugs in prison

or 3/10/11

Jevon Kinder (Letters, August 1) appears to have little understanding about duty of care in the ACT prison or about the efforts to prevent drugs entering prison.

A duty of care in the Alexander Maconochie Centre is an obligation requiring reasonable care by the Government and by prison officers while performing any acts that could foreseeably cause harm to others.

Overlaying this is the requirement for the AMC to be human-rights compliant.

Prisoners are not in the AMC to be punished! The Government has always made it crystal clear that prisoners in the AMC are there as punishment not for punishment.

It seems Kinder wants prisoners to be punished continually.

How can a prisoner, who has been

subject to continual punishment during incarceration be a better person in the community on his or her release?

Every effort (including sniffer dogs) is used to prevent drugs from entering the prison - without a 100 per cent success rate.

Drugs do enter the prison and unclean needles are shared, thus increasing the spread of blood borne viruses both in the prison and, on release of the prisoner, into the community.

Thus it would be a failure of duty of care if the Government did nothing further about this known public health issue.

This duty of care also extends to prison officers.

Needle stick injuries from hidden and contaminated syringes can occur, especially when officers search cells.

This issue is addressed and fully satisfied by the first two recommendations in the Moore report, which call for containment of syringes to the health facility.

ACT human rights requires health services within the prison to be equivalent to those in the general community.

Given the protection it affords and the financial savings to the community, the community-based needle and syringe program operates very effectively in reducing the spread of blood borne viruses, despite the fact that most are used to inject illegal drugs.

The Government should move quickly in the best interest of the community, the prison officers and the prisoners and implement the Moore recommendations.

B. McConnell, Higgins

space in North Canberra. Minister for Economic Development Andrew Barr said the question of additional full-line supermarkets for the city was a commercial one that would best be addressed by supermarket operators and property owners.

He said the Government supermarket policy would not prevent either Woolworths or Coles from establishing in the city, where Supabarn is the only full-line supermarket.

Any proposal would be considered on its merits.

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ves around

as a Ms Fryar said many of the young people who committed serious offences came from dysfunctional families and had been involved with care and protection services.

"To have an adult in authority showing an interest in how they are going from week-to-week or fortnight-to-fofortnight has some impact on their thinking and behaviour," she said.

If a young person fails to complete their rehab program they will be sentenced in the Children's Court as normal but cannot be given heavier sentences for dropping out of the program.

with Louis Andrews

ab that alcohol workers, young men and children's family in-attend- meetings, lawyers, staff id create magis- nent was program.