

Media Release

RIGOROUS RESEARCH REQUIRED IN INJECTING ROOM DEBATE

Commenting on today's report from the State Government's Drug Policy Expert Committee, Dr Rob Moodie, CEO of VicHealth called for rigorous research to guide further policy decisions.

"The most important issue about this trial is that research and evaluation are used to ensure the needs and problems facing communities and population groups are taken into account. It is vital that both the potential benefits as well as community concerns are rigorously evaluated," said Dr. Moodie.

"Preliminary research findings from a survey examining community attitudes on the issue of safe injecting rooms are a starting point. Survey results show strong support for a injection room trial in five local government areas.

"What is noteworthy is that 64.3% of the 1,500 people surveyed expressed they were in favour of the proposed injection room trial, if a suitable location can be identified in their area.

"In fact, in every municipality surveyed, the number of people expressing their support for the trial was higher than those opposed to having an injecting facility in their area."

The highest level of support came from those interviewed in the City of Yarra, where Smith Street and Victoria Street, are identified as high use areas. In this area, 80.6% supported the trial. In the City of Port Phillip a strong 77.6% of the respondents expressed their support.

"It is interesting that even in the City of Dandenong, where the level of support was the lowest, more people approved of the trial of injecting facilities than disapproved."

VicHealth commissioned The Wallis Group to conduct *The Survey of Community Attitudes to Safe Injecting Rooms*, in early April. A total of 1,500 people randomly selected for interviews in five local government areas including the Cities of Melbourne, Port Phillip, Yarra, and Greater Dandenong, Maribyrnong. Interviews were conducted between 5pm and 9pm on weekdays and 10am and 6pm on weekends. The sample frame used ensured respondents from various postcodes within the five areas were included in the research. All data was weighted to represent the total population in each of the five local government areas. Final results of the survey will be available within the next couple weeks.

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