



## MEDIA RELEASE

# New Data Further Supports Calls for a Second Injecting Room in Melbourne

13 March 2024

New wastewater analysis data released yesterday again highlights the need for greater investment in evidence-based harm reduction approaches to respond to the increasing levels of illicit drug use in Australia.

In response to the [Australian Crime Intelligence Commission \(ACIC\)'s recent National Waster Water Drug Monitoring Program 2024 Report](#), Family Drug Support (FDS), Keep Our City Alive (KOCA) and Harm Reduction Australia (HRA) call on the Premier, the Hon. Jacinta Allan to follow through the Victorian Governments' 2020 commitment to establish an overdose prevention service in the CBD before further lives are lost.

[The Age](#) claims the City of Melbourne has maintained its title of "Australia's Heroin Capital" by the ACIC Report confirming that almost half of the countries annual heroin use takes place in this jurisdiction: "Of the estimated 999 kilograms of heroin consumed nationally [...], almost half – 456 kilograms – was used by Victorians."

The members of KOCA, HRA and FDS include family members who have lost loved ones, CBD residents and business owners, drug policy experts, people with lived experience of drug use and health practitioners.

FDS is a national agency which advocates for more education and support for families affected by drug dependence and compassionate drug policy change.

Founder and CEO, Tony Trimmingham OAM, who established FDS after the heroin death of his son Damien 27 years ago, says that families are often missing from the national drug policy debate and that the vast majority of families affected by drug use support overdose prevention services.

[FDS's "Voices to be Heard" Survey](#) found that 83.1% of families affected by someone else's drug and alcohol use supported overdose prevention services.

*"The ACIC Report shows that drug use continues to be an issue in the community. It is a constant particularly when it comes to heroin use in major cities such as Melbourne's CBD. My son lost his life after consuming heroin in a lane way in Sydney's Kings Cross and this is still happening today."*

*FDS will continue to support families who are commonly the number one protective factor for anyone with a drug dependency. People who access FDS carry out life-saving work*

*including implementing default harm reduction programs in their own homes. This is in spite of the lack of appropriate service provision – such as overdose prevention centres – currently available to users.”*

KOCA spokesperson and CBD resident, Jill Mellon-Robertson, says that overdose deaths are preventable, and governments should follow expert advice and evidence.

*“I see the devastating impact of drug use every day in laneways near my home. Medical and health professionals are telling us the solution, so why aren’t we listening? If we want to move drug use off the streets and help people, an overdose prevention service is the way forward,” says Jill.*

*“Drug use is happening in the community whether we like it or not. A supervised injecting service in the CBD would move drug use off the streets and connect people with health services and pathways to recovery,” she said.*

HRA, Executive Director, Dr Annie Madden AO says: *“The global evidence clear, safe injecting facilities save lives and connect people with essential health services.”*

*“There has never been a single overdose death in an Australian safe injecting facility or in any of the many drug consumption sites globally. Preventable heroin-related overdose deaths, however, continue to occur on the streets of Melbourne’s CBD largely due to the absence of such a service. We ask, what is the Victorian Government waiting for?” Dr Madden concluded.*

The 2020 Hamilton Review found that a single Medically Supervised Injecting Room in North Richmond cannot effectively address the needs of a community as large as Melbourne and recommended that the Victorian Government trial an overdose prevention centre in the CBD.

The latest Coroner’s Court of Victoria data showed that 24 people died from heroin overdose in the City of Melbourne in a 12-month period, the highest number of any Victorian Local Government Area (LGA).

Advocates argue that an overdose prevention service in the CBD would reduce public overdoses, decrease syringe litter and connect people to health workers.

More info: [keepourcityalive.com](https://keepourcityalive.com) / [fds.org.au](https://fds.org.au) / [harmreductionaustralia.org.au](https://harmreductionaustralia.org.au)

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