

12<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Australian Sex Party  
Inquiry: Pilot Medically Supervised Injecting Centre Bill 2017  
Parliament House, Spring St  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

In response to the Committees letter of invitation, I am writing to provide a submission for the inquiry into the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pilot Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2017.

My name is Cherie Short and I come to this issue as a grieving Mother. My beautiful Son [REDACTED], tragically lost his life to an accidental heroin overdose in August 2015, aged only 26 years.

Due to significant childhood trauma, [REDACTED] battled addiction for eight years of his life. The impact of losing [REDACTED] has been devastating, to myself, his family and his friends. Our loss is inconsolable.

Like most young people, [REDACTED] had plans for his future, getting engaged to his partner, having children, etc. His death is a senseless loss of a young life, of his and our future and of hopes and dreams.

[REDACTED] had been in recovery for a period of twelve months at the time of his death. He was studying to become an Alcohol and Other Drugs worker and was determined to make a difference. We both agreed that the methods (which are still current) for dealing with drug users weren't working. As a user of the system for many years, it was evident the system had flaws and could not fully support [REDACTED] or our family. In these turbulent times, it would have been a relief as a parent to know that [REDACTED] had access to a safe injecting facility, as throughout this period, I constantly lived in the ultimate fear of losing him to an accidental overdose.

I strongly believe [REDACTED]'s death could have been prevented, had he accessed a Supervised Injecting Centre. MSIC's had been a topic [REDACTED] had previously discussed and one he was passionate about. I have no doubt that if he had an option to either risk injecting alone; or being able to do so within a safe environment, he would have chosen the latter. [REDACTED] wanted life, he did not want to die.

I support the Coroner's recommendation to set up a trial of a supervised injecting facility in North Richmond, as we can help addicts whilst they are alive, not dead. As well as an MSIC being able to offer a safe environment, lifesaving equipment and medications are available to reverse a fatal overdose, such as [REDACTED]'s. From experience with an addict, I know that support and human contact can offer a pathway to treatment and recovery. Most importantly, if an MSIC helps another family from losing a child, then why should there be question. There is overwhelming evidence that safe injecting facilities save lives, so I beg you to please do so.

Yours Sincerely,

Cherie Short