04 May 2017

Patrick O’Brien
Secretary, Legal and Social Issues Committee
Parliament of Victoria
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr O’Brien,

Re: Legal and Social Issues Committee – Inquiry into Medically Supervised Injecting Centre

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is the largest representative body of general practitioners (GPs) in urban, regional and rural Australia. We represent over 35,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice.

The RACGP supports holistic, continuing comprehensive patient centered care. Injecting drug use has many negative physical, psychological and social effects that extend beyond the user to their family and friends and the community as a whole.

As stated in Coroner Hawkins’ Findings – Inquest into the Death of Ms A, delivered on 20 February 2017, in 2015 there were 172 fatal heroin overdose deaths in Victoria, with 20 of these occurring in the City of Yarra. Over the past 7 years, the City of Yarra has consistently been the local government area with the highest frequency and rate of heroin overdose deaths in Victoria, with these fatal overdoses taking place in publically accessible locations, such as car parks, toilet blocks, restaurants, alleys and other publically accessible locations, as well as private residences.

A MSIC was opened in Kings Cross in 2001 and based from data that has been collected from this center from May 2001 to December 2013, there was 861,848 supervised injections, 4937 overdoses with zero deaths1. Findings from a NSW Health report in 2010 show that the Sydney MSIC provides a safe environment and that the center reduces the impact of overdose related events other health impacts while also providing access to drug treatment options. In addition, the same report indicates from an evaluation of the Sydney MSIC data sources there was a decrease in the total number of discarded needle and syringes collected in the vicinity of the center and reduced sightings of public injecting.1

Based on the Coroner Hawkins’ findings and recommendations and the evidence from the Sydney MSIC the RACGP supports the establishment of a pilot of a MSIC in North Richmond. This will give vulnerable drug users access to a clean, safe injecting facility that in addition will provide accessible health care services and treatment options that they may have not had the opportunity to access in the past.
If you require any further information or have any questions in relation to this submission, please contact Emma Stonham, Manager RACGP Specific Interests or email

Yours sincerely

Dr Cameron Loy
Chair, RACGP Victoria

Dr Hester Wilson
Chair, RACGP Specific Interests Addiction Medicine Network

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1 Uniting Care NSW.ACT, 2014. Cross Currents: The story behind Australia’s first and only Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, p29