

**Christianne Andonovski**

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**From:** Doug Steley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 February 2017 1:26 PM  
**To:** LRRCS  
**Subject:** submission doug steley

I tried to send this submission online but it did not seem to go

this is my backup copy

Cheers Doug Steley

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I would like to make this submission as a private citizen who has had some secondary contact with addicts and drug rehabilitation over many years now. In the early 1970s my brother worked in drug rehabilitation and treatment centers, this brought me into contact with other professionals working in the area, they were unanimous that the drug problem could not be fought using the criminal justice system and that the "War On Drugs" approach was making the problem worse rather than better.

From my own casual observation this was apparent to me, police were cracking down on marijuana smokers and growers so when supply dried up people were turning to cheaper and harder drugs like Heroin that was in cheap and easy supply, the problems became worse.

I have seen this same cycle over many years finally seeing it more recently in the massive ice issues we have today.

When I met my wife she was a nurse in a drug rehab center and I was in the Air Force again with her experience she and her colleagues were saying the same things in the 1980s that I had seen and heard in the 1970s the tough on drugs was not working and we needed a sane medical approach to the problems.

As an example of this I worked for a RAAF sergeant who was a highly skilled and very good NCO, he had a wife and 3 children who were happy and healthy, he also had a heroin addiction that he had developed serving in remote south east asia doing work for the government.

He had lived with the hill tribes and had joined their culture to fit in.

He would be mailed a kilo of Heroin once a year to keep him from going into withdrawals of course seeking treatment would mean the end of his career and discharge from a job he was really good at.

One year the package was detected, he was sent to jail, he lost his job, his family, his superannuation, he lost everything because he was not allowed to seek help.

In the 1990s my wife worked with the police and again we met many officers who described their utter frustration of dealing over and over with exactly the same problem of drug abuse and damage to people for no good reason other than they had a medical substance abuse issue that needed treating not punishing. Families suffered along with those addicted.

Now in 2016 I have a young friend who has been crippled for life, he was working and married with 2 daughters, he was targeted by some ice users who accused him of a crime he did not commit, the ice users came to his home and bashed him senseless in a vicious attack, he now has permanent brain damage and cannot recognise his children or wife and is in need of permanent care.

This will cost millions of dollars over his lifetime. Both in lost productivity from him but also welfare for his wife and family + medical care for him.

We desperately need to stop doing exactly the same things that we know do not work and that have never worked anywhere in the world and start looking for alternatives that actually have shown results.

The Portugal "Experiment" seems to be one of the most effective, the legalization of cannabis in America seems to be showing very promising results there have been doctors and professionals calling for change for decades now, we have tried the war on drugs / tough on drugs approach for decades, it has not worked instead it has seen the problem become worse.

On a personal note as a service veteran who suffers quite severe PTSD from my service to Australia I am prohibited from being prescribed drugs that show great promise in improving my condition ( Cannabis and MDMA ) because some people choose to use them recreationally and they are totally banned and illegal.

This is discriminatory as well as senseless.

What I would like to see is a meeting of people who have alternative plans other than making tougher laws to discuss ideas and develop a plan I would like to see systems and treatments that have a proven record of actually working tried and given decent funding and support so they have a chance of success.

I want to see a unified professional approach to the issue not one driven by right wing newspapers, media commentators and religious groups.

Yours Sincerely

Doug Steley

PS I am also badly dyslexic so my submission is as brief as possible, I am happy to discuss or speak with anyone if required.

I prefer discussing face to face than written submissions

I can make myself available if required