

**Christianne Andonovski**

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**From:** Patsy Lisle <wordpress@wp.greens.org.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 February 2017 7:52 PM  
**To:** LRRCS  
**Subject:** Policing the drug problem does not work

RE: INQUIRY INTO DRUG LAW REFORM

Policing the drug problem does not work

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on drug law reform for Victoria.

I believe drug use should be decriminalised. I am not advocating greater use of drugs or suggesting that addictions are not damaging to a person's life. But I believe that the drug black market, the variability of strength and quality of the drugs available, and the inevitable contact of ordinary citizens with organised crime required under this system, combine to present grave dangers in addition to any the drugs pose themselves.

A friend of mine is dead because he injected heroin of much greater strength than he realised. I understand that the variability of street bought 'doses' has been responsible for many such deaths. He did not have a heroin addiction. He liked to take it every now and then and did not do that more than a few times a year. He was employed, well loved and an honest person who happened to believe that drugs shouldn't be illegal.

As I said, I fully agree that a heroin or other drug addiction can be dangerous to the user. But making their use illegal has thoroughly failed as a solution. Rather, it has created a criminal class which doesn't need to exist and a black market whose products take lives in addition to whatever drug problems we might otherwise be dealing with.

As I understand it, the evidence from Portugal and their decriminalisation of drugs demonstrates the effectiveness of health-centred drug policies.

However, it seems that in Australia, governments are too wary of the outrage of Prohibitionists in the community and on the fringes of their parties to venture sensible reforms. If decriminalisation is too much to hope for, then I believe the reforms Colleen Hartland of the Greens has been campaigning for are a way to minimise the problems caused by criminalisation. Her reforms include stopping the use of sniffer dogs at music festivals when this likely results in people taking all their drugs at once rather than risking arrest, supervised injecting rooms in Richmond and warnings for potential users about the strength and dangers of pills being marketed as party drugs.

But I still hope that you might see the sense of decriminalising drugs and removing a whole layer of dangers and problems from the issue. The evidence from other countries is very clear that decriminalisation does not produce a spike in drug use.

Yours sincerely

-- Patsy Lisle  


I'm happy for my submission and details to be made public.