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From: [REDACTED] <wordpress@wp.greens.org.au>
Sent: Friday, 24 February 2017 10:38 AM
To: LRRCS
Subject: Why do we shirk at saving drug addicts lives?

RE: INQUIRY INTO DRUG LAW REFORM

Why do we shirk at saving drug addicts lives?

Hi,

My name is [REDACTED] and i am a drug addict. This is how i identify myself in the twelve step meetings that i attend - meetings that are free and have without a doubt saved my life. You see i was addicted to heroin for well over a decade. Somehow, i survived. Not because i never succumbed to overdose - i overdosed almost daily on heroin towards the end of my drug use - emergency services and friends who knew CPR the only grace between myself and certain death. I can only imagine the financial burden on emergency services who were called out to administer life saving narcan - a medication can that can be administered with the same skill level as that of an epipen to a person experiencing an anaphalatic shock.

Before i got clean, i would visit the needle exchange in Richmond to get fresh syringes. I would then go to my car to inject - ensuring that i locked all the car doors so that i wouldn't be robbed or arrested if anybody saw what i was doing. One time, i injected half a gram of heroin. i dont remember starting my car, dont remember driving, dont remember nodding off at the wheel and smashing into a pole on the pavement of a busy Carlton street on a Sunday morning. I still cannot believe that i didn't kill anyone. The paramedics who attended broke the windows to get to me - there was no surprise on their face - this type of thing would be standard to them everyday. Through my drug daze i recall seeing a boy of 5 or 6 walking past with his Mother - guilt echoed in my heart - imagine if i had missed the pole and ploughed straight into this boy?

I would like to say that i would never repeat this behaviour as i have learned my lesson - but i cannot say that - if i use a drug as an addict this is what i do to myself and the community. Not because i am evil, a monster, morally bankrupt - its because i cant stop obsessively and compulsively ingesting drugs to a point where i am a danger to myself and the community.

so what to do with this hopeless state? well there is recovery - a lengthy, often episodic process where relapse is commonplace and the risk of overdose increases after a period of abstinence. So what to do in between these addicted reigns of terror we fall into? Reduce the harm...doesn't that make sense? Isn't that government policy? Imagine the reduction of harm a supervised injecting room could bring about. i would not have been injecting in my car that day. i would have been in the supervised injecting room where i would've dropped and been revived. No car crashes. No near misses of small children. No cost to emergency services.

It is said that drug addicts see as much death in their life as 70 year olds - our loved ones drop everyday and we lose people. I have lost many friends. two partners. childhood friends. i just don't understand why you would keep something from us that saves our lives? Not might save our lives - that has been proven in other Australian states, to save our lives. Is it money? morals? what is the block? You have money to fund fireworks displays on new years eve but you have none to save the people i love? You preach harm reduction but is it only to secure borders and fund police taskforce. what will it take for you to open your hearts and safe injecting room doors.

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[REDACTED]

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