

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Supervised injecting is better than unsupervised injecting**

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) support the development of supervised injecting in North Richmond as a necessary place based intervention to reduce substance related harms and associated broader local issues.

Recent reporting highlighting concerns regarding the location of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre as well as substances which can be used in that centre need to be addressed.

Mr Sam Biondo, EO of VAADA says, 'we currently have wide ranging unsupervised injecting occurring throughout North Richmond, including areas within close proximity to businesses, residential property and public facilities such as schools. The local residents, including children, have often witnessed public injecting and substance use (including methamphetamine) and at times, found comatose individuals experiencing overdose.'

'Similar to the 100 already existing MSIC, this MSIC will greatly improve community amenity for all through the supervision of injecting drug use, with many of those currently injecting unsupervised in public places to be using this facility in a supervised manner. This means an expected significant reduction in public injecting, and the associated harms and trauma, within the proximity within businesses, homes and public facilities such as schools.'

Mr Biondo states, 'the government has followed international and domestic evidence informed practice of over 100 MSIC's in not imposing limitations on the type of substance consumed. Any limitation on the types of substances consumed will not substantially improve the circumstances for the individuals or communities effected, as it will reduce the number of people accessing the MSIC, limiting its' effectiveness in preventing overdose, public injecting and the broader amenity'.

The lived reality of those residing in North Richmond is to witness the daily consumption of a range of substances, including methamphetamine, in public, and to witness and at times, respond, to overdose.

'The local families, businesses, those using substances and first responders will all benefit from this facility.'

*VAADA is the peak body that represents over 80 Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. On a daily basis these services are dealing with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.*

**For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Sam Biondo on 0414 974 121 for comment or if unavailable, David Taylor on 0413 914 206.**