

RESPONSE FROM TONY TRIMINGHAM

When discussing drug issues and policy I make it a point not to comment on individuals or organisations submissions. Everyone is entitled to their point of view. In my submission to this committee on behalf of Family Drug Support, I stayed with the evidence we have gathered in providing support to drug affected families over the past 10 years. However in reading a submission from Geraldine Mullins and reading transcripts of the proceedings I feel I have to respond to allegations and insinuations made against me personally and our organisation.

In Mullins submission she makes many outrageous claims against various individuals and organisations. My response to the various comments regarding myself and Family Drug Support are as follows:

- **On page 2 of Mullins submission – ‘Wodak and Trimingham have both received the Rolleston International Legalisation Award’.**

I won the National Rolleston Award in 2004 and was presented with the award at the international Harm Reduction Conference in Melbourne. The award is named after Dr Humphrey Rolleston, former President of the Royal College of Physicians and is presented each year to an individual or group who have made an outstanding contribution to reducing drug or alcohol related harm from the host country.

Calling this the ‘Rolleston International Legalisation Award’ is preposterous and offensive.

- **Page 19 –‘ Liberals Rhonda Parker, the minister for Drug Strategy lost her position because she stood in the way of Dr Wodak, Professor Pennington and Tony Trimingham and their efforts to have heroin clinics set up in Perth’.**

Once again Mullins labels me a 'drug legaliser'.

Whilst an advocate for injecting sites and heroin prescription I have never had a conversation with anyone about setting up clinics in Perth. I am sure that even Rhonda Parker would laugh at the suggestion that she lost her job through my activities!

- **Page 19 – 'Meanwhile some Perth parents who had sons or daughters who were either drug addicted or dead from overdoses were enlisted by Murphy to work as volunteer drug counsellors. These families educated by Trimingham'.**

Following the establishment of Family Drug Support in 1998, several States including Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, ACT and Western Australia has discussions with me about establishing a support network for families. I was happy to assist by describing our model and talking about the process we used. These discussions were informal and subsequently the Parent Drug and Information Support Service was established in WA. The model established there is similar to FDS but also has some differences. At no time did I 'educate' PIDISS volunteers.

- **Page 19 ref 30 'Trimingham was brought by Terry Murphy of WA Drug & Alcohol Authority to address two community seminars'.**

I was invited to speak at the 2003 and 2006 Beyond the Boundaries Symposium.

Whilst it is not a major issue my invitation was from the Palmerston Association not WA D & A authority - I had no contact with Mr Murphy regarding these conferences.

- **Page 23 – 'There are two main drug reform parent groups, Tony Trimingham Family Drug Support and Brian and Marion McConnell's Families and Friends of Drug Law reform. When these two families lost a son to a heroin death, they were enlisted to lend weight to the burgeoning drug reform and the public through the message that if sons had free drugs and a place to shoot up they would still be alive. They are closely aligned to**

**Dr Alex Wodak and Michael Moore's Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation and the Australian Parliamentary Group for Drug Law Reform. These are really sister groups, lobbying at two levels and sharing the same aims and philosophies.'**

Family Drug Support enjoys a cordial relationship with Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform. We have worked with Brian and Marion McConnell and others in FFDLR to organise 2 major conferences dealing with the problems of drugs and families and several other forums. We work with them on Annual Remembrance Ceremonies around Australia for those lost to drugs. We have expressed our concerns at elements of State and Federal Drug Policy from time to time especially where we believe policy affects families. We are not however 'sister' organisations. Our mission statement is stated below and drug law reform is a secondary matter for us. We have never been members of the other 2 organisations named nor have we had any discussions with them about 'aims and philosophies'. I have never been 'enlisted' by anyone to promote legalisation! We spend the majority of our time and energy providing support to affected families.

Our mission statement is as follows:

'To assist families throughout Australia to deal with drug issues in a way that strengthens relationships and achieves positive outcomes'

The second matter I would like to comment on specifically is the comments made by the Chair on Wednesday 28 March 2007 in Canberra.

PFHS 6 – responding to Mr Babington from Families Australia on the focus groups they held.

**'I notice Tony Trimmingham, who has been part of the industry for a long time. One of things I am starting to see is that there is an industry of people who get government grants, publish papers, make their reputation and become**

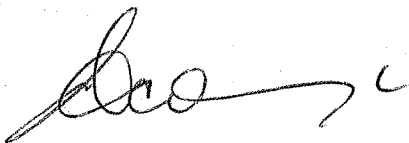
spokespeople. There is a whole industry out there which is dependant on these people being there'.

**PFHS 12 – 'We do not need another hotline. I have got a list of hotlines. I have got a list of people who are getting government money, and I am finding kids and parents are not getting anything'.**

The inference by the chair that I am somehow profiting from the work of FDS and the grants we get is grossly offensive. FDS is a poorly resourced NGO which relies largely on the goodwill and energy of volunteers to provide a wonderful support for people which was unavailable prior to its existence

On a personal level my own business slowly collapsed as FDS grew (I virtually funded FDS and received little remuneration for the first 3 years of our existence). It is certainly true that financially I would have been much better off if I had not founded FDS.

Finally, having read transcripts and attended one session of this committee I am concerned that some of the committee members are biased and interested in only one point of view. I would have thought that the purpose of these committees was to gather evidence then come to a decision – not start with a fixed position and only be interested in those that support that stand! The fact that Family Drug Support - the largest family support service for drugs in the country was not invited to present is evidence of her unwillingness to listen to the views of the majority of families affected by illicit drugs.



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