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STANDING COMMITTEE

28 MAR 2007

on Family and Human Services

21st March, '07.

Submission - House of Reps. Standing Committee on Family & Human Services

I am writing to urge the Federal government to introduce workable alternatives to harm minimisation in the interests of families as well as drug abusers. Harm minimisation programmes have not been accompanied by adequate resources to treat addiction and have seen illicit drug use increase. Australia could learn from the well documented experience of drug prevention in Sweden; the overall aim is a drug free society.

Sweden's holistic approach to illicit drugs which combines reducing the supply, punishing abusers and coercing them to undergo treatment, has had startling success. According to a report from United Nations on Drugs and Crime, September 2006, drug use in the 15-24 age group is less than one-third that of other E.U. Member States.

The policy of increasing the knowledge and skills of young people to contribute to the minimisation of harm from the use of drugs while imparting a deep knowledge of drugs and their dangers, tends to normalise their use. Needle exchange programs can reduce risk of infection but at the same time normalises and encourages the injection of intravenous drugs.

signed: Mary B. McInerney.