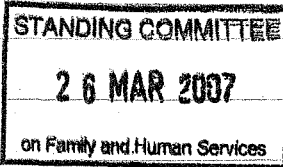


Submission To:-



Submission No: 105

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915/07 K

22nd March '07

House Of Representatives Standing Committee
On Family and Human Services.
Parliament House, Canberra. A.C.T. 2600

Impact Of Illicit Drug Use On Families.

This is a brief outline of relevant experience of the above topic, which I am moved to put to the enquiry.

1. Over the course of several years voluntary community welfare work, visiting homes, including half-way houses for drug rehabilitates, I soon concluded that programs to control the drug problem were inadequate

2. In speaking to young people trying to recover from drug usage, they exhibited a lack of confidence in obtaining employment with attendant fear of falling back into crime. Most of these people had a difficult path ahead to become drug free, obtain employment and form families. The scene impacted me in a sombre way and must have been of great concern to their families

3. I cite a further example which remains with me, of a young couple both on methadone trying to recover, with a young baby and short of money. They wanted to form a family and look after their baby, but the atmosphere in the dwelling was "electric" with shattered nerves and a crying baby which terrified the couple. This was a prime illustration of the clash of two cultures i.e. family formation and drug use.

4. In the case of another established and well educated family, one of the sons using marijuana ran up large bills on the parent, and flustered up in court with great distress to the family. The father took a firm line with the son to give up the drug. While on the drug the son was oblivious to common sense. The parents were divided on how to handle the problem. In the end after some heroic years the father prevailed, and the son gave up drug usage.

5. One has to ask, is all this suffering necessary in the name of harm minimisation approaches?

6. On one occasion being concerned about the drug problem, I attended a forum held in the Victorian State Parliament. This was addressed by quality and experienced people. The poor attendance by State Members of

Parliament did not engender any confidence in their application to the drug problem or their ability to solve it.

7. I hope the above is of some interest to the Standing Committee, for the sake of the future of Australian families and people to which I would like to make some contribution as a result of my contact with the great problem.

Yours faithfully,
Brian Tierney, (BRIAN TIERNEY)

Signed- B.A. Tierney
22/3/07