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BY:

Secretary
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA:

INQUIRY INTO CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY: OFFENDERS

Since 1968 I have been closely involved with criminal offenders.

Then alcohol was the intoxicant common in many crimes. I have watched my society slip to a time when alcohol and illegal drugs are the main material ingredients in crime.

I will limit myself to offenders involved in illegal drug-related crime.

Proposition:

**THE TWO HELPING ARMS BETRAY BOTH USERS AND VICTIMS
OF CRIME.**

The two arms are:

1) POLICE

Police connivance in the mid to late seventy's contributed greatly to the escalation of drug abuse.

As to whether Police connivance is now less, I have no way of knowing. The continued unabated and increasing drug trade says no. Recent death of citizens about to be arrested by Police under the influence of drugs, is a further worry. Policing is such a closed society.....

With Policing I include the self defeating 12 separate law enforcement agencies directly fighting illegal drugs: self defeating because they do not share intelligence and have no day to day national command or overall coordinator.

2) HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

The Health Departments soon took the view that their main effort in relation to illegal drug users was to protect them from the full consequences of their drug use. This led to a policy they proposed, and which government accepted, called harm minimisation. Methadone became the drug of cure. Ideologically the spread of diseases connected with use of illegal drugs was to be arrested, and so free needles was another strategy.

What do we all see NOW ? The ever increasing use of illegal drugs, the failure of Methadone, the bankruptcy of harm minimisation, the injecting room, the call for free heroine and the continued delving into the " grass roots " of crime as the place to find solutions. The so called "grass roots" such as low socioeconomic background, low educational level, low self esteem, addictive personality etc are forever debated and no conclusions reached. As an example of the failure is the absurdity of " ten to fifteen years maintenance on methadone".

I am reminded of the statement " those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad".

REMEDY: A SOCIETY FREE FROM ILLEGAL DRUGS

Users of illegal drugs suffer an addiction from which, of their own volition, they are unable to escape. A person dulled of reason by drugs, cannot think clearly about a serious matter.

Because we do not know at the point of arrest, the level of addiction, all users must be treated medically as if the addiction is high, till clinically proved otherwise.

This involves the mandatory seclusion of illegal drug users to determine their level of addiction. Then is made a determination of length of in-patient treatment necessary to give the user an opportunity to return to the state where s/he was, pre drug use.

The aim is **SOBRIETY as early as possible** ; the end is to **facilitate the return to pre-drug-use state.**

Put simply we change the ideal from harm prevention to a society free of illegal drugs.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lopez".

Joe Lopez

I would appreciate a copy of the Committee's final report.