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Second medically supervised injecting room will save lives for Victorians struggling with addiction: Jesuit Social Services

Jesuit Social Services welcomes Victoria's second medically supervised injecting room, announced today by the Victorian Government.

An independent panel last year recommended a new site be built after its review of a medically supervised injecting room in North Richmond found it had saved lives and helped thousands of Victorians struggling with addiction to get help.

Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards said a second injecting room made sense and was supported by evidence. Ms Edwards also backed the three-year extension of the original North Richmond trial site.

"Drug addiction is a health problem. Too many people are dying of or being seriously harmed by drug overdoses. It is positive to see the Victorian Government act on the evidence of what works to save lives and help people get healthy," says Ms Edwards.

"We must focus on health-based responses, not punitive responses, to address these serious social issues and work towards the healthier communities we all want to be part of."

The Medically Supervised Injecting Room Review Panel found that in the first 18 months of its operation the North Richmond trial site saved at least 21 lives and safely managed 3200 overdoses that may have led to death or harm had they happened outside the facility.

Critically, the North Richmond centre also provided more than 13,000 interventions for people with drug and alcohol, mental health, family violence or housing issues.

"We know from our own experience at Jesuit Social Services that drug addictions are complex conditions that are often associated with social issues such as family violence, mental illness and homelessness," says Ms Edwards.

"Medically supervised injecting rooms are about saving lives and helping people to heal. Any program that keeps people safer, and helps them get well, is to be commended."

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