



The Injecting Rooms Scam

in the words of their government
evaluators

7. Misleading the public

**DRUG
FREE**
AUSTRALIA

Scorecard

- Government-ordered objectives

1. save lives (episode 1& 2)	multiple \$\$millions to save a single life
2. reduce public nuisance (episode 3)	Fail
3. referral to treatment/rehab (episode 4)	Fail
4. reduce blood-borne viruses (episode 5)	Fail
5. reduce ambulance callouts (episode 6)	Fail

- with overdoses in these facilities 42 – 102 times greater than on the street
- with testimony of ex-clients now in rehab that rates are astronomical because of experimenting with drugs
- with clients buying more drugs to service all those overdoses
- these facilities are undeniably a government-funded accessory to the drug trade

Sydney

- disinformation
- Every overdose in the injecting room = a life saved

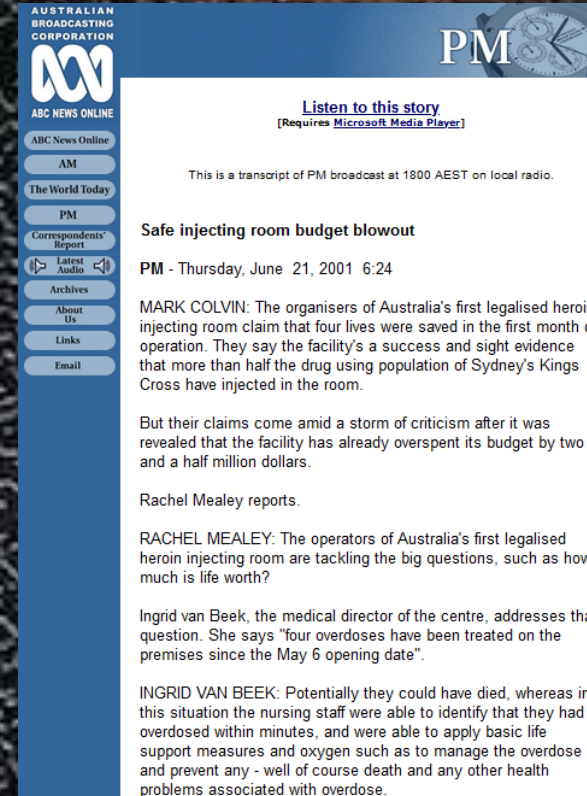
Sydney

How did they get political support?

- A concerted program of disinformation

PM Archive - Thursday, 21 June , 2001 00:00:00
Reporter: Rachel Mealey

*MARK COLVIN: The organisers of Australia's first legalised heroin injecting room claim that **FOUR LIVES WERE SAVED IN THE FIRST MONTH OF OPERATION**. They say the facility's a success and sight (sic) evidence that more than half the drug using population of Sydney's Kings Cross have injected in the room. But their claims come amid a storm of criticism after it was revealed that the facility has already overspent its budget by two and a half million dollars.*



The screenshot shows a webpage from ABC News Online. The header includes the ABC logo and the text 'AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION' and 'ABC NEWS ONLINE'. A navigation menu on the left lists 'ABC News Online', 'AM', 'The World Today', 'PM', 'Correspondents' Report', 'Latest Audio', 'Archives', 'About Us', 'Links', and 'Email'. The main content area features a 'Listen to this story' link with a note that it requires a Microsoft Media Player. Below this, it states 'This is a transcript of PM broadcast at 1800 AEST on local radio.' The article title is 'Safe injecting room budget blowout' and the date is 'PM - Thursday, June 21, 2001 6:24'. The text of the article includes a quote from Mark Colvin, a report by Rachel Mealey, a quote from Ingrid van Beek, and a quote from Ingrid van Beek.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20020212102009/http://www.abc.net.au/pm/s316825.htm>

Sydney

- Disinformation

The centre has recorded more than 500 injecting episodes in its first month of operation. In one four-hour period more than 60 clients used the premises. Four overdoses have been recorded on site. In each case the user had arrived at the centre alone, which is a known risk factor in drug overdose death, Dr van Beek said.

“POTENTIALLY WE’VE SAVED FOUR LIVES IN THE FIRST MONTH.”

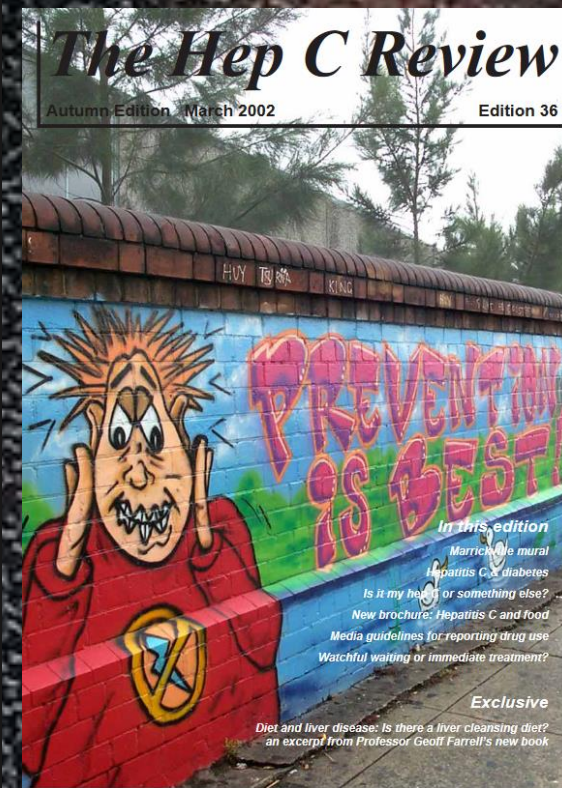
Kelly Burke - SMH 22/6/2001 p 3



Sydney

- disinformation

“Careful not to promote the centre at this stage as anything other than a solution to a local problem (ie. preventing fatal drug overdoses in Kings Cross), Dr Van Beek presented compelling evidence that in its first nine months, the centre has **SAVED MORE THAN 100 LIVES**. Early intervention has meant that potentially fatal overdoses which would otherwise have occurred in the surrounding streets and laneways were successfully treated on-site.”



https://web.archive.org/web/20060820230958/http://www.hepatitisc.org.au/resources/documents/36_01.pdf

Sydney

- Disinformation influences NSW politicians

“To date, the trial injecting room has reported that there were 2,729 registered clients and 250 overdoses. Therefore, because of the available trained medical staff **250 LIVES WERE SAVED**. There were 446 referrals into drug treatment, which could be contrasted with what occurs on the streets.”

The Hon Bryce Gaudry MP, NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard 29 May 2002

Sydney

How could management not have known that an overdose \neq a life lost

- As seen in episode 1 their client registration system asked each new registrant how many overdoses they had had (an average of **3** for 44% of clients) – p 16
- Management would have to know it was disinformation, but never lifted a publicity finger

FINAL REPORT OF
THE EVALUATION OF
THE SYDNEY MEDICALLY
SUPERVISED INJECTING CENTRE

MSIC Evaluation Committee

Copyright © 2003 MSIC Evaluation Committee

Sydney

Other strategies

- used heroin drought reductions to claim successes (reduced needles and reduced ambulance callouts)
- downplayed astronomical overdose rates from clients experimenting
- refused to draw obvious conclusions from negative data
- used inflated overdose numbers to inflate 'lives saved' estimates
- continually played the emotional card

FINAL REPORT OF
THE EVALUATION OF
THE SYDNEY MEDICALLY
SUPERVISED INJECTING CENTRE

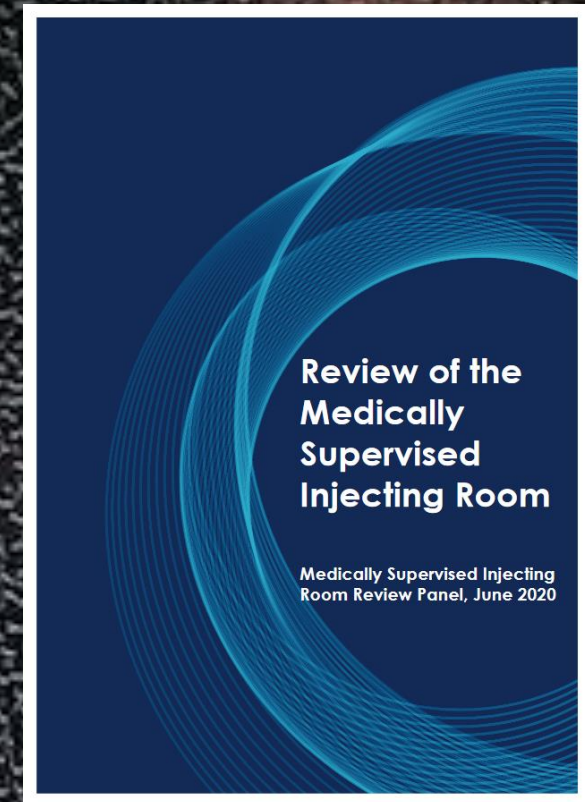
MSIC Evaluation Committee

Copyright © 2003 MSIC Evaluation Committee

Melbourne

No luxury of a heroin drought to fool politicians

- had to resort to ambulance callout reductions resulting from stricter policing
- had to make up fanciful lives saved estimates (14-18 lives saved)
- BUT using the European estimate method
 - one in every 100 heroin users dies from overdose annually
 - or one death for every 109,500 injections cumulatively
- 75,221 injections per year – well short of the 109,500 injections to save a single life in a year



Vancouver

Strategies

- Despite the same government-funded evaluators carefully studying the displacement effect of zero tolerance policing, every resulting metric was slated to injecting room ‘success’
- even a ‘deaths averted’ study by the same evaluators claimed many lives saved while stating they knew of no policing changes that might affect their estimate

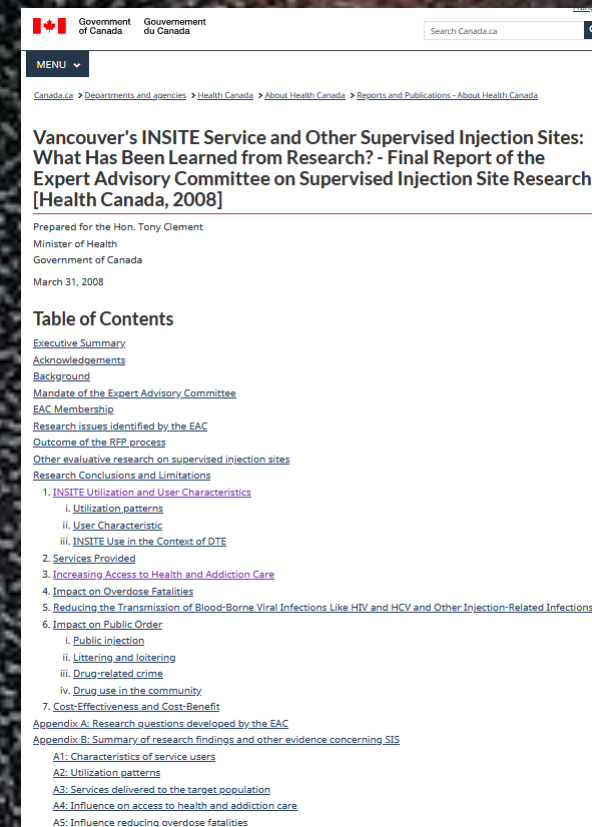
The screenshot shows the PubMed interface for a specific article. At the top, the NIH logo and 'National Library of Medicine' are visible. Below that is the PubMed logo and a search bar. The article title is 'Changes in public order after the opening of a medically supervised safer injecting facility for illicit injection drug users'. The authors listed are Evan Wood, Thomas Kerr, Will Small, Kathy Li, David C Marsh, Julio S G Montaner, and Mark W Tyndal. The article is from CMAJ, 2004, volume 28, issue 171(7), pages 731-4. The abstract is partially visible, starting with 'Background: North America's first medically supervised safer injecting facility for illicit injection drug users was opened in Vancouver on Sept. 22, 2003. Although similar facilities exist in a number of European cities and in Sydney, Australia, no standardized evaluations of their impact have been presented in the scientific literature.'

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15451834/>

Vancouver

Lives saved:

- A Liberal government estimate used to support its closure estimated 1.08 deaths averted per year
- given 144,000 injections annually and their estimate 4 injections per user per day, it was realistic



The screenshot shows a web page from the Government of Canada. The page title is "Vancouver's INSITE Service and Other Supervised Injection Sites: What Has Been Learned from Research? - Final Report of the Expert Advisory Committee on Supervised Injection Site Research [Health Canada, 2008]". The page is prepared for the Hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Health, Government of Canada, dated March 31, 2008. A "Table of Contents" section lists various sections of the report, including Executive Summary, Acknowledgements, Background, Mandate of the Expert Advisory Committee, EAC Membership, Research issues identified by the EAC, Outcome of the RFP process, Other evaluative research on supervised injection sites, Research Conclusions and Limitations, and seven numbered sections: 1. INSITE Utilization and User Characteristics (with sub-sections i-iii), 2. Services Provided, 3. Increasing Access to Health and Addiction Care, 4. Impact on Overdose Fatalities, 5. Reducing the Transmission of Blood-Borne Viral Infections Like HIV and HCV and Other Injection-Related Infections, 6. Impact on Public Order (with sub-sections i-iv), and 7. Cost-Effectiveness and Cost-Benefit. There are also two appendices: Appendix A: Research questions developed by the EAC and Appendix B: Summary of research findings and other evidence concerning SIS, with sub-sections A1 through A5.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/reports-publications/vancouver-insite-service-other-supervised-injection-sites-what-been-learned-research.html#insite>

Honesty, Integrity?

- You decide



The Injecting Rooms Scam

in the words of their government
evaluators

8. Just who were these evaluators?