

Notice of Motion, Cr Campbell: Injecting Room in the City of Melbourne

Motion

That the Future Melbourne Committee:

1. Notes the economic devastation experienced by the City of Melbourne as a result of COVID-19 and the concern of many traders and residents that having an injecting room in the City of Melbourne will significantly hinder the recovery.
2. Requests that the Lord Mayor write to the Premier and Minister for Health within 5 days of this motion being passed to:
 - 2.1 express the concern of many traders and residents in the City of Melbourne as to whether an injecting room will be opened in the CBD and if so, its location.
 - 2.2 request the report of Mr Ken Lay AO APM on the site of a proposed CBD injecting room be urgently completed and released noting that Mr Lay advised it would be completed in mid-2021.
 - 2.3 seek confirmation as to which sites in the City of Melbourne are under consideration by the State Government for a proposed injecting room including any sites recommended in any drafts of the Ken Lay report.
 - 2.4 seek clarification as to the level of compensation to be provided to ratepayers including business and property owners affected by the location of an injecting room in their proximity if the State Government proceeds to open it.
3. Requests management obtains an independent review of the impacts of the North Richmond injecting room on the local business community, residents, children, safety and amenity and publishes it publicly.
4. Requests management provide an urgent report following receipt of the Ken Lay report on the economic and amenity impacts of any proposed sites recommended by Mr Lay in the City of Melbourne.

Background

5. The impacts of COVID-19 have been disastrous for the City of Melbourne's local economy and while the city seeks to recover from those impacts, currently:
 - 5.1 approximately 20% of retail and hospitality shops in the City of Melbourne remain unoccupied.
 - 5.2 average weekday pedestrian activity is approximately 50% of pre-Covid levels.
6. There are a number of significant issues arising from the injecting room that was opened in June 2018 by the state government in North Richmond including:

- 6.1 In the first 10 months after the MSIR opened, the number of inappropriately disposed syringes collected in the surrounding area increased by 27 per cent (compared with the 10 months before the injecting room opened);
 - 6.2 There were more heroin related deaths within 1km of the North Richmond injecting room in the 12 month period after it opened than the 12 month period prior to it opening; and
 - 6.3 A survey of Victoria Police officers working in the area surrounding the North Richmond injecting room found 77.5% of officers reported observing significantly more people who appeared to be buying or selling drugs, 67.5% of officers observing significantly more people who appeared to be under the influence of drugs and 57.5% of officers observing significantly more people behaving in an antisocial or disorderly manner that appeared drug related.
7. The State Government purchased the former Yooralla facility at 244 Flinders Street early in 2021 but has not confirmed whether it intends to locate an injecting room there creating ongoing uncertainty for surrounding traders and residents.
 8. On 9 August 2022, the Premier stated it was unlikely the government would decide on the site for an injecting room in the City of Melbourne before the state election on 26 November 2022, creating ongoing uncertainty for all traders, residents and those looking to invest in the City of Melbourne.
 9. Mr Ken Lay AO APM was appointed by the Victorian Government to lead the consultation process to compile evidence and data to inform the advice to government on the final site selection and actions to maintain and enhance safety and amenity. Mr Lay advised that his report to the Victorian Government was likely to be completed in mid-2021 but the Premier has stated it is not completed due to COVID-impacts.

Mover: Cr Roshena Campbell

Secunder: Cr Jason Chang