

AUSTRALIA: AMA Pushes for Safe Injecting Trial

Kate Hagan and Julia Medew

October 2, 2012

The Age (Melbourne) (10.01.12)

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has called for the trial of a supervised injecting facility in Victoria that would help prevent overdoses and control the spread of blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis C. With a successful facility operating in Sydney for more than 10 years, AMA Victorian president Stephen Parnis said it was time the Victorian government considered a trial. The Baillieu government has repeatedly ruled out such a trial since coming to power two years ago and did so again last night. However, the opposition and the Greens [a political party] urged the government to consider the proposal. Dr. Parnis suggested that the facilities could work in Melbourne's drug hotspots. Heroin-related ambulance attendances were particularly high in the City of Yarra, where councillors voted last year to introduce a trial, but were thwarted by the government when it refused to change legislation that would have allowed the city to move forward. In Victoria, during the years 2009 through 2010, there were 2,033 heroin-related ambulance attendances, and more than one in five were in the City of Yarra. The mayor of Yarra, Geoff Barbour, said the council maintained its support for a safe injecting facility within the municipality because the current criminal approach had failed. Yarra Drug and Health Forum executive officer Greg Denham welcomed AMA's statement and called on other community leaders and organizations to express support. He added that approximately 100 Victorians continued to die each year from drug overdoses.

[See the topic on aegis.org](http://aegis.org)