

Notice of Motion, Cr Campbell: Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) in the City of Melbourne

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes the economic devastation experienced by the City of Melbourne as a result of COVID-19 and that having a MSIR in the City of Melbourne will significantly hinder the recovery process.
2. Objects to the opening of a MSIR in the City of Melbourne.
3. Obtains legal advice and considers any available legal action to defend this objection.
4. Determines that if the State Government proceeds to open an MSIR in the City of Melbourne despite objection, then Council:
 - 4.1 obtains an independent review of the impacts of the North Richmond MSIR on the local business community, residents, children, safety and amenity and publishes it publicly.
 - 4.2 determines and, if necessary, obtains external advice as to what planning permits are required to open a MSIR within the City of Melbourne.
 - 4.3 asks the State Government to provide clarification on the following:
 - 4.3.1 the financial and security resources to be provided for the establishment of an MSIR and what measures will be put in place for the safety of people within the area
 - 4.3.2 the level of compensation to be provided to ratepayers including business and property owners affected by the location of the MSIR in their proximity.

Background

1. Prior to COVID-19, the City of Melbourne had a Gross Local Product totalling more than \$104 billion. The impacts of COVID-19 have been disastrous for the City of Melbourne's local economy with modelling undertaken by PwC Australia projecting that the economy would lose 79,000 jobs and up to \$110 billion in output over the next five years.
2. The economy of the central city relies heavily on a transient daily population. COVID-19 has led to a significant reduction in daily visitation and even after the lifting of restrictions commuter activity remains depressed.
3. Google mobility data last month showed a 42% decrease in retail and recreation visits compared to the pre-COVID baseline period. Nationally, the City of Melbourne is the LGA with the biggest decrease in retail and recreation activity compared to the pre-COVID baseline period.

4. Approximately 20% of retail and hospitality shops in the City of Melbourne remain unoccupied.
5. There are a number of significant issues arising from the MSIR that was opened in North Richmond in June 2018 including:
 - 5.1 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 MSIR opened);
 - 5.2 There were more heroin related deaths within 1km of the North Richmond MSIR in the 12 month period after it opened than the 12 month period prior to it opening; and
 - 5.3 A survey of Victoria Police officers working in the area surrounding the North Richmond MSIR found 77.5% of officers reported observing significantly more people who appeared to be buying or selling drugs, 67.5% of officers observed significantly more people who appeared to be under the influence of drugs and 57.5% of officers observed significantly more people behaving in an antisocial or disorderly manner that appeared drug related.

Mover: Cr Roshena Campbell

Seconder: Cr Philip Le Liu