

## IF NOT US, WHO?

MARIANNE E JAUNCEY<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, Sydney*

<sup>2</sup> *National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of NSW*

<sup>3</sup> *Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney*

Presenter's email: [mjauncey@uniting.org](mailto:mjauncey@uniting.org)

**Introduction:** Melbourne is currently the site of intense and sustained debate about the establishment of a supervised injecting facility in North Richmond. APSAD is an organisation dedicated to 'promoting evidence-based improvements in the treatment and prevention of drug and alcohol-related problems and to raising awareness of AOD issues'. As the 2017 APSAD conference is mere kilometres from the proposed site of Australia's second supervised injecting facility (SIF), it provides an ideal setting to review both the evidence and the political history of SIFs in Australia.

**Approach:** An overview of the international context will provide a backdrop to the current situation in Melbourne, including statistics on overdose in North Richmond, the private members bill to open a SIF, repeated coronial enquires recommending establishing a SIF, views of relevant stakeholders including local residents and traders, media coverage and responses from politicians.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** There are key differences in context between Melbourne in 2017 and Sydney in 1999 when a SIF proposal was accepted by government. These include (but are not limited to):

Melbourne's political champions are not in government, whereas Sydney's political champions were; Melbourne's state government is coming up to an election, whereas Sydney's state government had just won another term; there was little evidence for SIFs in 1999; and the media portrayal of methamphetamines has influenced perceptions of drug users.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** What does this mean for APSAD members, and the organisation as a whole? Does APSAD have a role influencing debate about a SIF in Melbourne, or not? Can researchers be advocates? Can health professionals? And if not us, who?

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** nil