Drug Addicted In Jail: Issues And Opportunities

Throwing drug addicts in jail costs a lot of money and can be a waste of time. That money would be better spent on funding services such as rehabilitation or education. Anybody that has been down the road of trying to secure a place for their loved one in a state rehabilitation program will understand the desperate need of that extra funding. Money is being spent on police sniffer dogs at railway stations or raiding nightclubs hoping to catch people with small amounts of quantities of marijuana or ecstasy. The aim of the legislation regulating the use of sniffer dogs was to catch the drug supplier - not drug users. So far, the implementation of these dogs has been a hopeless failure. Also, by treating drug use as a public health issue would save money through healthcare due to the lower rates of drug-related deaths and HIV. It would also reduce valuable time on policing minor drug offences - our police officer will then have more time to focus on catching the real criminals - those who supply.

Throwing drug addicts in jail can ruin a person's life. We need to view substance abuse as a disease or a condition that requires continuous treatment, rather than a crime. This will prevent kids from being labelled at the beginning of their lives, and give them a fighting chance at rehabilitation. All people appearing before the court risk the possibility of conviction and a criminal record. Even if the charge is dismissed, there is still a record kept of the result. A criminal record can preclude a person from undertaking certain occupations and travelling to certain countries.

By removing the stigma from drug use and addiction by viewing it as a disease, will most importantly lower the number of deaths from unregulated drugs if users feel safe to get their pills screened, and to call in overdoses. In 2001, Portugal became the first European country to abolish all criminal penalties for personal drug possession. In addition, drug users were to be provided with therapy, rather than prison sentences. Research commissioned by the Cato Institute found that in five years after decriminalization, illegal drug use by teenagers had declines, the rate of HIV infection among drug users had dropped, deaths related to heroin and similar drugs had been cut by more than half, and the number of people seeking treatment for drug addiction had doubled. If it has worked dramatically in one country, why can't it work here in Australia.