



FREE TO USERS

2007 edition

**SERVICES DIRECTORY
FOR DRUG & ALCOHOL USERS**

emergency numbers — 24 hours

DirectLine 1800 888 236

DirectLine is a 24-hour telephone counselling, information and referral service that is available to anyone to discuss any drug or alcohol related concerns.

**YSAS line 9418 1020 or 9415 8881
1800 014 446**

YSAS line is a program of the Youth Substance Abuse Service for people between 12 and 21 years of age.

**Gambler's Help 1800 156 789
TTY (for hearing impaired) 1800 777 706**

Ambulance 000

Police 000

Fire 000

Dental Emergency Service 9341 1040

Poisons Information Service 13 11 26

Suicide Helpline 1300 651 251

Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78

**Lifeline 13 11 14
TTY (for hearing impaired) 9662 9030**

Sexual Assault 1800 806 292

Syringe Disposal Helpline 1800 552 355

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▲ LEGAL
▲ SERVICE INC.



2007
edition

Revised and Updated

**SERVICES DIRECTORY
FOR DRUG & ALCOHOL USERS**

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The text of the *Services Directory* is available in PDF format on the Fitzroy Legal Service website at <www.fitzroy-legal.org.au>.

foreword

The *Services Directory for Drug and Alcohol Users 2007* is published by the Fitzroy Legal Service, which is one of the oldest community legal centres in Australia, opening in 1972. We provide information and free advice to members of the community.

The new updated edition of the Services Directory has been funded by the Department of Human Services and is also supported by various community organisations. It provides comprehensive information for drug and alcohol users, including an up-to-date directory of service providers in Victoria. Workers in organisations working with clients who have drug and alcohol problems also find the Services Directory to be a useful resource.

Extraordinary care has been taken to ensure that the information provided is factual and current. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the contributors to the book, who provided their time and expertise for free, and the Fitzroy Legal Service staff and volunteers who have contributed to this work, for producing such a quality community resource.

Rachna Muddagouni,
Executive Officer, Fitzroy Legal Service

notes to the 2007 edition

Welcome to the updated edition of the *Services Directory for Drug and Alcohol Users*. The Directory is in constant demand from all sectors of the community, with stocks unable to keep pace with requests for further supplies. This 2007 edition has been updated with a revised agency listing to ensure that the information it contains is as current as possible. We've tried to balance the need for expanded information, particularly about services in regional Victoria, with the wish to maintain the book's handy size and easy portability. The sustained demand is a clear indication that the Directory is doing what it was designed to do — provide useful and practical information about drugs and related matters for people throughout Victoria.

If you have any suggestions for material you would like to see included in our next edition, please let us know. We rely on your feedback to continuously improve our publications.

Fitzroy Legal Service

acknowledgments

We wish to thank the following organisations for helping to provide funding for the production of the *Services Directory for Drug and Alcohol Users*: the Danks Trust, the City of Yarra, City of Melbourne, City of Darebin, City of Moreland, City of Port Phillip and the Terumo Corporation.

Members of the Steering Committee who gave generously of their time and expertise in overseeing the production of the original Directory were Sam Biondo, Fitzroy Legal Service; Jocelyn Snow, North Yarra Community Health (NYCH); Cristian Becerra and Sarah Lord, Victorian Drug Users Group (VIVAIDS); Chris Hardy, Melbourne Inner City Needle Exchange (MINE); Robyn Szechtman, City of Port Phillip; Kealy Smith, City of Melbourne; John Fitzgerald, Department of Political Science, University of Melbourne; and Amanda Bolleter, Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA).

Thanks to all the agencies, services, self-help groups and individuals without whose co-operation we would not be able to produce the Services Directory. In particular we wish to thank: VIVAIDS; NYCH; MINE; focus groups at VIVAIDS and FLS; Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre; SHARC; and Fitzroy Legal Service staff and volunteers for their support, in particular Louise Kay and Kate Crabtree for the 2007 agency directory update.

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Finally, an enormous thank you to all the contributors who worked overtime to produce their sections and provide all the additional information we asked for.

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What Causes a Drug Overdose? — Sarah Lord, VIVAIDS. *Updated for 2007 edition by staff at VIVAIDS.*

introduction

Originally published in 1988 as *The Users Guide*, the *Services Directory for Drug and Alcohol Users* has from its inception been designed with the service user in mind. Containing a wide range of information within one volume, the Directory aims to assist people in making more informed choices about treatment options and clearer decisions regarding their own health and personal welfare. The contents are based on the philosophy of harm minimisation and the belief that the rights of users are best met by providing reliable information that empowers people to make their own decisions about drug use and treatment.

Principal support for the initial project came from a 'Local Initiative' grant provided by the Community Support Fund under the Victorian Government's 'Turning the Tide' drug strategy. The development of the book involved the participation and goodwill of the City of Yarra and numerous statewide agencies. These groups, along with the authors, committee members and other supporters, contributed an enormous amount of work and support. This level of commitment and support has continued with subsequent editions.

The method used when developing the Drug and Alcohol Agency section of this guide allowed agencies to speak for themselves via a comprehensive questionnaire, which sought information that would be useful to prospective service users, their families, and friends. This information has been completely revised and updated for 2007 with the further cooperation of these agencies.

As is the way with directories such as this, there are obvious difficulties arising from the fact that information does not remain static — new programs or services start up, old ones close down or change their focus, addresses change and people move. Because of this, where possible we have listed 'umbrella' groups and organisations that are relatively stable and may act as conduits for the most up-to-date information in this rapidly changing services environment.

We are interested in your ideas, experience and knowledge of services. If you know or discover that a service no longer exists, has changed or is not listed in the Directory, please let us know so this information can be updated. We would also like your feedback on the contents of the new edition. Does it provide relevant information? What sections work well? What could be improved?

We hope that this Services Directory will provide a reasonable starting point which will empower people to start making informed decisions about their own health, welfare and treatment options.

Services Directory for Drug and Alcohol Users Steering Committee

greek tragedy of our times

The following letter appeared in Phillip Adams' column in the Weekend Australian, Review Section, 22–23 May 1999. Tragically, it is still as relevant now as when it was first published.

'I want to tell you a story, my story. I reckon I'm a modern-day Antigone.'

A letter arrived in response to a column about our barking mad drug laws. And it was so moving, so powerful, that I wanted to share it with you, as a counterpoint to the political posturing and cant at the drug summit.

‘Drug law reformers sometimes say that heroin users don’t match the stereotypical image of the non-confronting, rebellious, delinquent type wearing torn clothes and claiming welfare. And they’re right. But sometimes, like my brother, users do fit the stereotype. Not that it makes much difference. He was my brother and I loved him.

‘My brother was born in 1960 and died in 1984, a month after his 24th birthday. He hadn’t come from a happy home but from a pressure-cooker environment of high expectations, high tensions, spite, infidelity, mental illness and borderline poverty.

My brother didn’t “contribute” to decent society as such: he rejected work, he rejected religion, he stole and drank and smoked and he used heroin. An unsavoury character who probably got what he deserved, right?

‘Well, I don’t think so. Billy, clean, was the gentlest, funniest, most poetic soul I’ve ever known. I adored him, always. And he loved me. I was certain that one day he’d find his niche and be brilliant. But he couldn’t ride out the pains of adolescence, love and a difficult life: rightly or wrongly, he used drugs. There were lots of reasons for him to use heroin. Without it, I’m sure he’d have taken his own life at a much younger age.

‘We’ll never know whether Billy’s eventual overdose was intentional or not. He was with other users when he died. I think maybe he’d have injected alone if he’d meant to die. His friends were too whacked to see that he was in trouble with the fatal dose, and when they did realise, they were too scared of police recrimination to call an ambulance. Besides, it was too late. His friends put his body into the back seat of his (stolen) car and drove it to the closest pub. They left it in the pub’s car park and went home. Three days later, a passer-by noticed the stink coming from the car where, apparently, a man was “sleeping off” a hard night on the turps. For three nights in a row.

‘When the police knocked on my door looking less threatening than usual, I suspected that something was up. Anyway, I went with them to identify the dead man as my brother. The responsibility for authorising an autopsy, collecting his clothes and possessions from police and his landlord, telling each of my parents and friends and relatives that he’d died as well as organising his funeral, fell to me. I was 21 years old.

‘In the eyes of “law-abiding society” Billy’s life had a negative value. He stole, he defrauded Social Security, he got sick, he shared needles. Regardless of how great a guy I tell you he was, these things are true whether he came from a “happy home” or not. So I’m not going to tell you how his life was destroyed by heroin, because it wasn’t. It’s the opposite: ordinary, everyday “normal” life so depressed and frustrated him that heroin made it bearable. Billy needed heroin to live. But its illegality was incredibly dispiriting for him — he felt guilty about using, and every time he used again, he reconfirmed and reiterated his identity as a “failure” in his own and others’ eyes. If heroin were not illegal, if it were not so attached to users’ identities as criminal, irresponsible, death-dealing people, it might have been easier for him to stop using it. (It might not have, too). If the failure to kick heroin wasn’t understood as such an irrevocable and complete decline, but rather as learning to put breaks between periods of using, learning to deal with withdrawals, I think it would have

been easier for Billy to manage — if not kick — his habit. If heroin had had a better regulated, safer availability, my brother might not have felt so panicky about the prospect of stopping.

‘When Billy couldn’t get heroin, but needed it, he used barbiturates (prescribed for him, mind you) with alcohol. The effect of these legal drugs was appalling. When he was using heroin, Billy was really docile — a bit slurry and sleepy, but otherwise quite “normal”. You can’t really “see” heroin use like you can alcohol or acid or even speed or ecstasy. Over time you see the poverty heroin-use produces, but not the general effect of the drug itself. It was only when he used barbs with alcohol that being with Billy was really distressing. Now you might think I’m a coward, that just because it didn’t hurt me or embarrass me when my brother used heroin, that I think it’s okay. And maybe there’s some truth in that. But my cowardice, if that’s what it was, stemmed from real danger — to myself, my brother, and others.

‘Using barbs and alcohol, there was always a crime, there was always damage to people and property. There would be incredible anger expressed, blood everywhere, cars stolen and smashed, paranoid obliteration of the first order. He never remembered any of it. One time he didn’t recognise me as his sister. I’m saying, “Come on, it’s me, it’s Mega, lets get out of here,” and he’s saying or slurring, “Who? Don’t know you, f*** off”

‘I was just trying to get him to leave a pub he was threatening to smash up — the bar staff had called the police. He didn’t want to leave with me. And the brother who would never play-fight with me when we were little for fear of accidentally hurting me smashed a pint glass and lunged at my face. I dodged it. He was so out of it that he fell off his stool and cut his own hand up. Later, Billy tried to suture his gashed hand himself rather than go to a hospital and get the third degree on his drug use, or be carted off to a psych hospital.

‘Is it wrong for me to have preferred him to use heroin? Is it wrong for me to have wanted to avoid the everyday misery, violence and grief that prevailed when there was no heroin for my brother?

‘My adolescence was turbulent, too. I too committed crimes and took drugs. I didn’t get caught. At 18 or 19 you’d have said that the two of us were heading for identical destinies. I lived through it and today I’m poised for a very rewarding career in academia.

‘That’s the difference between my brother and myself — I lived, he didn’t. And after more than 10 years reflecting on my brother’s death, its cause and consequences, I can only urge people to realise that where there’s life, there’s hope. As long as Billy was alive, I could hope for fresh memories to replace and augment the old ones. I could hope for future memories of my brother recovering, getting off heroin, finding a vocation. I could hope for memories of, maybe, making a speech at his wedding, or welcoming his children into the world.

‘But these things never happened and my family and I had to stop hoping for them. I can’t even begin to express the distress and grief I suffered over losing Billy. Could it have been prevented? Maybe.

‘If heroin weren’t so criminal, maybe there’d have been someone willing to call an ambulance on the day Billy died. Again, maybe not. But my brother’s death shouldn’t have ended in such indignity. His body should not have been abandoned like Polynices to the January sun beating down on a vomit-strewn car park. And it should not have fallen to me, like Antigone, to bury him.’