

## Australia Dossier by Robert Barwick

### Soros's friends legalize drug 'shooting gallery'

*Addicts will soon legally inject heroin in New South Wales, thanks to media baron Kerry Packer and George Soros.*

New South Wales (N.S.W.) Premier Bob Carr announced on July 27 that he had approved a trial of an official heroin injection room, or "shooting gallery," as his government's response to the June Drug Summit, an all-party pow-wow which he had called to address the state's burgeoning drug crisis. This 18-month trial will give Australia's largest state, which is also the principal gateway for the drugs flowing into Australia, the most liberal drug laws in the country, and will, as well, set a pattern which other states have announced they will follow.

Along with the shooting gallery, N.S.W. will run a trial "caution policy," where first-time offenders possessing less than 0.5 grams of heroin or cocaine, and 15 grams of cannabis, will not be criminally charged if the offender agrees to compulsory assessment and treatment. N.S.W. opposition leader Kerry Chikarovski attacked the new policy, saying, "I am still concerned about the message sent to children that injecting drugs can be seen as safe in any way."

In order to soften the expected political outcry against his government aiding and abetting heroin use, Carr has arranged for the trial to be administered by the Catholic Church's Sisters of Charity, a religious order based at St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. The church's involvement is unfortunately not surprising: It was one of three denominations that earlier this year sponsored an illegal shooting gallery in Sydney's seedy King's Cross district, and St. Vincent's board has approved this latest shooting gallery, to be set up in the same district. Addition-

ally, the head of St. Vincent's Drug and Alcohol Services, Dr. Alex Wodak, is the president of the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, and the country's foremost advocate of the George Soros-funded Drug Policy Foundation's "harm minimization" policies—another word for legalization; Wodak is also a beneficiary of Soros awards and money.

Ironically, in 1996, when Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett attempted to legalize dope in his state, whilst the Catholic Church generally supported his stance, it was Wodak's counterpart at Melbourne's St. Vincent's Hospital, Dr. Joseph Santamaria, who led the successful fight against it, together with the Citizens Electoral Council, Lyndon LaRouche's associates.

But a look at St. Vincent's Sydney board of directors, which approved the Sisters of Charity's involvement in the trial, sheds light on the real forces behind the push to legalize drugs. Dominating the board is Mrs. Ros Packer, the wife of Australia's richest man, Kerry Packer. Packer's media outlets, Channel 9 and *The Bulletin*, have campaigned to legalize dope, while Packer himself was named by the 1983 Royal Commission investigating the Ship Painters and Dockers Union as "The Goanna," a codename for the Mr. Big of organized crime, who was alleged to be involved in pornography, tax evasion, corporate fraud, racketeering, murder, and drugs. Packer even admitted to being the Goanna, but, before any findings could be made, Prime Minister Bob Hawke, shut down the investigation.

Since that time, Packer's wealth has skyrocketed from \$100 million,

to over \$6.3 billion. He has interests in Australia's two largest casinos—Sydney's Star City and Melbourne's Crown, the latter of which he totally controls—both of which have been implicated in drug-money laundering. He also boasts the friendship of former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, current PM John Howard, and N.S.W. Premier Bob Carr. Before entering politics, Carr was a scribe with Packer's *Bulletin* magazine, and a big player in the Packer organization, and it was Carr's lieutenant, John Della Bosca, who rammed the heroin trial through the June Drug Summit. Della Bosca is the former state secretary of the N.S.W. branch of the Australian Labor Party, which has long been known to be in Packer's pocket. Rounding off Packer's involvement in the go-ahead of the shooting gallery, St. Vincent's Hospital sought "ethical counsel" before its approval, from the Rev. Dr. Gerald Gleeson, the son of Gerry Gleeson, the former head of the state Premier's Department under another Packer political stooge, Neville Wran. Gleeson's other son, Damien, is St. Vincent's PR man.

The state of New South Wales has taken the point for the dope lobby, and others, such as pro-dope Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett and Australian Capital Territory Premier Kate Carnell, have announced that they will follow suit with their own legal heroin injecting rooms.

Prime Minister Howard, meanwhile, has sharply criticized the states' rush to push heroin. During a mid-July trip to Washington, Howard met with Gen. Barry McCaffrey (ret.), director of the White House Office of National Drug Policy, who denounced the Australian drive for legal injection rooms as "pouring alcohol into an alcoholic." McCaffrey accepted Howard's invitation to visit Australia in November.