

A nighttime photograph of a city street. In the background, a large red billboard for Coca-Cola is visible, with the word 'Enjoy' above the logo. To the right, a tall pole holds a large rainbow flag. The street is illuminated by streetlights, and a white car is visible in the distance. The overall scene is a vibrant urban environment.

Lessons from the urban jungle!

Dr Ingrid van Beek AM

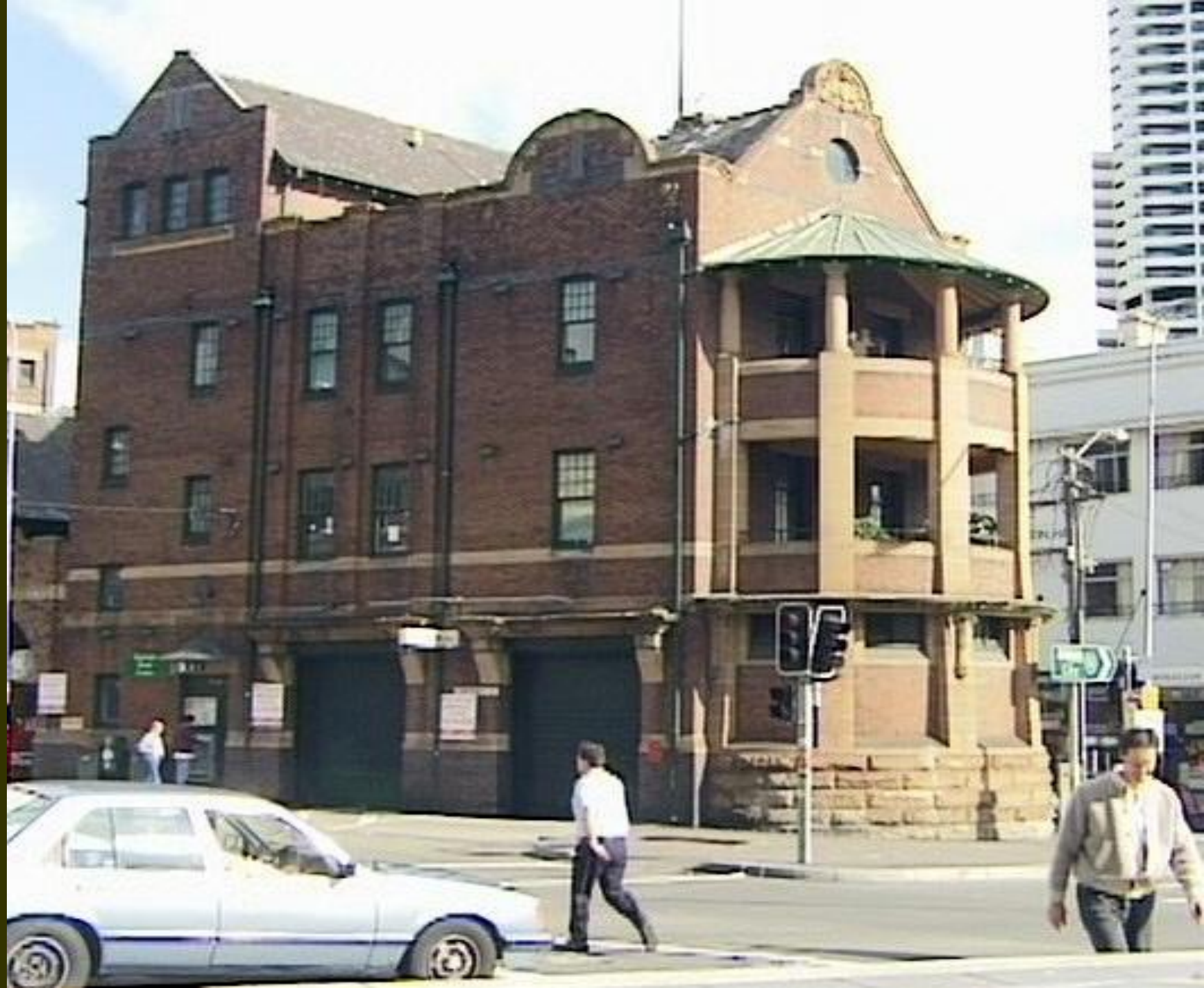
MBBS MBA FAFPHM FACHAM MD

Director, Kirketon Road Centre (KRC)

Conjoint Assoc Prof, University of NSW







PUBLIC MEETING
SAY NO
TO
NEEDLE
EXCHANGE
IN
DARLINGHURST RD
AT

REGINALD MURPHY HALL
GREENKNOWE AVENUE

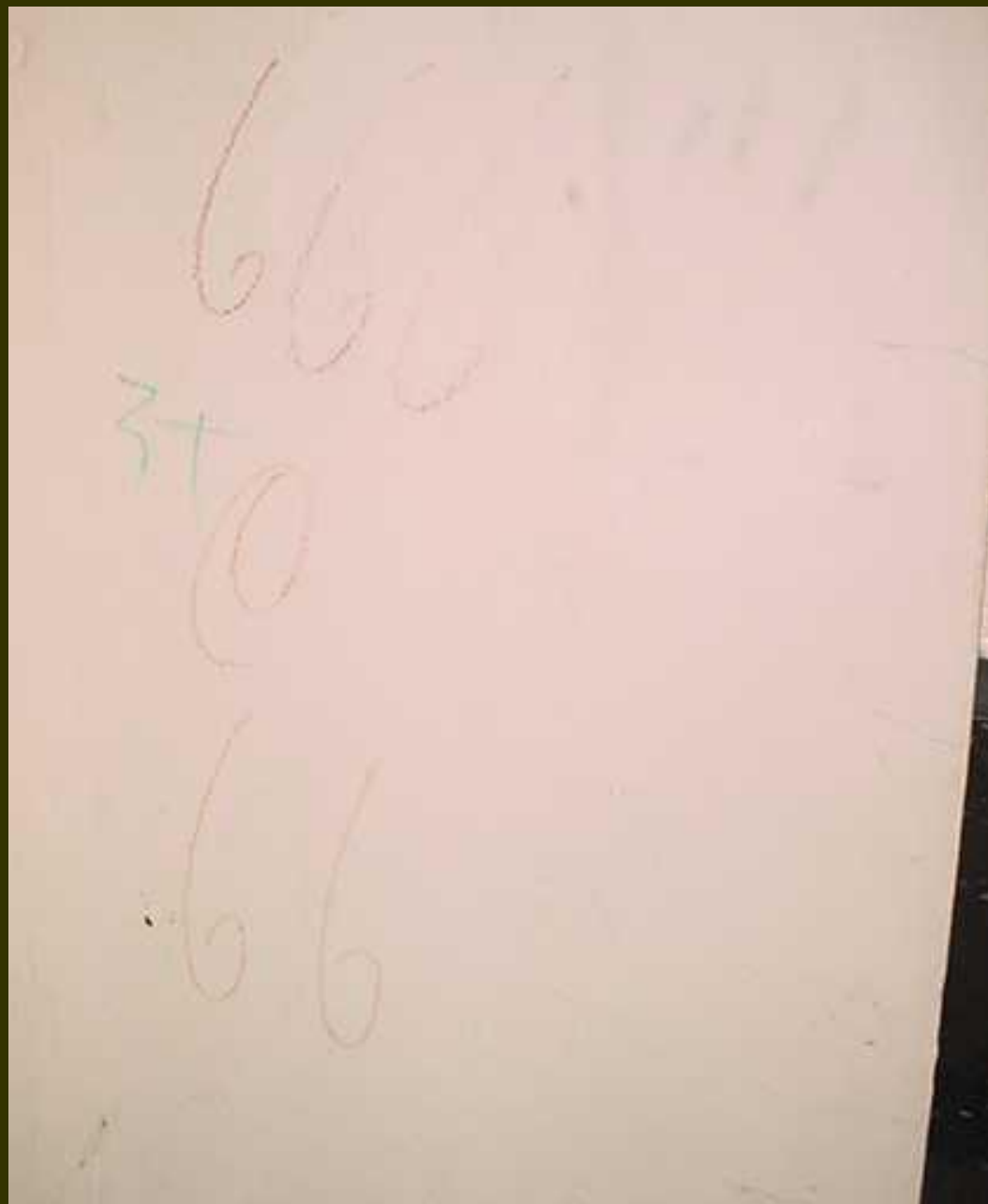
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

AT 6.45PM











Kirketon
Road
Centre

K R C

FIRE BRIGADE
EMERGENCY
ACCESS
24 HOURS
KEEP CLEAR



Close down
This place
for good
your debts.

Roxbury
Residents Action
Group.

Some do's and don'ts!

- Garner political support
- Provide relevant evidence
- Mobilise other 'expert' voices
- Communicate information effectively
- Show you care; speak from the heart

“How many people have been encouraged to inject drugs because of the advice being offered by Ingrid van Beek and her team of so-called professionals? I am willing to bet that some of those working at the [medically supervised injecting] centre will be trawling the streets for addicts to get their numbers up because, after all, it is their livelihood. Indeed, when I pointed out the escape clause to my wife [the new provision that a review will be triggered should the medically supervised injecting centre’s utilisation drop below 75% of current attendance levels] she immediately suggested that staff would pull people in off the street and get them to inject inside the injecting room so that they could maintain their jobs”

– MP for Castle Hill; Hansard, NSW Parliament, June 2007.

- Respect the community's intelligence
- Develop a relationship with media
- Get media training!

SMH - 040906 .

Diabetic cat brings needle case unstuck

IN July *The Daily Telegraph* heralded the apocalypse when it published photographs of a pile of "potentially deadly blood-tainted needles" dumped in a rubbish bin near the supervised injecting clinic in Kings Cross.

Cue calls for the centre to be shut, righteous anger from shock jocks and promises from the NSW Opposition Leader, Peter Debnam, that he would close the clinic if elected.

Then came the (less widely reported) riposte from the injecting centre: the syringes photographed by the *Telegraph* were not the brand they used, and there was no way they came from the clinic.

The *Telegraph* denied any wrongdoing, but the mystery of the needles, and how they came to be there, remained unsolved - until now. The syringes belonged not to a drug-ravaged junkie but to a diabetic cat named Trotsky, according to an exposé in the *Sydney City Hub*.

"While the issue raged in the media, Trotsky, an insulin-dependent cat, lined up for his next shot," reads the exclusive by Pam Walker.

Walker writes that Trotsky's master was moving house the day



into his flat. When he emerged, the needles were gone and he did not see them again until he picked up the *Telegraph*.

He did not know how they came to be scattered on top of a bin of a nearby restaurant.

"The vet has been supplying me with a big bunch [of needles] every visit. We go every two weeks to check Trotsky's blood sugar levels," he said.

We'd like to quote Mr Debnam in reminding Trotsky that: "The suggestion there's a safe way to take drugs is simply wrong ... funding

- Join every local community committee
- Establish your own community committee!
- Focus on local impacts
- Prioritise local residents' issues
- Include other sectors

- Consider community forums but beware of the pitfalls of falling in public
- Never dismiss adversarial views; be respectful and keep turning the other cheek
- Try to find the common ground but do not agree to something that will set up your program for failure
- DO NOT APOLOGISE for what you do

- Know your opposition
- Use your time judiciously
- Offer to pilot initiatives, but have an exit strategy (preferably after 12 months)
- Develop a Plan of Management to assess, monitor and review any impacts
- Be approachable and available at all times

- Be proactive in responding to complaints
- Communicate issues with the client base but be aware of the risks
- Be willing to be flexible and modify operations if needed
- Continue community dialogue in the good times as well as the mad and the bad times...
- And finally, be proud of what you do.

Thank YOU for listening!



Special thanks to:

- The dedicated staff of KRC and the MSIC and the socially marginalised populations for whom these services were established
- The SESLHD executive, the NSW Ministry of Health and the Government, which have supported these services over many years despite this area of work being potentially controversial...
- And finally, the Kings Cross community for recognising our legitimacy as a local stakeholder