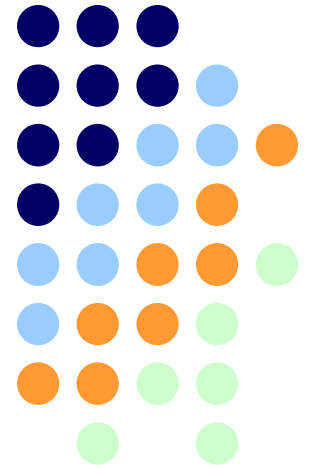
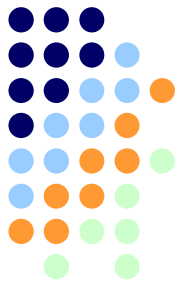


# Community Sharps

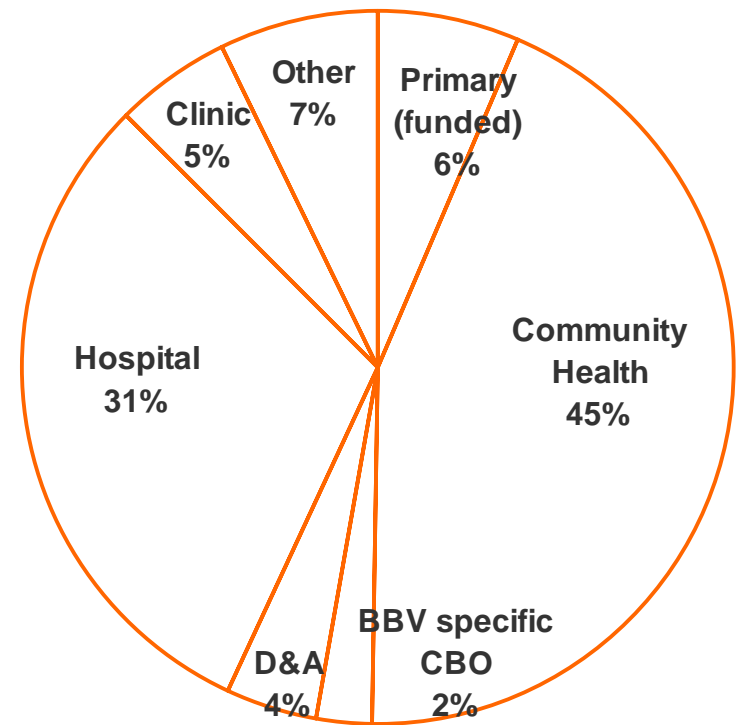
## Elements of Risk Management



# About NSP



- The Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) began in Australia in 1987 as a public health measure to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users and the general community.
- The NSP now provides a range of services that include access to:
  - blood-borne virus prevention equipment
  - education and information,
  - drug treatment,
  - legal, health and social services
  - medical care and
  - disposal and retrieval services.



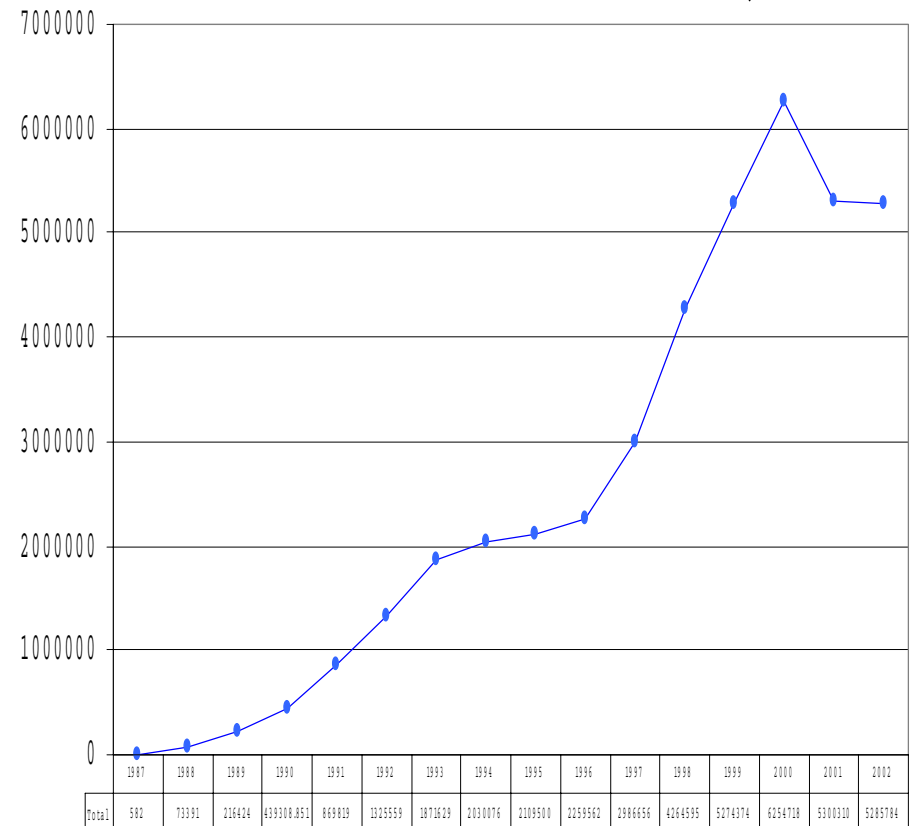
# About NSP

From 1991 – 2000, the provision of sterile needles and syringes has contributed to the prevention of:

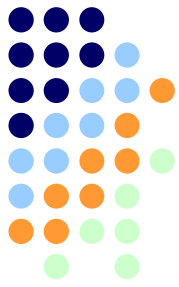
- 25,000 HIV infections
- 21,000 HCV infections
- 4,500 HIV related deaths by 2010
- 650 cases of liver cirrhosis among IDU by 2010
- 90 HCV related deaths by 2010

Up to \$7.7 billion in treatment costs saved.

Source: Commonwealth (2002) *Return on Investment in Needle and Syringe Programs in Australia* report.



Syringe Distribution in Victoria 1987 - 2002



# Methodology

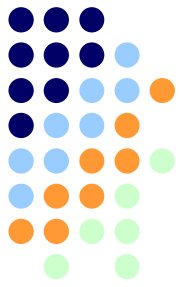
## World Health Organisation (WHO) Rapid Situational Assessment

“A means for depicting the extent and nature of social and health problems and for suggesting ways in which they may be improved.”

Data was gathered from range of sources including:

- statistical reports generated by agencies and organisations;
- structured interviews with key informants (service providers and residents); and
- open-ended questionnaires with people who purchase and/or use illicit drugs in the local area

# Impact



- **Increase in syringe litter**

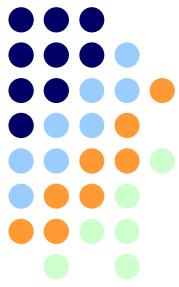
*It's just disgusting that we have to put up with this ... I have a young child who I have had to teach about needles ... I get really fed up with it*

- **Visibility of drug use and the illicit drug scene**

*Lots more people injecting and smoking ice, you can't sleep and eat on that stuff, last time I got some in Richmond I was up for five days.*

*I see lots of new faces from out of Richmond who don't respect people who live here. They're noisy and always act obvious when looking to score ...*

# Impact



- **Sense of danger and lack of safety**

*Locals feel scared to see somebody on drugs ... boisterous, erratic, too passive ...*

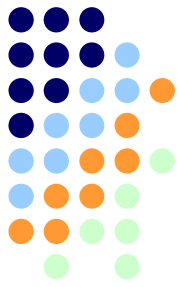
*I have seen more violence ... attempts at ripping others off. I don't think with dealers, more users against users.*

- **Isolation and disempowerment**

*I've nothing against them but they blatantly walk in as if they own the place ... they walk into my backyard and that really affects me.*

*It impacts on [resident's] home environment ... their home is not being kept clean and is not up to a standard that they have been used to, it gives people a sense of loss of control and a reminder that they are below the poverty line ...*

# Impact



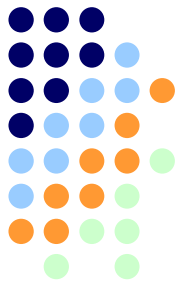
- **Deterioration of Community**

*Locals are more accepting of local injecting drug users, so they are familiar with each other, they have known them since they were kids, so they are less afraid.*

*We get hassled by security guards ... I don't go out as much as I used to ... people who live around here avoid us, they're all scared or something, it makes me feel bad that they judge me.*

*Certainly public housing residents are very angry about what they perceive to be a lack of attention to these issues by government and by the landlord.*

# Impact



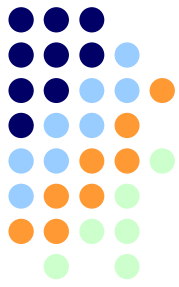
- **Lack of Support for local NSP**

*The needle exchange program isn't a very popular one at all, a lot of tenants have mentioned or indicated that having it there encourages [drug users] to come to the estate.*

*It's difficult to run highly specialised services because people are identified, poor behaviour is immediately associated with the program ... we've never been under threat as much as what we are now ... I think that there's enough of a kind of ... grassroots swell of disapproval towards the NSP ...*

*Anytime during the day ... there could be up to 6 or 7 junkies standing there, it's not a good look for a family health centre ... The tenants that live here do not understand that they have to sit and wait for a doctor, users can walk in and demand to see someone and they get their needles straight away.*





# Responses

- **Concierge System and Increased Security**

*We've had lots of positive comments, people are feeling an increased sense of security ...*

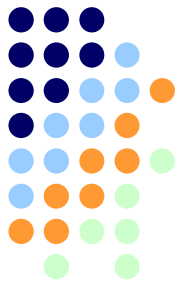
*I don't think that [security] really fixes the problem. It just moves it off the direct housing estate and in to the walk up units who don't have that security.*

- **Increased police presence**

*I would encourage more of ... a public face to the police, it's not just about arresting people, catching people, it's more about a visible presence.*

*One of the challenges for the police ... is that they want to be able to participate on the estate more ... there's a historic ... distrust of the police and people in authority [among residents].*

# Challenges



- **Dislocation and Adaptation of Drug Scene**

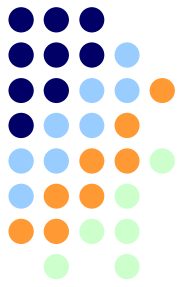
*It seems to be a smaller scene, not as many dealers, but still no problem for people to score, dealing is more hidden 'cause of security on the estate.*

*What it's done I think is that it's pushed a lot of dealers out of the buildings themselves onto the street, so it's displaced a lot of the drug activity to some extent.*

*... it further pushes things to the margins, so it makes it harder for [service provider] to identify where people are ... to identify those groups and then work with them to do that kind of harm reduction work we do.*

*More people are using in lane ways, car parks, on top of high-rise buildings and streets out of the estate.*

# Challenges



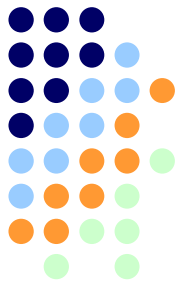
- **Increased risk**  
*[Injecting drug users are] more rushed in terms of their using practices, it's harder to find a safe secure place ...*

*A lot of anecdotal stuff about people seeing police on their way to the [Community Health Centre] or just word of mouth, knowing well it's not worth going near there because there's too many police around.*

*I am quickly in and out of the NSP, when I leave I feel like a police commando, watching my back to see who is near by.*

*More people are using in lane ways, car parks, on top of high-rise buildings and streets out of the estate.*

# Challenges



- **Limited Access**

MINE

9.00 am to 6.30 pm (Mon-Fri)

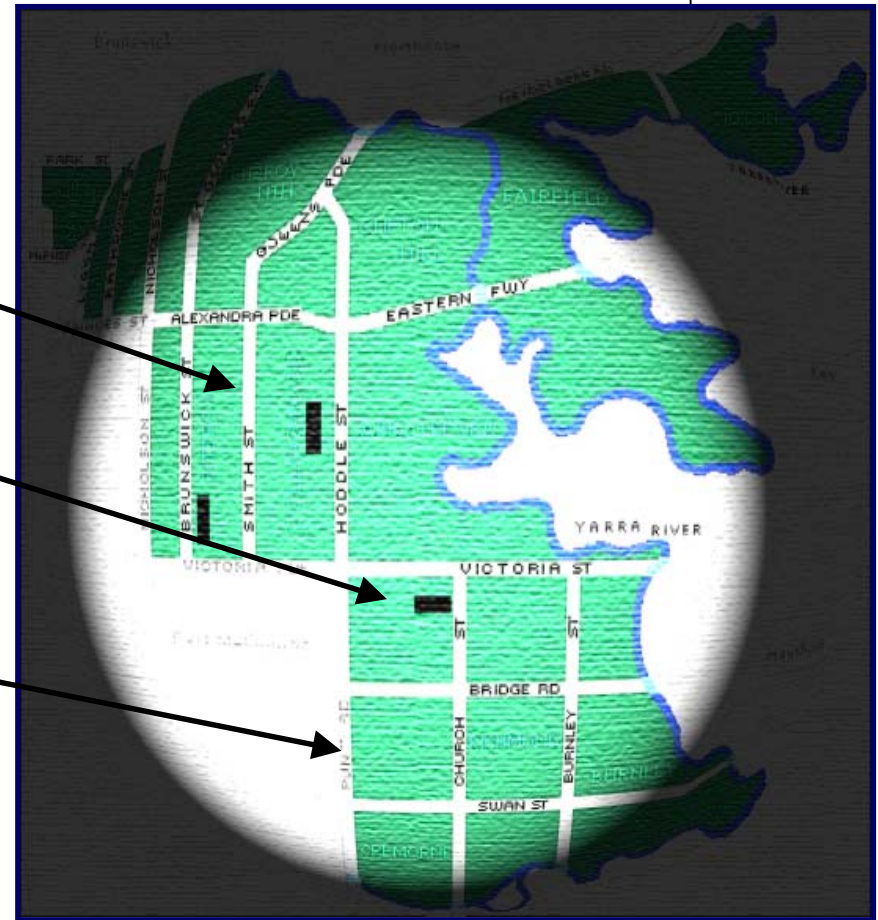
7.30 pm to 11.30 pm (Mon-Fri)

North Richmond CHC NSP

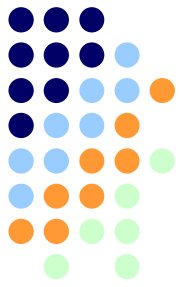
12.00 pm to 5.00 pm (Mon-Fri)

Bouyancy Foundation NSP

9.00 am to 5.30 pm (Mon-Fri)



# Challenges



- **Working with cultural and linguistic diversity**

Over 2060 residents living on the North Richmond estate.

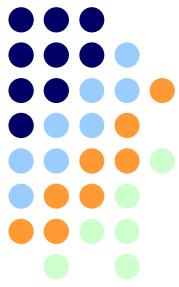
Of these 70 percent are of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds:

38 percent Vietnamese Australians

23 percent Chinese Australians

9 percent of other CLD backgrounds

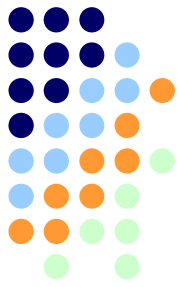
# Conclusion



Drug-related issues and the strategies that address them do not exist in isolation but are part of an organic system that is continually evolving.

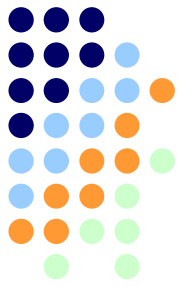
The development and implementation of management strategies require a whole system approach that assesses the impact of each of these strategies for all parts of the system.

# Conclusion



Risk management in relation to syringe litter will need to take into account the likelihood and consequences of:

- Increased drug activity and consequential increases in the volumes of syringe litter.
- Increased drug activity and consequential impact on the community.
- Increased police activity and security and consequential displacement of the drug scene.
- Resources required to be diverted to alleviate pressures and concerns of local community.



# Acknowledgements

Special thanks to:

Bouyancy Foundation  
CCI/DROP (Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre)  
City of Yarra  
Fitzroy Legal Service  
Jesuit Social Services  
MINE (Melbourne Inner City Needle and Syringe Program)  
North Richmond Community Health Centre  
Needle and Syringe Program (North Richmond Community Health Centre)  
YDOSE (North Richmond Community Health Centre)  
North Richmond Tenants Association  
Tenants Union  
Office of Housing, North Richmond  
VIVAIDS (Victorian Drug User Organisation)  
West Richmond Primary School  
Victoria Police  
Yarra Drug and Health Forum  
and the people who use and inject drugs who freely contributed their time to this project



# Community Sharps

## Elements of Risk Management

