

been undermined by his savage cuts to law enforcement, and by the composition of his own 14-person panel of appointed drug advisers, the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD), 11 of whom are known pro-legalization advocates, including Soros operative Tony Trimmingham (see interview with Tony Wood which follows). On Dec. 16, the ANCD released a statement, saying that the “ANCD would be supportive of any proven intervention that reduces drug use *and related harm*” (emphasis added). Although the chairman of the ANCD, Salvation Army Maj. Brian Watters, in the past has been vigorously opposed to any softening of drug laws, sources report that he has come under pressure from other Salvation Army officers who are supportive of shooting galleries, as well as several large financial contributors to the Salvation Army, who have threatened to withhold money unless he changes his hard-line position.

In fact, charities are leading the push to establish the shooting galleries, which is not unrelated to the large, tax-free donations they receive from large banks and foundations— institutions which have long bankrolled the drug-legalization campaign in Australia. For example, the Melbourne charity Open Family earlier this year threatened to open a shooting gallery illegally; an *EIR* investigation revealed that its board was stacked by known pro-drug financial interests, including ANZ Nominees, a slush fund for one of Australia’s oldest and dirtiest banks, the ANZ, which was based in London until 1976.

On Dec. 12, yet another pro-doper came out of the political closet, when federal opposition Labor Party leader Kim Beasley announced his personal support for “safe” heroin-injecting rooms—the highest level endorsement ever received for the drug legalization agenda in Australia.

Interview: Tony Wood

The fight for a zero-tolerance drug policy in Australia



Tony Wood and his wife Angela are staunch anti-drug campaigners in Australia, who took up the anti-drug fight when their 15-year-old daughter Anna died from a bad reaction to an Ecstasy tablet four years ago. Anna Wood’s death received widespread publicity, and Tony and Angela were courted by the George Soros-funded pro-drug legalization lobby in Australia to become their spokesmen. Because the Woods were vociferously anti-legalization, the recruitment attempt failed, and the Soros lobby turned to Tony Trimmingham, a divorced marriage guidance counselor, whose son Damien had died from a heroin overdose in a back alley in Sydney three years ago, to be their “grieving parent” spokesman instead. As the head of Family and Friends for Drug Law Reform, a Soros front, Trimmingham is regularly wheeled out to comment to the media about the necessity for softening the drug laws. Trimmingham is scheduled to be a featured speaker at a Jan. 13-14 conference in Seattle, Washington, entitled “Preventing Heroin Overdoses: A Pragmatic Approach,” which is sponsored by the George Soros-funded Lindesmith Center. Robert Barwick interviewed Tony Wood on Dec. 6 to get the other side of the drug debate in Australia.

EIR: What prompted you to become an anti-drug campaigner?

Wood: It happened when our daughter died, actually, just a little over four years ago. We didn’t need any prompting—we just fell into it, it wasn’t as if anything happened one way or the other. Not long after Anna died from taking a single Ecstasy tablet—it wasn’t an overdose, these tablets just kill people at random, we don’t know why—Anna was diagnosed with hypotremia, that’s what she died of, caused by taking one single Ecstasy tablet. From there, as a family we were contacted by people like Dr. Alex Wodak, who tried to recruit us to his way of thinking, that we needed drastic changes here in Australia, inasmuch as if we legalized all drugs, we wouldn’t be having this problem. I believe, and as a family, we believe, that Anna would have died whether the drug was legal, or illegal—it makes no difference, drugs are still dangerous.

From there on, the media picked up on Anna, and it started a whole new life for us. I’ve still got to work, obviously, to pay the bills at home, but there’s a lot of this anti-drug work going on. My wife spends her entire time talking at schools, and has spoken at more than 300 schools Australia-wide—from Tasmania, to Perth, through Western Australia, right up through Queensland (I think the only two places she hasn’t been in are South Australia and the Northern Territory). But we’re finding that drug use among our children is just escalat-

ing, and we're handling the situation very poorly in Australia.

EIR: Your story received a huge amount of publicity at the time, but the dominant voice in drug issues in Australia is "harm minimization." What are your thoughts on harm minimization?

Wood: Harm minimization is murdering our children. Let me put it to you this way: To start with, as a family, my wife and myself were responsible for letting Anna go out that night when she took that tablet, so we take the full responsibility for that. But when we look at what's been going on in our country since 1985, with this policy of harm minimization, it is the number-one killer of our children, and it is not only killing them, it is maiming them. We're getting young people maimed because of the drug education they're being supplied with in our country, and it is a scandal—it's an absolute scandal. I cannot condemn harm minimization enough. I think that once we take on a zero-tolerance policy in Australia, we've got some chance of combatting what's going on in our country.

Angela was over in Perth just recently, and she came back with some tapes of a conference she was at, and one of the politicians talked about how drug deaths in Western Australia were going down, to the extent of 18-19% a year, whereas over in the eastern states we're going up 60-70% a year. He put this down to their tougher stance on drugs over there—they're not talking about shooting galleries or anything else in Western Australia; they don't want them, and they believe that their strong commitment to more or less zero-tolerance is helping to reduce drug deaths in their state.

EIR: There are similar differences between Australia and America on that point, as well, aren't there?

Wood: The difference between Australia and America is that adolescent drug use in Australia is now four times higher than in the States. I've got the figures here in front of me: the 1995 Household Drug Survey for Australia, and the 1995 Household Drug Survey for the States. It's now running at Australian adolescents taking drugs at four times a higher rate than in the U.S.A., and I think that that's a scandal as well. To see Australia doing what we're doing to our children, and not doing anything to stop it, is mind-blowing—we've got to do something to stop our kids from taking these drugs.

EIR: In the United States, the Drug Policy Foundation (DPF) and the Lindesmith Center, the main promoters of harm minimization, are funded by George Soros, and Soros funds counterpart groups in Australia. Is there much awareness in Australia about the Soros agenda in pushing drug legalization?

Wood: No, not at all, and it's pretty well covered up. There is [a Soros] organization down in Victoria, down in Melbourne, called the Australian Drug Foundation, which is run by a man named Bill Stronach. I've got film of Stronach addressing a conference in Washington in 1992, where he actually stood

up and bragged openly about how they manipulate the media in Australia. He said, and his exact words were, "we employ journalists"—and he's talking about the Australian Drug Foundation—"we employ journalists, not to churn out press releases, but to get in the mainstream media and act as subversives." To get their point across, they've got people—he went on to say, "We've got 24-hour availability." So, if somebody comes up with a theory that marijuana could be bad for you, they've got people on tap 24 hours a day to turn that around. And he actually says that "we can turn things around and get our point of view put across the way we want to"—and he uses that expression, "the way we want to"—in the newspapers. These people are the biggest harm minimizers we've got in this country, and, between him and Alex Wodak, they are probably the two biggest killers of our adolescents in this country.

EIR: What has been your experience with the proponents of harm minimization?

Wood: The "Witness" program on Channel 7 invited us to go to Hobart to a harm minimization conference there. I think it was the 19th minimization conference. We went there for only a day. Angela and I were shocked when we arrived, to find that these people had so much money. There were 600 delegates from all over the world, some of them actual heroin users, who were put up in the Hobart Casino for three nights. This conference went on for three days, and the whole thing was an absolute farce. I mean, how can you have educators down there being taught how to talk to kids, telling them how to use drugs safely? *There is no safe way to use drugs.* That conference was exhausting for the pair of us; we were probably the only two people—the TV crew were obviously neutral, but we were the only two people out of 600 who were actually anti-drug. All the rest thought that the best way to sort out our drug problem in Australia is to let our kids have availability of anything.

There was a man there from Liverpool, England, whose name was Pat O'Hare. I got him to say in front of the TV camera that he would not be happy until all drugs are legalized worldwide. Now, this was what he said; he was brought over here to address this conference, and these people were actually pressing for the legalization of drugs, worldwide.

EIR: Was it your sense that they were trying to recruit you to their cause?

Wood: Look, by this stage—it was probably six months after Anna's death, and by then we had looked at the folly that was going on in our country, and the people who were ringing us and looking for assistance because their kids were out of control, or had died, were looking for some help, and there was no help for them. The ones who were on drugs, the Drug Council in this country will tell them—you could have a 15-year-old on marijuana here who's gone almost psychotic and the councillors will say to you, "Leave him alone, he's 15

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years old, he's allowed to do what he wants to." So, it's your problem, it's not his. Now, you just leave him alone, and just let him get on with his drug use. And this is what our Drug Council, paid for by governments in this country, are telling parents in our country.

EIR: What was your reaction to this Hobart conference?

Wood: The reaction was one of sadness, anger. We went home after this conference (we were probably exhausted for days afterwards) and we were scratching our heads that someone could finance a conference like this, to teach kids how to use drugs safely, to talk about harm minimization. I think that our kids are owed more that. They should be taught that drugs are unsafe, and they should be told exactly what drugs can do to them.

EIR: Of course, today the Wood case receives next to no publicity, and media attention is instead focussed on Tony Trimingham, who is pro-drug legalization. Why does he get publicity, and you don't?

Wood: The media love people like Tony Trimingham because he is a pro-legalizer. He's got himself onto the Prime Minister's committee—which to me is another shame, that the Prime Minister has put this Tough on Drugs committee together with 14 people on it, and 11 of them are pro-legalization. The committee just doesn't work when you've got people like that on board, and Tony Trimingham will take any available chance to get himself into the media.

We have a friend, a rather well-known man, whose 15-year-old daughter had started on heroin. He rang Angela and wanted some assistance. He also stormed into our Premier Bob Carr's office, and demanded to know why needles are so readily available in this country and why our kids can pick them up and just go onto using heroin. I mean heroin freely available at school gates—you'll buy it anywhere you want to. But this very well-known media personality wanted to know from Bob Carr, why this was happening. The Premier's office contacted Tony Trimingham and advised him of what was going on, and Trimingham contacted "A Current Affair" to tell them that this well-known identity's child was on heroin. I challenged Trimingham about this at a meeting several months later, and he said, "Well, you know how hard it is to get publicity, Tony." So, these people will prostitute themselves for any sort of publicity.

EIR: The "grieving parent" image is something the pro-de-

criminalization lobby plays to the hilt. As grieving parents yourselves, what do you think about the way they are being used to leverage softer drug laws?

Wood: I get sick in the stomach, the way they use that. Look, as a family, we're survivors—Anna was a victim in this, but we're survivors. Now, these parents are carrying on like they're victims. Until they get themselves above that and come back as survivors, we're not going to go anywhere. Always play the part of a victim—it's looking for public sympathy, and I think that the public in this country are starting to get sick of it. I don't think they want a country full of victims. We want survivors, we want to get out there and change things.

I cannot understand the parents. Tony Trimingham has this magazine out called *Heroin Site*. It's a terrible little paper that he puts out every month, and the whole theme right through this magazine is the legalization of drugs; it's just there. "If my child had free heroin, maybe he wouldn't have died," and so on. But the worst one of all, was just in the magazine we saw last month, where they said, two different lots of parents (and we feel very sorry they've lost their children), but they talk about how they couldn't call the ambulance because the police would get involved. Now, I don't understand that mentality. If your child is ill, it doesn't matter whether it's drugs or whatever, you immediately get medical assistance for them. Now, if you don't call an ambulance, and your child dies because of a heroin overdose, I think you're the one responsible for their death, to be quite honest with you.

EIR: Tony Trimingham is addressing a Soros conference in the United States in January. What do you think about that?

Wood: Well, it makes you wonder doesn't it? Why would you take someone over to the States—and I suppose it would be people like Wodak and the rest of them going over there—why would you be taking someone to address a country where they're winning the war, and we're actually losing it here? When we talk about our kids—adolescent drug use in this country is four times that of America—we're failing here. What's going on here is a scandal, and they're going to take those people over to address a conference in America. Why would you want losers to go and address a conference? You want winners, not losers. And these people are dead-set losers. And the victims are our children.

EIR: What are your thoughts on the churches that are leading the charge to set up heroin shooting galleries and the like?

Wood: Yes, that's very sad. I don't believe that is all the churches, I believe it's just several people who have been seduced by the Trimminghams and the Wodaks. The Catholic Church, of course, St. Vincents Hospital here—Wodak has his Drug and Alcohol Service in there, and I truly believe that those Sisters [of Charity], the nuns, probably thought they were doing the right thing. But with a lot of prayer and a lot of letters to the Pope, that was changed. The other church up here at Kings Cross, the Wayside Chapel [which has taken over the shooting gallery project], I see now where there's hierarchy in that organization that are trying to stop that as well. So, I can't see the churches taking this over. I think that there's too many good Christian people out there who don't want to see this happen.

EIR: Are you saying that the Pope's intervention, stopping the Sisters of Charity from running the original shooting gallery, came after a campaign of letter-writing to the Pope?

Wood: Yes, a lot of letter-writing, from Catholics Australia-wide. And not only to the Pope, but to the Bishop here in Sydney as well—they wrote to everybody to try to have this stopped. The Catholics don't want to be seen to be keeping people ill. What we've got to do is make them better. If those sisters had said, "We're going to put them into rehabilitation and get them well," there wouldn't have been a problem. But when they're talking about giving them heroin, and actually have people trade in the drugs quite openly outside the hospital, no Catholic person would want that to happen.

EIR: American Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche has advocated a military-style war on drugs, one that targets the sources of production, as well as the banks that launder the money, without which the trade couldn't function. As a parent-turned-anti-drug campaigner, do you support this approach? And could you give us a picture of the status of the anti-drug campaign in Australia at the moment?

Wood: I support a military-style campaign on drugs 100%. That's the only way we're going to win this battle—we've got to cut it off at the source. And if we don't do that, we're going to lose more young people. I'm not concerned about the ones who have died; I'm concerned about the parents who are going through this living hell, of having their kids on cocaine, or marijuana, or whatever. I've been with mothers whose sons beat them up to steal their pension money for drugs. Now this is unacceptable behavior; it's got to be stopped, worldwide. And I think that if we get out there and stop it at the source, that's the way to go. We're losing more young people every year to drugs than we ever did in the whole ten years we were in the Vietnam War. So, I think we've got to get out there and fight it that way.

But that's only one way. We've also got to get out there and educate our kids, to let them know what these drugs are doing to them, and tell them the truth at schools—that marijuana not only affects your brain, but it affects your reproduc-

tive organs, and it's probably mutating your body; it's going to affect the next generations, after what's going on today.

The state of the anti-drug fight in Australia is almost zero. I mean, we've got no say at all. I believe that what has happened in Australia—we watched a political party form here not too many years ago, Pauline Hanson's One Nation. Now, what happened with her, was, the Prime Minister here—and it was very clever—never acknowledged it. And this is what is happening with anti-drug campaigners in this country—you don't get any acknowledgment. They don't argue with you, they just pat you on your head and leave you go. If we could really get out there and argue, we'd have some chance of balancing it. But there is no balance in the argument here, because [the media] treat us like we're not even here. We're treated like we're invisible.

We need to make ourselves more visible, and I think the way we do that is to get more people on board, and more angry people. We need to get out there with a lot of anger and a lot of guts, and start tearing at the Wodaks, and Stronachs, and the rest of the people who are niggling away, behind the scenes, day in and day out. They've got the money, they've got the time, they've got everything we haven't. We have no money, no funding—it's not funding we need, as much as we need more people out there being strong and pressuring our governments, and telling them that what's happening is unacceptable.

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Documentation

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Nov. 17, 1999

Sir,

I refer to the attached letter of Oct. 15, 1999 from the Honorable John Della Bosca MLC, Special Minister of State for the Government of New South Wales. At its 67th session (Nov. 1-18, 1999), the International Narcotics Control Board considered carefully the question of whether "medically supervised injection rooms" or so-called "shooting galleries," including the explanation of the proposed facility in the state of New South Wales as explained by Mr. Della Bosca, are consistent with the international drug control convention. This letter contains the conclusions of the Board. . . .

The Board maintains its position that permission or tacit consent given by any national, state, or local authority for the establishment and operation of injection rooms or shooting galleries is contrary to the international drug control conventions.

It is noted that the government of New South Wales wishes to permit the establishment of a medically supervised injection room for heroin addicts as a "clinical" trial, limited in duration for a period of 18 months at one location. The Board is unable to agree with this justification. The state's sanctioning of a facility where drugs may be abused "safely" cannot be considered as a medical or scientific trial under the drug control conventions and should be distinguished from the case where the Board approved a country's annual estimates for heroin to be used in a scientific study of medically prescribed narcotics to drug addicts. The INCB has no information that any prescriptions will be issued and administered at the injection rooms in response to any proper medical diagnosis by qualified and licensed physicians who practice in the substance abuse field, or that prescriptions will be issued in full compliance with Australian law. No details have been provided about how scientific controls can and will be exercised in this project.

The Board recognizes that the spread of drug abuse, HIV, and hepatitis are serious concerns, and encourages your government to provide instead the largest variety possible of treatment facilities including the medically supervised administration of prescription drugs in line with sound medical practice and the international drug control conventions.

Serious legal problems exist with such injection rooms as well. Mr. Della Bosca states that injection rooms should be permitted where prevailing conditions in the relevant country make it the most appropriate means of protecting the public health and welfare. To the knowledge of the Board, the Gov-

ernment of Australia has not made such a determination. It would be grateful nonetheless for clarification on this matter. While it is recognized that there is some flexibility in the application of the penal provisions in article 36 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended, the treaty limits the range of possible alternatives to conviction and punishment: treatment, education, after-care, rehabilitation and social reintegration. The aim of allowing this flexibility is to balance the deterrent effect of the penal sanctions with the proper medical treatment of drug addiction. By permitting the existence of an injection facility where the goal would appear to be harm reduction without fear of arrest, little is done to advance the medical treatment of drug addiction (it would appear that only those under the age of 18 who are barred from using the facility would be required to undergo any treatment or counseling) and the deterrent effect of criminal law is undermined. In this respect, such facilities are in contravention not only of the Single Convention, but also of various human rights instruments which confer an obligation on governments to recognize everyone's right to attain the highest standards of physical and mental health (see, for example, article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). Those under 18 for whom treatment is required have no incentive to approach these facilities, and therefore cannot be said to meet the State's obligation under article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to protect children from drug abuse.

The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988, requires Parties, subject to their constitutional principles and basic concepts of their legal system, to establish possession and purchase of drugs for personal (non-medical) consumption as a criminal offense. By permitting injection rooms, the government could be considered to be facilitating in the commission of possession and use crimes, as well as other criminal offenses including drug trafficking.

Last, but not least, the Board is concerned at the message that would be sent by the countenancing of these injection facilities by public authorities. As I am sure you are aware, drug issues receive wide publicity in the Australian media and the existence of legally countenanced injection rooms could send the wrong message that Australia is a place where illicit substances can be abused with impunity. As the host of the year 2000 summer Olympics, Australia should instead be promoting healthy lifestyles, free from any substance abuse.

I would be grateful if you could transmit this letter to Australia's Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, to the Honorable John Della Bosca MLC, Special Minister of State for the Government of New South Wales and to (Rev.) Honorable Fred Nile MLC of the New South Wales Parliament. . . .

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A.L. Mandris, President, International Narcotics Control Board