

# MEDIA RELEASE

Amanda Bresnan MLA, Health Spokesperson, ACT Greens

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## **Corrections staff delegate should be shown overseas NSPs first hand**

ACT Greens Health and Corrections spokesperson, Amanda Bresnan MLA, says delegates of Corrections staff should be given the opportunity to visit and observe prisons in Europe that successfully run needle and syringe programs, in order to better understand what is proposed at the AMC.

“Corrections staff are key stakeholders and it’s important that they are given the chance to talk to their peers who have run similar programs elsewhere,” Ms Bresnan said.

“It is common practise for government to take a delegation to examine services that they are considering implementing or replicating, including if this is overseas. In July 2008, a team funded by ACT Health travelled to the United Kingdom to observe the structure and operations of established Nurse Walk in Centres.

“Corrections staff should be given the opportunity to visit overseas needle and syringe programs, so they are actually seeing how these programs work on the ground.

“When the Public Health Association were given the task of writing the report about a possible needle and syringe program for the AMC, they proposed taking a delegate of the Corrections staff with them to Europe to see existing program first-hand. Unfortunately this didn’t happen.

“I appreciate that Corrections staff would have concerns about what a needle and syringe program would mean to their role as law enforcers, and whether it would be a threat to their safety. Giving them the opportunity to talk to their peers, means they aren’t just seeing reports or looking at information second-hand.

“In a contentious debate such as this, it is vitally important to look at how existing programs work and what has been the experience from this. We do this as a matter of practice for any sort of program that is introduced and this issue shouldn’t been any different,” Ms Bresnan said.