



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Hearing date: 14 February 2025

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Alcohol and Drug Foundation

Received date: 3 March 2025

1. Rachel PAYNE, p. 9-10

Question asked:

An independent review of international cannabis legalisation models needs to be undertaken before any moves to legalise cannabis in Victoria. Would you consider an expert advisory panel to be the appropriate mechanism to conduct an independent review, and who would you see that would be included in that? What stakeholders or sectors would be included?

Response: (See response below)

3 March 2025

Committee Secretariat
Parliament House, Spring St
East Melbourne VIC 3002
lsic.council@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Alcohol and Drug Foundation – Question on Notice

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) thanks the committee for the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry through the written consultation and the public hearing. We are writing to respond to the subsequent Question on Notice from the public hearing:

An independent review of international cannabis legalisation models needs to be undertaken before any moves to legalise cannabis in Victoria. Would you consider an expert advisory panel to be the appropriate mechanism to conduct an independent review, and who would you see that would be included in that? What stakeholders or sectors would be included?

The ADF would be very supportive of an expert advisory panel to conduct an independent review, pending appropriate terms of reference and committee membership. As noted in our written submission, existing evidence demonstrates that highly commercialised cannabis markets can exacerbate public health harms. We would therefore recommend that any expert committee to investigate cannabis legalisation in Victoria should be required to examine the issue of legalisation in the context of minimising harms, including the existing significant harms of criminalisation. By embedding this principle from the beginning of the policy process, it is more likely to be embedded in any recommendations or conclusions from the committee.

Committee membership would be best made up of relevant experts from the AOD sector, including drug policy academics, NGOs engaged in advocacy and with relevant experience, and the voices of people with lived experience of both cannabis use and criminalisation, as well as representatives from relevant government bodies who would be involved in the implementation and operationalisation of cannabis legalisation in Victoria. To further support the committee's harm minimisation objectives, the committee should explicitly exclude members of groups with a commercial interest in cannabis. This

Level 12
607 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

PO Box 818
North Melbourne
VIC 3051

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 03 9611 6100
 adf@adf.org.au
adf.org.au ABN 66 057 731 192

would reflect direction from the World Health Organisation on policy making on tobacco, and best-practice policymaking on alcohol.

The ADF has undertaken significant work looking at models of cannabis legalisation, including an evidence review that examined the relationship between different models of legalisation and differing outcomes. We would be pleased to continue to engage with the committee, its members, and the government on this important topic.

Sincerely,



Robert Taylor

Manager – Policy & Engagement

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