



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA
Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee – Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

Beechworth hearing for use of cannabis inquiry

A parliamentary inquiry into the [use of cannabis in Victoria](#) will hold a landmark regional hearing in Beechworth this Wednesday 28 April.

The Legislative Council’s Legal and Social Issues Committee will travel to the North East Victorian town to coincide with the Upper House’s historic regional sitting to be held in Bright.

The hearing will commence at 10 am at the George Kerferd Hotel, with representatives of Gateway Health, an organisation which provides drug and alcohol support services across North East Victoria.

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service will follow, with members of the community welcome to attend and watch proceedings from the public gallery.

“We know Aboriginal Victorians are over-represented when it comes to cannabis-related offences,” Committee Chair Fiona Patten said.

“The work of the Parliament is about reflecting and representing the community and the committee process is one of the very significant ways we do this.”

Representatives from The Centre Wangaratta and Odyssey House Victoria will also provide evidence.

Members of the local community are also encouraged to share their lived experiences of cannabis use once formal witness contributions wrap up at 1 pm.

“The data shows us that cannabis use is prevalent in regional Victoria so it is vitally important that we hear from these local voices as we investigate the best way to manage the use of cannabis in our community,” Ms Patten said.

The inquiry is one of three Upper House committees set to hold hearings in regional Victoria this week to coincide with the Legislative Council’s first regional sitting in nine years.

The Environment and Planning Committee will hold two hearings into [ecosystem decline in Victoria](#) over consecutive days (Tuesday 27 April and Wednesday 28 April) at the Parklake Quality Hotel in Shepparton.

The Economy and Infrastructure Committee’s hearing into the [impact of COVID-19 on Victoria’s tourism and events sectors](#) will be held at the Bright Community Centre on Wednesday 28 April.

Members of the community are welcome to attend, but all hearings will comply with check-in and social distancing requirements of each venue, including public gallery limits.

Issued: 26 April 2021