

Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

██████████
Organisation Name:
Your position or role:

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Drag the statements below to reorder them. In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this Inquiry into the use of Cannabis in Victoria to consider::

Education,Public health,Public safety,Criminal activity,Young people and children,Accessing and using cannabis,Social impacts,Mental health

What best describes your interest in our Inquiry? (select all that apply) :

Individual,Academic and research

Are there any additional themes we should consider?

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

First and foremost, it needs to be understood why cannabis was made illegal in the first place. It was not an outcry from the public because of health issues, it was an excuse to retain and marginalise a certain demographic. Cannabis was no problem until the early 20th century. What caused the problem was not even an Australian problem, but a US situation.

The US had seen a massive influx of Mexicans after the Mexican Revolution war. The locals in Texas and other southern border states had issues with the influx of Mexicans, mainly anecdotal and simple racism. The media played on this fear through propaganda by demonising the Mexicans and their culture, including the use of cannabis, as a way to explain their "abnormal" behavior and customs.

During 1920, America decided that alcohol should be barred from legal sales and thus created an enforcement agency to enforce this new law, the Bureau of Prohibition, which would later become part of the FBI. When prohibition was lifted in 1933, the US government had this entire enforcement agency with nothing to do.

These two elements combined to make for a reason to detain and control certain demographics in the US. It is widely known and accepted that minorities back then made more use of cannabis as Caucasians stuck to their alcohol. The enforcement agency required a motive and a reason to detain these certain demographics and cannabis became just that.

Australia made cannabis illegal because of the Geneva Convention of 1925, where the League of Nations decided to make it a world wide recommendation that its use must be limited to medical use. Most Australians at that time had no idea cannabis even existed, let alone what effects it have, or what medical use it may have. Australia, being a young nation, bowed to pressure from both the LoN and the US.

It has since then stayed illegal for no reason other than it was made illegal.

I have been smoking cannabis for 20 years on a regular basis. Yes I tried other drugs during that time, but they were on my hit list long before I even used cannabis. I no longer make use of any other substances, nor

have I for a long period time other than cannabis (I simply grew out of it) and my use of cannabis is simply a vice to unwind. Not one of my friends or close acquaintances have ever seen it as a gateway drug, none of them have used hard hitting substances such as cocaine, heroin or meth.

In my 20 years of use I have noticed a few things.

- 1) You can reason with someone who is stoned, you cannot reason with someone who is drunk;
- 2) You can't die from cannabis use, you cannot overdose using cannabis;
- 3) You plateau with cannabis use, which is to say, if you smoke more during a session, there is a limited as to how strong the effects get. You'll reach a point where the effects simply won't increase, unlike alcohol where you can literally drink yourself to death. In fact, you'll start to sober up;
- 4) Constant, heavy use does have a detriment effect on motivation, however motivation returns when not smoking heavily;
- 5) You do not dream when you are using cannabis, but dreams return after you detox for a period of time;
- 6) Smoking/using cannabis in a more controlled manner, ie. for certain events, helps with motivation such as the gym;
- 7) Driving under the influence should be illegal and rightfully so as it does impair reaction times, however the criteria for its effects need to be narrowed. In other words, the effects drastically lesson after 3-4 hours, to the point where reaction time is normalised again, even though you might have traces of it left in your system.
- 8) You retain complete body control, unlike alcohol where you can start to stagger your movement and start to slur your words.

Just like how not everyone is an alcoholic or a smoker, not everyone will become users of cannabis. Individuals who want to use cannabis right now will find avenues to do so, and this is usually through criminal hubs. As of this moment, criminals are benefiting from the law, it's enriching them, they are the main benefactors of the illegality of cannabis use. Some of us are lucky enough to have made contacts in the industry who are not criminals and who are simply cultivating the product for this exact reason. Because of its status as being an illegal substance, you have a taboo on its users who can't seek medical advice or personal help without fear of being demonised as a drug user, instead of someone who needs mental health assistance.

The number of tobacco smokers have gone down over time, along with the consumption of alcohol. This was achieved mainly through education programs and there's no reason to believe that the same outcome won't be attained through educating the public of cannabis use. Tobacco isn't advertised and the same rules should apply to cannabis.

Then there is the medical use of cannabis, which has been proven to be great alternative to synthetic opioids and far less addictive than said substance. I can speak of experience here as I have had back problems for a long time since a cycling accident. Certain strains of cannabis were more effective than the Oxycontin I was subscribed by my GP. When I was using cannabis, I remained a functioning adult, I could continue to do tasks at home. With Oxycontin I was a vegetable. The pain was gone, sure, but so was my own self being.

There are a number of people who are in far worse situations than me regarding their health who would benefit greatly from the use of cannabis, chemotherapy patients being a big demographic.

I mean, there are even studies that are concluding that the use of cannabis can block COVID19.

The fact is keeping it illegal doesn't allow the research of all its uses and properties. We can talk endlessly of the use from hemp resin, how strong it is and its uses, but hemp is also classified as illegal and is considered cannabis, thereby limiting its research and use.

Legalising the use of cannabis would be gigantic economic boom to the state. Whichever state does it first,

will benefit the most. You'll have a surge in small businesses and entrepreneurship. Banks however would need to see the cannabis industry as legit otherwise they'd be reluctant in approving business loans. Criminals would be have a large source of their income taken away and the state would benefit from the revenue for use of medical education and other public programs. Court usage would allow for more serious crimes and the police force can be focused on more serious criminal activity.

At the end of the day, personally, all I want to do is to sometimes have a cannabis chocolate brownie at home after putting the kids to sleep, to unwind and relax, maybe watch a movie or complete some mundane chores. If my kids require me at all during that time, I am functioning, and also funnier, being more playful and focused on them. I am tired of feeling like I am a criminal to society when what I am doing does no harm to anyone, including myself or those around me.

When I wake up I am sober and normalised.

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

My wife does not approve my use of cannabis, because of its legal standing, not its effects, and as such it would best if I do not appear before a committee or have my name published. However the submission may be published for public consumption if the ability is there to do so.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:

Signature:

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