

## Inquiry into the use of Cannabis in Victoria

It's time for government policy to reflect reality Yehuda Harmor

**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::**

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

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

Individual

**Are there any additional themes we should consider?**

Bodily autonomy

**Select all that apply. Do you think there should be restrictions on the use of cannabis? :**

Personal use of cannabis should be legal. ,Sale of cannabis should be legal and regulated. ,Cultivation of cannabis for personal use should be legal.,There should be no restrictions.

### YOUR SUBMISSION

#### Submission:

I apologise in advance if this submission isn't presented in the correct manner and for hurried nature in which it is written but I hope my message gets across.

When I was a teenager, my contemporaries and I thought that some of our elders were woefully backward in their attitudes to drugs in general and marijuana in particular. That view became even more prevalent when I was in my twenties and thirties. I'm now in my sixties and use of weed has been normalised throughout the western world with most people having no issue with its occasional use. Like any drug, legal or otherwise, there are cases where its use has adversely affected people. To deal with those adverse medical, psychological and social effects, we need to change our attitudes and our approach, and to treat cannabis use as a normal part of everyday life. Our official approach to the drug's use as, a priori problematic, is the cause of needless pain and suffering and hampers our efforts to deal with many social ills. Sensible policy needs to be based on facts elicited from scientific enquiry. We need to first establish what negative effects cannabis use has and to distinguish those from the negative effects of our policy responses (criminality, social stigma, etc). This distinction is, as far as I can see, seldom if ever made. Then we can decide what needs to be done in response.

As my remarks are meant to relate to the commission's terms of reference, I will address the question of criminal activity. This, and the economic distortions associated with it are not a consequence of cannabis use per se, but of our criminalisation of activities related to it. Cannabis is so easy to grow that we could end the associated criminal activity, in a heartbeat by removing the profit motive. We could also restore some trust in authorities if they are seen to be basing their policies on a reality that most of the community already knows and understands.

I'd also like to briefly address the topic of education. Nothing makes an education campaign fail as easily as

apparent dishonesty. If any material you produce doesn't ring true or accord with people's experience, they will reject everything you have to say on the subject. Any campaign must include an acknowledgement of the reasons that people choose to use drugs and the positive personal experiences they have with them. Only then can you talk about the negative effects. I have only ever seen one attempt at doing this which explains why these campaigns are almost always seen as irrelevant by the target audience.

Before I die, It would be great to see our society deal with our psycho-social problems of alienation isolation and hopelessness directly, instead of fiddling around the edges with the symptoms. But I'm not holding my breath.

Yours sincerely, Y.H.

**Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:**

### **FILE ATTACHMENTS**

**File1:**

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**

Yehuda Harmor