

Inquiry into the use of Cannabis in Victoria

mr Andrew Hale

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

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

Individual,Working in the criminal or social justice sector

Are there any additional themes we should consider?

legalisation

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.

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

legalise cannabis. assess it according to science, not ideology

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1: [5f433d8f46297-submission to parl inquiry re cannabis.pdf](#)

File2:

File3:

Signature:

andrew hale

This inquiry is rigged to prevent it considering the proper question - how to best manage and regulate cultivation, sale and use of LEGAL cannabis. The terms of reference are otherwise, directed to continued criminalisation of cannabis, and ignoring what reason demands.

Before turning to the terms, and addressing each, we ought to agree that: Cannabis is a part of our drug taking society, whether that drug is coffee, alcohol, prescription drugs, powders or crystals.

It's not going to disappear.

Pharmacologically, it is an hallucinogen. It is readily cultivated and processed for use; pretty much a weed. The worst side effect in a small percentage of users appears to be psychosis, and consequent mental illness. Most users enjoy heightened senses, and, when the effects dissipate, experience irritability. Use does not lead to aggressive behaviour; it is a relatively benign drug. The illegal trade turns over billions in black money.

THE TERMS

- a. prevent young people and children from accessing and using cannabis in Victoria;

This can be achieved by attacking the black-market, and removing sale of the drug from control of criminals; and, frank education of the dangers on a plastic brain of an hallucinogen.

If the drug is sold legally, in a properly regulated fashion, children and young persons will not gain access to it.

- b. protect public health and public safety in relation to the use of cannabis in Victoria;

Cannabis is a part of our society, just as alcohol was part of American culture during prohibition; it is either managed legally, healthily, or left in the dark.

Criminalising cannabis has influenced its cultivation, and increased harmful consequences for users.

In the 70s, in Australia, large commercial plantations were grown outdoors, one crop a year, sometimes on crown land, or hidden amidst legal crops. By the 90's, aerial surveillance made this impossible, and crooks shifted to indoor hydroponic set-ups; grow houses enabled multiple crops a year, and required less space. Plants are grown not from seeds in jiffy pots, but cloned from potent female plants.

There is no one type of cannabis; there are numberless varieties, varying in compound and affect. In the 70's, on average, there was about 3 or 4% THC, the active substance, and an equal amount of an anti-psychotic substance, CBD. Growers developed strains with increased THC, so that it is now over 8 %, with less CBD. The health consequence is increased risk of mental illness from the more toxic hydroponic strains. This is a direct result of forcing the drug to be grown clandestinely.

By legalising cannabis, and promoting strains with moderate THC and high CBD content, there would be less potential for mental health issues, than currently. Users would know what to expect when buying the product from an approved outlet.

Further, by instituting a scheme that encourages home cultivation under licence, users would enjoy their own product, likely less toxic than that grown hydroponically.

Public safety will be enhanced by legalisation, by removing a source of corruption in public life; reducing crime; and, stopping the introduction of generally law abiding citizens to the underworld associated with any activity deemed criminal.

Illegal cannabis has always attracted police corruption, at all levels and degrees.

Public officials have mostly avoided detection for such crimes. Punters let go, or facing the courts, never expose police who keep drugs or cash for themselves. This is a very common practice; no one complains, the police run a lucrative side industry, and the crook gets a lesser sentence.

Legalisation would remove a significant source of income of crooks. The funds obtained under a legal system would result in significant government income, suitably applied to funding health issues.

The Amsterdam model for regulation of cannabis is a tried and proven method. It is worth considering in Victoria. Alternatively, tracking of sales through chemists would enable identification of problematic users, and referral to counselling.

- c. implement health education campaigns and programs to ensure children and young people are aware of the dangers of drug use, in particular, cannabis use

Education programs are an obvious necessity in schools. Realistic harm minimisation education is best, as demonising – “all drugs are equally bad” – results in undermining intelligent analysis of risks. People who try cannabis and find it benign, doubt appropriate warnings about other drugs.

The limits of ignorance concerning cannabis are endless. Education ought to make people aware of the health harm caused by smoking. Realistic information about its pharmacological effects would help in the making of properly informed decisions about its use and status.

- d. prevent criminal activity relating to the illegal cannabis trade in Victoria;

If trade in cannabis is made legal, there will be little if any criminal activity associated with it.

Promoting legalisation through licence and regulation of home grown weed undercuts the commercial market. For a good gardener, a couple of plants in the backyard are enough for own use; the process is simple, there is no need for a factory or chemicals or interaction with crooks.

The little vaunted Victorian Charter of Human Rights provides that one’s property cannot be seized by the state, except in accordance with law. So an unfair law, like the Confiscation Act, enables the state to legally and automatically seize real estate of growers convicted of cultivating a commercial quantity of weed. They may not be selling at all.

This is what I know from personal and professional life. Since The Age ran a campaign for legalisation in the 80’s, I have waited for reason to make drug laws; I’m still waiting. The Labor Party has a policy that cannabis be made legal, but no will to implement that policy. So the law continues to be a fraud, perpetuated by vested interests and ignorance.

Our society would be far better off if cannabis was legal. People would be safer and healthier, and there would be less crime. Funds from regulation of cannabis could be applied to public hospitals.

READINGS

1. W. HALL & W. SWIFT - The THC Content of Cannabis in Australia:

Evidence and implications UNSW NDARC Technical Report No. 74

<https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/resource/thc-content-cannabis-australia-evidence-and-implications>

<https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/matters-of-substance/november-2010/cannabis-potency/>

2. A Comparison of CBD and THC, by Jenna Fletcher 26.07.19 published Medical News Today, - <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325871>
3. <https://cannabiscompany.com.au/blogs/higher-learning/the-difference-between-cbd-thc>

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