

## Inquiry into the use of Cannabis in Victoria

Mr Aaron Lim

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

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

Individual

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

Indigenous culture and norms; societal behaviour (including abuse) towards cannabis users

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

Personal use of cannabis should be decriminalised.

(Decriminalised: there are no criminal or civil penalties instead a person is referred to a drug diversion program or other health/ treatment service),Personal use of cannabis should be legal. ,Sale of cannabis should be legal and regulated.

### YOUR SUBMISSION

**Submission:**  
See attached.

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

### FILE ATTACHMENTS

**File1:** [5f4c6cb8edcc6-Cannabis inquiry submission.docx](#)

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**  
Aaron Lim

To the Legal and Social Issues Committee  
Legislative Council  
59<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Victoria

### **Submission for the inquiry into the use of cannabis in Victoria**

I write to you as a general member of the public taking an interest in current social issues. I have never used cannabis, or otherwise have a vested interest in the issue, and do not foresee myself doing so in the future. However, this is a short submission to express my support of cannabis legalisation in Victoria. I base my reasoning on the following:

- Despite the illegality of cannabis in Victoria, cannabis continues to be available in practice through means beyond the reach of the law.
- Outright *de jure* bans of the use of cannabis have allowed the black market for the drug to flourish. The proceeds from these have been used to fund criminal activities, including organised crime, around the world.
- Contaminated or otherwise low-quality cannabis has proliferated as the black market tries to cut costs to maximise profits. These contaminants have been demonstrated to cause significantly more bodily harm compared to the cannabis compound itself. The law is unable to regulate the quality of cannabis in the market while cannabis remains illegal.
- Cannabis users are disproportionally stigmatised (e.g. publicly viewed as criminals or otherwise unsavoury) in society, especially when compared to tobacco users despite both drugs having a similar degree of harm. The illegality of cannabis, and public communications about drugs in general, contributes to this perception.
- Cannabis users are reluctant to seek treatment for addiction or serious physical and mental health resulting from cannabis use in fears that they will be prosecuted or otherwise retaliated against.

I believe the following should be taken into consideration when designing a future recreational cannabis access framework:

- The state should take a harm minimisation approach to cannabis use, rather than outright control.
- Cannabis use should be decriminalised and considered a health and social issue. In my opinion, there is no ethical and sound basis on retaining cannabis use as a crime.
- Cannabis should be reclassified to a similar rank as tobacco and alcohol (adjusting for the unique effects of cannabis), given that the risk and severity of harm are closer to these than more potent psychoactive drugs.
- Most cannabis users often begin using cannabis in response to societal pressures, come from a disadvantaged background, or are otherwise dissatisfied or disillusioned with life or society. There should be a greater focus on rectifying these systemic issues that have long been neglected by the state. Doing so will naturally lead to a reduction in uptake of cannabis. Possible measures may include investments into mental health, family support and welfare services.
- The sale of cannabis and cannabis edibles should be legalised and regulated. Legal cannabis retailers can compete with black market sales in terms of quality and price. Legal outlets are also naturally more attractive than the black market since individuals generally want to avoid getting involved with criminal affairs. At introduction, the state should operate its own outlets exclusively to ensure price, quality and compliance standards are set in stone, before deciding on whether private retailers should be permitted. The government should also

strictly regulate how and where cannabis is sourced. Particular attention should be paid to edibles where the risk of accidental consumption by children or non-consenting adults is high. Cannabis marketing should be banned.

- The cultural and social norms of Indigenous Victorians in relation to cannabis use should be accounted for and respected.
- Restrictions on operating machinery (including vehicles) similar to those in relation to alcohol should apply.
- There should be public awareness campaigns regarding the harms and the proper dosages of cannabis, in a similar vein to tobacco and alcohol. Children should be educated on the harms of cannabis as part of the education system.
- Cannabis should remain out of reach to children unless prescribed for medical treatment. The age at which individuals gain legal access to recreational cannabis should be at the age of majority (or potentially younger if data shows that close-to-age teenagers are resorting to the black market for cannabis – the merits of this is up for debate).
- Cannabis models from other jurisdictions that have legalised recreational cannabis, such as Canada, Uruguay, South Africa, the Australian Capital Territory and some American states, should be analysed and assessed for their suitability to Victoria. The Canadian model in particular may be readily adapted for use here given their maturity and the similar cultural circumstances. However, this should not preclude Victoria from designing its own model if it would result in better outcomes for society.

I lack the time to do proper research and due diligence on the matter, but I have written this submission to the best of my knowledge of the issues surrounding cannabis and what I believe as a general member of the public to be important considerations going forward.

Thank you for your time.

Aaron Lim