

Inquiry into the use of Cannabis 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::

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

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

Individual, Advocacy body

Are there any additional themes we should consider?

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. , Cultivation of cannabis for personal use should be legal. , Other – please explain.

Medical use of cannabis should be made more accessible to those who may benefit from it's effects.

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

The restrictions on and laws against cannabis in all respects I believe are far too harsh. Cannabis users and patients, returning and new, have been subject to unfair punishments and restrictions based on stigma which have long since been debunked and invalidated; here's why.

First and foremost, the laws around the use of cannabis and driving a vehicle on the road or operating machinery in the workplace are unjust and impeding on the lives of citizens nation wide. With advertisements stating "Get caught long after the high is gone" there is a clear self-awareness that roadside drug tests and the penalties that apply are not based on the safety of road users and maintaining sobriety while operating a vehicle. The tests in question should only apply when testing for trace elements of cannabis outside of roadside applications as a user could be completely sober, cognitive and aware of the road and their vehicle having used cannabis days in advance and not since. They do not aid in relevant traffic policing and are completely unjust to those who are prosecuted by roadside drug tests. Instead, I believe a similar system to that of New Zealand should be put in place of the current where sobriety is tested and prosecuted rather than body chemistry.

Secondly, access of cannabis products and material to medical users is often very difficult or impossible for those who may see benefits from it's effects, as well as being well overpriced. The medical benefits from cannabis, although commonly overstated by recreational users, is understated by the government and therefore made inaccessible to applicable patients despite having approval or recommendation from a licensed medical or mental health professional. Patients who are approved for medical cannabis are also still feeling the stigma sound the substance as they pay ridiculous fees to gain access to their doctor prescribed

medicine; to better this issue, I believe that medical patients should be allowed to grow their own plants as the product that they are receiving from a pharmacist is often identical and indistinguishable from what flowers naturally on the unrefined plant. I have personally seen physical and mental health improvements and betterment from prohibited substances including both cannabis and body safe and organic psychedelic substances such as psilocybin.

Thirdly, I believe that recreational use should be legalised and allowed as well as the commercial sale of cannabis along with it. This is because cannabis use and culture is already very popular among Australian citizens as it was recorded in 2016 and published by the AIHW that 35% of Australian citizens aged 14 and over had consumed cannabis in their life time and 10.4% of Australians had consumed cannabis within 12 months prior to the survey. This means that over one third of Australians have consumed cannabis despite the legality and repercussions of doing so, making the current laws somewhat ineffective at deterring the single and continual use of the substance. Not only are the laws ineffective but they are also endangering the large quantity of users as they must turn to black market and illicit dealers of which may be selling tampered with or harmful products that contain far more serious and dangerous drugs, harmful pesticides and growth hormones, or may even be fake or imitation cannabis all together. This large underground market is also directly funding violent and large scale crimes and criminal groups which then further harm the community and often influence young people. Legalising the recreational use and commercial sale of cannabis will not only defund criminals and related organisations and dissipate their influence but will also add to an enormous untapped tax revenue stream which can be used to better the country and its communities and further lessen the continual defunding of public services and resources in place of ridiculous and unnecessary infrastructure projects as trade, cultivation and consumption of illegal cannabis still occurs in mass nationwide despite the laws around it. Not only legalisation be profitable and publically beneficial in terms of health and infrastructure, legalising cannabis may also deter the use of seriously harmful and carcinogenic, but legal, substances of abuse like alcohol and tobacco of which have been a complete burden on the health system in too many ways and therefore helping the government lessen one of Australia's leading causes of death as well as improve the overall health of the population and community as cannabis has never been recorded as lethal in humans nor does it require smoking to be consumed.

Finally, I believe that the public, both young and old, should be better educated on the health and social effects of cannabis as many members of the public, especially those advanced in age, wholeheartedly and stubbornly cling to verbal and published rumours and misinformation around the plant. This leads to social and workplace discrimination against users, even and often including alienation and unreasonable relief of duty in the workplace despite high work ethic and performance, among other issues. The cannabis flower and related products should be treated similarly to that of alcohol or tobacco rather than amphetamines and opiates and adult and medical users should be warned, educated and discouraged from smoking the plant material and informed of alternative consumption methods.

In conclusion, I believe that cannabis has been unfairly ruled by the government and improperly educated citizens and employers as unsafe, not useful or applicable in medical and mental health settings, unfit for recreational use and commercial sale and that users are unable to contribute to society or perform well in a work environment. Cannabis use is also tested, punished and treated in a completely unjust and ineffective manner to further perpetuate these myths and therefore justify the unethical and disproportional treatment of cannabis users inside and outside the legal system.

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

Please do not attach my full name to my statement if my statement is published as I wish for this statement to remain confidential and with the intention of my individual political expression only.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:

Signature:

