

Ms Sophie Dunstone
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO BOX 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Tuesday, 10 March 2015

RE: The Regulator of Medicinal Cannabis Bill 2014

Dear Ms Dunstone and Committee Delegates,

Please accept this covering letter, table of contents and supporting appendixes as my submission.

Regarding drugs, our Elected Representatives' role is to protect with regulation and education; not attempt control via prohibition - this obviously doesn't work.

Thank you for the opportunity for public submissions for the Regulator of Medicinal Cannabis Bill 2014. It is tremendous our democratic process allows for my views and experiences with the world's most extra-ordinary plant to be provided freely and honestly without fear or threat of legal action. It will be even more fantastic when **this Inquiry** provides positive recommendations which are fully and quickly committed into just legislation by our Senate, unlike many other forgotten inquiries and reports delivered to various Australian Governments regarding Cannabis during my voting time - including "*Cannabis and the Law in Queensland*" (1994), the Federal Government report "*Legislative Options for Cannabis in Australia*" (1994), "*The Medical Use of Cannabis: Recent Developments by Gareth Griffith and Marie Swain*" (NSW Parliamentary Library Briefing Paper No 11/99 in 1999), "*Medical Cannabis Programs: A Review of Selected Jurisdictions*" (NSW Parliamentary Library Briefing Paper No 10/04) from 2004 and, most recently the New South Wales Parliamentary Inquiry into Medical Cannabis. All huge wastes of effort and finance. This time, please listen.

After pressing submit I foresee these two things happening, obviously "b" is not acceptable.

- a) Life will proceed, with legal regulation of natural Medical Cannabis beginning soon.
- b) Regardless of any perceived "Parliamentary Privilege", those with less understanding of my situation will wrongly stereotype and, no longer my telephone will ring providing the casual work on which I - and my family - rely.

With this in mind, I provide evidence to this inquiry in the following capacities:

- Now “out of the closet” 26 year 14g+ week user of Cannabis who (despite a quite dysfunctional spine following a simple but effectively damaging motorcycle accident, now can't wipe his butt easily, lacks full bladder / bowel sensitivity, avoids sitting for long, walking - especially stairs and non-flat surfaces, sex, dishes, washing and work) has overall health better than similarly aged and, like other Cannabis consumers during various stages of this period imported, grown, purchased and then consumed personal Cannabis daily and never attracted anyones attention. Until now.
- Tertiary Educated individual with an intense desire of extracting everything from his mind and body.
- Someone finding it incomprehensible that almost **ALL** “problems” associated with Cannabis (or any ‘illicit’ drug for that matter) are legal problems generated by our Governments through mis-information, prohibition, incrimination and incarceration and, this situation has been allowed to continue for generations! Despite many reports, expert recommendations and much public call for change, **nothing has happened**. It's even a crime to discuss (medical) Cannabis.
- Someone who believes some of our Elected Representatives should be incriminated for abuse of office for: not truly listening; not looking around seeing the world and really leading our beautiful nation; putting their own or corporate interests before those of the people (who need it most); for not fully understanding the life-altering legislation needing attention; or sometimes not even being chamber punctual enough to vote.
- An extremely physically uncomfortable person who has been rudely ignored on Medical Cannabis by his elected representatives for decades.

We nearly led the world in 1994; allowing raw, unprocessed Medical Cannabis now would finally bring us into line with the growing list of many American United States and countries such as Canada, Israel, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Finland, Italy, Spain, Israel and Portugal with full Medical Cannabis legislation. Positive legislation for unprocessed, RAW Medical Cannabis removes any un-compassionate, hypocritical, demoralising, ill-informed personal-view and discriminating practices our laws have imposed on those with quite debilitating and (often) extremely painful medically recognised conditions, who are treated as criminals for none other than self-relief with a natural, unprocessed plant. Positive legislation will allow patients to grow and consume this wonderful natural substance via differing and worldly accepted safer methods than stereotyped smoking, such as eating, vaporising, etc. Positive, well considered legislation for raw unprocessed Medical Cannabis allows our Governments to regulate this amazing plant and promote growth of renewable, environmentally sound and financially apt industries supporting human health through its own natural systems.

Without fair process existing legislation prevents and / or severely restricts research and development of any Cannabis related production. Positive Medical Cannabis laws allow for regulation of emerging industries and a high quality product, providing those with need the best and most compassionate experience. Geez, it may even help people feel good - injury depression sucks.

Furthermore, fair raw unprocessed Medical Cannabis laws will free up valuable Police and other Judicial resources from prosecuting those with genuine use of this ancient, natural, unprocessed plant. Besides diverting obviously well-needed resources against dangerous and violent criminals who really are societal problems, potential revenue from Medical Cannabis would also be available for health / educational programs, schools and hospitals, etc.

Thank you again for this awesome opportunity, I've made my views, extensive experience, research and knowledge of Cannabis practically concise. As a physically broken hard-working, well-educated professional tax payer with a family and other commitments, respect as appropriate please.

I am willing and would enjoy providing further information about Cannabis when, if and as needed.

It's time for change - please listen carefully as history shows Cannabis "laws" in particular are not respected by intelligent people understanding their health.

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Appendix A - The efficacy and safety of cannabis for medical purposes

Every invertebrate creature has an “Endo” (inbuilt) Cannabinoid system and, every single cell in its entity has a Cannabinoid Receptor on the membrane. Our uniquely interacting Cannabinoid system crucially participates in neuronal cell-cell-communication and signal transduction through synaptic input modulation and, protecting neurons from excitotoxic damage (Ullrich, Schneider-Stock, Zipp 2006). Recent research confirms Cannabinoids play an important role in communication between immune cells, and in the interaction between nerve and immune system during CNS damage.

The Cannabis plant uniquely produces Phyto (natural) Cannabinoids - which exactly match those our body normally produces, providing us with **natural, targeted and specific medication**. Our body is clever enough to know the difference between anything natural or synthesised; it doesn't like or often work well with synthesised products (usually made from cheap petro-chemical by-products).

Nature knows how to put specific sub-atomic spins on atoms (etc) and do so many things that humans are just not aware of and do not really comprehend - this is why Cannabis must be grown and supplied in plant form, not created in a laboratory and shoved into a pill.

Cannabis offers almost non-existent toxicity to humans, is a natural substance for which our animal bodies are designed and, for most conditions works better overall and with negligible long-term side-effects when compared to modern (synthesised) medication. With almost perfect combinations of nutrients for humans, including more protein than some meats, its very-low psychoactive version HEMP should be considered essential to our diet. When combined as necessary with higher THC / CBDs potency Cannabis “medication” - this amazing plant is “greater than its sum” (Partland and Russo, 2001) which we should sow in every garden: the ultimate gift for our ultimate gift.

The method of consumption of Cannabis affects how the body works with it. Inhaling has a fast, initially stronger and easy to regulate dose than eating. Vaporising is a safer inhalation method for Cannabis, although with regards to smoking - in 2013 Tashin confirmed “no clear link to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease has been established”. Eating provides different experience as the active components are processed first by the liver, rather than going straight to the brain as per inhalation (Huestis, 2007).

Different strains of Cannabis contain varying levels of therapeutically active compounds, notably Cannabinoids, Terpenoids and Flavonoids. Our body simply draws from its goodies pool as needed. As such Tetrahydrocannabinol (**THC**) varieties must be made available as THC is the Cannabinoid associated with cell apoptosis (natural cyclic cell death) (Munson, Harris, Friedman, Dewey, Carchman, 1975; Ruiz, Miguel, D'laz-Laviada, 1999) and has many other therapeutic benefits.

For this reason, again - it is extremely important that various strains of RAW, UN-PROCESSED (whole plant) Cannabis be made available without legal restriction and patients educated on its differing uses, effects and safe consumption methods.

There are far more dangerous substances currently available without any regulation or much consideration of long-term problems in public policy.

Excessive water, sugar (often synthesised from corn), salt, fat (etc) are all quite dangerous for human health, yet these have absolutely no rules. Tobacco has no medical benefit what-so-ever, was traditionally used as a pesticide and has been directly linked to many preventable diseases and yet is still legally available with almost no regulation to any choosing adult - for fun! Alcohol, in various forms is also used for fuel and cleaning products, causes mega-damage to our society, is linked directly to causing many human cancers, obesity, violence and other traumas - yet this too is legally available for fun with very little education or regulation. Our current laws definitely send the wrong health message - preventable chronic disease is not "fun".

Simply our body uses Cannabinoids for basic functioning and this system is designed to be supplemented / stimulated with **natural Cannabis** and **HEMP** to help maintain good health. Millions of consumers over thousands of years - and recent research - repeatedly confirm this. Australia and our health is dramatically suffering because our "health laws" and any associated education are decided on financial reasons by people without any real idea of what they are doing to our health.

This needs to change - now, please.

We are designed for Cannabis. It keeps us healthy.

Strangely the United States Government has been trying to eradicate Cannabis with propaganda, public policy and laws enforced through international trade deals for decades; then issued itself a patent (US 6,630,501 B1) on October 7, 2003 for non-psychoactive Cannabis as a Neuroprotectant.

Remember the health of the nation need be placed above financial gain of a few greedy individuals or corporations.

Appendix B - Required “Regulator of Medical Cannabis Bill” amendments (how Cannabis should be supplied for medical use)

How cannabis should be supplied for medical use?

It's a natural plant, not rocket science - supply is being done very well elsewhere; a good time frame would be 4 to 6 weeks for consulted development of policy and, a maximum of 3 months for legal implementation. People need help quickly, not bureaucratic finger pointing and chin wagging please.

The Regulator of Medical Cannabis (2014) Bill MUST be adjusted to ensure:

- Cannabis may be issued on a “first line of defense” basis, not only as a last resort medication.
- Whole of Plant and Strain availability: No legal distinction between Medical Cannabis products taking different forms. Roots, Stems, Leaves, Flowers, Resin, Oil, Hashish - all have their place in medicine and distinction or specific legal association to condition will confuse causing problems. Also, implements associated with production and consumption of the various forms need legal support.
- Expansive, non-limiting “conditions” list or solely based on Doctor recommendation. Individual health should never be legally limited or imposed upon, differing Cannabis strains help differing conditions.
- Low pricing structures, and / or Cannabis entered on the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme.
- Quality control standards be implemented ensuring Patients receive the highest quality product available.
- Medical Cannabis patients are freely allowed travel between other world-wide Medical Cannabis jurisdictions without any legal impediment or recourse.

- Any **Producer / Licensing System** must:
 - Allowing producers the equipment and facilities to establish new markets.
 - Allow Personal growers, perhaps limited to a reasonable plant quantity allowing for the various stages of growth and specific user requirements. From experience growing anything requires some commitment and for *quality* Cannabis this is quite true.
 - Encourage use of renewable energy and agricultural processes.
 - Restrict advertising as per existing prescription medication - restricted to points-of-sale, individual business specific web site presence and specified targeted media (i.e. medical journals, etc).

- **Stores / Outlets:**
 - As per the Californian Medical Cannabis “dispensary” system; those with an endorsed medical certificate are granted entry to purchase **generous** amounts of Medical Cannabis and / or its derivatives for their own personal or those in-ones-care’ consumption.
 - May have areas where consumption is allowed.
 - Locations should be as per other regulated drug outlets: away from schools, but not located so as to create a “seedy” or dangerous environment for consumers.

- Patients / Consumers:

- Regulated through medical certificates via Medical Professional recommendation.
- Inhalation consumption anywhere other inhaled products are allowed, otherwise, registered Medical Cannabis should have no discrimination imposed them - just as other legal drug takers have little or no restrictions imposed.

As for quantities, it is difficult to pre-ascertain the requirements of individual users - however, I believe at any time Patients should be allowed to hold at least 300 grams of dried Cannabis leaf, 100-ish grams of dried Cannabis flower and at least 30 grams of resin. Australia is a big country, dispensaries may be far.

Appendix C - Any other related matters

One dangerous thing our “Leaders” overlook with current Cannabis laws is without quality regulation **all** Cannabis users are being exposed to product that may have traces of fungus (mould) from incorrect drying, storage and transport. Health hazards associated with potentially breathing spores should be obvious and, any Leader truly caring about roughly 30 per cent of the general populations’ health would very quickly adjust any Cannabis laws for this fact alone. Regardless of your disposition toward Tobacco, moldy cigarettes are unacceptable and would not be allowed for sale / consumption.

As has been continually noted in many reports from across various Australian Governments (Collins, Lapsley, 2008)and throughout the world, prohibiting Cannabis is a very costly exercise and like other “wars”, is not very successful. By regulating Cannabis through Medical channels as permitted under our UN Conventions obligations, our Authorities would reduce various stresses over their judicial systems and free up valuable resources for other, more important tasks. Also, any revenue raised would be available for better research and education programs, providing accurate information allowing for potential harms to be addressed and reduced.

There are many plants far more “dangerous” than Cannabis. For example, recently I discovered the Australian native “Gympie-Gympie” plant whilst bush-walking. After months of very painful “acid-like burns” resulting in deep scarring across my chest, left arm/under-arm and back, I question why our Governments haven’t spent the same amount of money and energy on “Gympie-Gympie Eradication Programs” as they have on attempting Cannabis eradication - that would be “Serving and Protecting”. Or educating that the anti-dote tree is often nearby (unlearned by me at the time).

Please let us decide through factual education what suits our body.

Appendix D - Cannabis and Me

I have been consuming Cannabis, almost daily since 1989. Before 2000 my consumption was about 28 grams every 6-8 weeks, using more on training days. Since mid-2000 however, this consumption has been a fairly consistent 28 grams every 10-12 days, obviously fluctuating slightly depending on specific need, quality of product and, unfortunately, supply.

Cannabis was first introduced to me in 1986 by a good European friend my age. I'd previously tried Nicotine when Mum gave me a drag on her cigarette about aged 7 so I'd know "how disgusting it tastes". Hooked me, and my sister, although we didn't know until years later. I had also tried Alcohol, smoking parsley and sniffed pepper by the time Cannabis came along. Experimenting and searching for new experiences are normal human things; respecting this and making such as safe as possible is what good policy should be about.

My legs / feet have always lightly tingled and I noticed this annoyance reduced when using Cannabis; but around 1989, other friends said they'd found meditating when using Cannabis to be really colourful. They also said all you needed to do when continually "stoned" was not think about it, continue with life as normal and just "go with the flow" - to not let "the man get you down". Meditation was already my religion, after some practice combining with Cannabis I found getting into the "zone" when extreme weightlifting or playing sport was easier, recovery times shortened and, I didn't seem to get generally sick. I also noted health and environmental topics more interesting as were small things around me such as visual angles and insects. An intense desire to "expand my mind further" was developing and I started finding myself mentally deconstructing objects into "exploded-parts" type views.

My education has never been hindered by Cannabis, although relaxing and learning how to remember is important as stimulating the EndoCannabinoid system opens fresh neural pathways and different potential storage points. Cannabis has enhanced my understanding of many varied disciplines; exercise and nutrition, math, computer science, a Bachelors Degree, music construction, 5 musical instruments including classical trained singing and professionally examined drumming, plus various audio/visual production, electrical, mechanical, environmental and horticultural interests.

As Cannabis is apparently extremely dangerous and is also socially unacceptable, I've searched for decades to find genuine evidence supporting this. I've also monitored my own health, which appears to have been only ever positively influenced by even heavy Cannabis use. Since beginning this journey, I no longer consume Nicotine, Alcohol, processed Sugars or any Meat - avoiding the first 3 like a plague. At some stage, I have considered and measured every single thing that enters into or is placed on my human vestibule to understand its interaction; giving my body its "best chance".

Smoking Cannabis - especially in large amounts as I consume - appears to make your lungs work hard, so I've happily invested in the best desktop and portable vaporisers available to reduce excessive organ stress. Vaporising heats for extraction without reaching combustion. Also, never mix drugs (i.e. Cannabis with Tobacco, anything with Alcohol, etc).

I regularly consume Cannabis now to regulate complaints with my spine; to cope with the continuing discomfort, pain and associated mental stress following a motor-cycle accident in mid-2000 - after being re-ended at a red-light, thrown at least 2 metres up in to the air and landing flat on my back onto my back-pack containing an aluminium bottle filled with 1 litre of water across a man-hole cover edge - my drink bottle was flattened, I have an impression of the landing surfaces across many vertebrae (compression fractures), bilateral pars defects, spondylolisthesis, faceting, etc, etc. Life has never been the same.

Prescription drugs offered for such discomfort often made other things worse, were simply ineffective or, had some pretty serious health warnings restricting “long-term” use. At this time, my life revolved around tertiary study, very heavy weight-lifting, music, mountain-bike riding and mountain running, but all these were becoming increasingly physically difficult to not possible - my body felt to be “stiffening up”, I was getting very angry and aggressive, some self-harm, had lots of major leg and back cramps and wasn’t sleeping.

Things haven’t really changed. 15 years later, everyday I wake up feeling like I’ve been belted by a freight train. Small tasks; dishes, washing clothes and car, putting things away, juggling, lawn mowing, opening windows or doors, vacuuming - anything that involves twisting, supportive torque, counterbalancing and moving my arms away from my body (especially holding any mass) - causes problems. I have grinding, clicking, popping, cracking and massive muscle cramps over my entire muscular-skeletal system as nothing is aligned correctly anymore.

I *feel* the swelling subside quickly after inhaling Cannabis, cramps relax, pain reduces - it truly is an amazing, multi-faceted medical gift.

To say I am uncomfortable with continued pain is an extreme understatement, but I am aware there are others far less fortunate than myself.

I guarantee *without* relief from Cannabis and, love and support of my closest(s), my life would have ended a long time ago.

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