

An Open Letter

regarding the use of
medicinal cannabis
(especially cold processed
medicinal cannabis oil/tinctures)

From Peter Rubenach
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An Open Letter to Tasmania Police, Politicians, Media, the Public.

In late December 2014 our daughter, Hannah Rubenach sent an Open Letter to Tasmania Police, Politicians, Media and the Public regarding the use of medicinal cannabis for her brother, Tim Rubenach

Because response to the questions she raised have been slow and sparse we, as Tim's parents/carers, are contacting the same people hoping to receive answers to questions we have about the use of medicinal cannabis for Tim and other users

At the time of writing we understand Hannah has received responses from the following people (names excluded)

- a letter from a State Labour MP confirming the Labour Party's support for the legalization of medicinal cannabis.
- a letter from a State Green MP reiterating the Party's stance for the legalization of medicinal cannabis
- a letter from a Tasmanian Federal MP expressing his personal views that he sees no reason why medicinal cannabis should not be legalized and grown safely in Tasmania
- one MLC acknowledged Hannah's letter via Email.
- one MLC phoned confirming her support for the legalizing of medicinal cannabis.
- Federal Greens office replied.
- Acknowledgment of Hannah's letter by 2 Liberal State MPs and 1 State Labour MP. also by the Health Ministers office and the Premier's office.
- Police officers have spoken directly to Hannah
- a TV interview and subsequent airing of this on the channel's nightly news.
- An Email regarding Hannah's letter by the Tasmanian Commissioner of Police.

We especially want answers to the statement made by the Commissioner of Police (and a similar one publicly made on TV by Hon Michael Ferguson):

From Email to Hannah from the Commissioner of Police
20 January 2015 - "I would like to reiterate that

Tasmania Police has not sought to actively pursue persons who make reasonable claims in relation to using cannabis for medical purposes. However, cannabis remains the most commonly used illicit drug in this state and in upholding the law and in the interest of the safety of the community, Tasmania Police is authorised under the Misuses of Drugs Act 2001 to investigate circumstances whenever the drug is discovered, or reported to police. Decisions to prosecute are then made on a case-by-case basis"

From that statement we ask the following questions:

1. Does the statement to not actively pursue persons who make reasonable claims for using cannabis for medicinal purpose also apply to:

a) carers, support workers, family members, friends who administer and/or source medicinal cannabis to a person who because of disabilities, cannot do so for themselves?'

b) Growers of medicinal cannabis who are supplying products to the user or their proxy?

c) Processors who are supplying medicinal cannabis to the user (or their proxy) in the form of cannabis oil and/or tincture?

d) Users cannot be a users if they do not have access to the herb, so what protection is currently in place for suppliers? Is it also determined on a case-by-case basis?

eg Tim relies totally on carers for all his needs

We, his parents/carers are supplying and administering medicinal cannabis to him on a daily basis, and we are procuring the cold processed cannabis from a processor.

Brief background about why we ^{are} prepared to publicly say we are involved with medicinal cannabis.:

• We are 66 and 68 year old respectively. We are committed Christians and therefore believe our actions should be able to withstand scrutiny by both people and God. We give full time care (24 hours, 7 days a week) to our 28 year old son, Tim. He needs constant supervision and support because of Acquired Brain Injury/epilepsy.

- (see Hannah's Open Letter for more details of Tim's illness)
- Together with Hannah we sent a submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee Inquiry into the Medical use of Cannabis, expressing our desire to trial Tim on cannabis as we considered it our last hope to help Tim have some quality of life.
At that point in time we did not know how to source medicinal cannabis.
 - In October 2014 Tim's health had deteriorated so badly he was lying in bed almost all of the time. He was in a constant seizure state, and we feared he would not live to see Christmas.
Tim's health had been progressively deteriorating since he suffered trauma from the 2006 East Coast Bush Fires and then in October 2012 when he was critically ill in the LGH after a severe bout of cluster tonic clonic seizures.
 - On 3rd November 2014 we were given a few capsules of cold processed cannabis oil to trial on Tim. We soon knew we had to use medicinal cannabis for him on a long term basis. Due to the generosity of people we were able to obtain a few weeks supply of cold processed cannabis oil. (See Hannah's Open Letter for more details and about the significant health benefits).
 - Since Hannah sent her Open Letter Tim has experienced even more health benefits especially with muscle tone, eg he can now walk unassisted at about 70% of the time; he can sit and arise unaided (even when sitting on the floor) he no longer needs to be propped up with bean bags/pillows to prevent toppling over; he can get himself a drink of water from the tap and select fruit from the fruit bowl. He is compliant and ^{with} very little challenging/aggressive behaviour. He is talking at times and taking an interest in life - wanting to go places and see things. He no longer seems to be in constant pain or depressed. He is still ^{having} severe, numerous tonic clonic seizure, but some life. This is an answer to years of prayer!
 - Between Christmas and New Year our supply of medication ran out. We were 4 days before generous

people supplied more cold processed medicinal cannabis oil and tincture. Within 24 hours without cannabis Tim's health started deteriorating i.e. complex partial seizures returned and he had significant loss of co-ordination and balance. Within 2 hours of resuming medication his health greatly improved.

• We know that we must continue giving Tim medicinal cold processed cannabis even when we are deemed law breakers. We are currently growing 2 types of cannabis

Question 2 ^{one type} low in THC and high in CBD. ^(This is to ensure we have a constant supply)

How can such a wonderful medicinal herb be deemed illegal and dangerous?

NB any ~~hallucination~~ ^{hallucinogenic} properties are only released with heating e.g. smoking. Hallucination properties are NOT released in cold processed medication.

We have spoken to many people about medicinal cannabis and have found that people interested in cannabis for medicinal purposes do NOT want a "high" - they simply want to use it for help and healing.

- All we have spoken to, both users and would be users, want to use cold processed medicinal cannabis that produces no side effects. Smoking cannabis is often their only option because cold processed products are harder to obtain and much more expensive but their preference is cold processed cannabis.
- People want to be educated about medicinal cannabis e.g. the types of cannabis available (those low in THC and high in CBD etc. and about cold processed cannabis as opposed to smoking cannabis)
- Every person we have talked to would prefer to use medicinal cannabis rather than pharmaceutical medications. They want the right to trial it!

Question 3 Surely people have the right of choice to medications they use/trial. On what grounds is medicinal cannabis declared unsafe and illegal while pharmaceutical drugs can be harmful?

In the past, we as Tim's parents/carers were legally protected when we gave Tim anti-convulsion, pharmaceutical medication ie Tegretol, Dilantin, Diazepam, Midazolam, Rivitrol, Topamax. We were legally protected because they were all pharmaceutical medications even though each came with a warning of side-effects (some severe side effects). These medications were specifically designed and legally manufactured to have effect on certain brain functions.

Now, as Tim's parents/carers we are legally guilty because we are giving the son we love dearly a herb that produces no side effects and brings health.

Question 4 How can pharmaceutical medications capable of producing severe side-effects (even when used as medically directed) be legal while medicinal cannabis (when used cold processed) produces no side-effects yet be deemed illegal and dangerous?

* Tim developed side-effects to all the above mentioned medications. Some produced frightening hallucinations and such severe side effects we were advised by G.P.s and Tim's specialist to stop such anti-convulsion pharmaceutical medications.

Also we know of many people using pharmaceutical medications that take up to 30 different medications, many of which are prescribed simply to counteract the side effects of each other.

Therefore our prayers to legislators, regulators and all people involved in this cannabis debate are:

"Dear God, please open the minds of those people and give them Your wisdom as they research and examine the scientific, medical, historical and users case/patient evidence of the pros and cons of medicinal cannabis. We pray they will have your discernment to separate facts from myths about medicinal cannabis. We ask dear God, to give them hearts of compassion

and brains to be used with commonsense and logic when making decisions regarding medicinal cannabis. We pray dear God, that all decisions made are done with your servant heart as an example ~~of that~~ ^{that positive things} will result to ~~promote~~ peoples' health and well-being ^{body,} soul and spirit.

We pray, dear God, that legislators, regulations and those of authority making decisions about the legalizing of medicinal cannabis will not succumb to pressure of pharmaceutical companies for such companies may have vested financial, self interest in medicinal cannabis. Whatever decisions are made must be in the best interests of the health, safety and well being of all Tasmanians (and Australians) especially for the ill and vulnerable.

Dear God, we ask you to help us all to be good stewards of all creation - to use and not abuse the wonderful gifts of creation you have set at our disposal.

May we all be able to work together on this medicinal cannabis issue so that both individually and collectively as a state/nation we benefit socially and economically from this incredible herb you give us. Please direct and guide all of us with your wisdom and love ever present. Thank you LORD GOD! Amen!"

Finally, we do not know if medicinal cold processed cannabis will continue to improve Tim's health and well being because the nature of his complex medical condition is unpredictable but every hour we see our son have some quality of life we thank God for this blessing. Tim has a right to medicinal cannabis!

QUESTIONS Surely we (Tim's parents/carers) Tim and other people using medicinal cannabis have a right to use/supply this medication without the stress of knowing we could, at any time, be arrested and prosecuted. When can we live with freedom of choice about the medications we use for our health and well being? When will medicinal cannabis be recognised as a right of choice legal medication?

- At present we are growing 13 plants. They range in size from seedlings to plants $\frac{1}{2}$ m high.
- In order to maintain a continual supply of medicinal cannabis cold processed oil we need access to a significant supply of Cannabis.
- We need to learn the cold processing technique.

Currently we give Tim $\frac{2}{3}$ to 1 capsule of cold processed cannabis oil daily (The dosage depends on the amount of tonic clonic seizure he is experiencing and any infections he is suffering for he is prone to ear, throat and digestive infections/conditions. (Cannabis has strong anti microbial properties as well as anti-convulsion properties)

We also give Tim cold processed cannabis tincture during tonic clonic seizures and to prevent seizure clusters (this is working as a replacement to diazepam/Valium)

As part of our regular family diet we use organic hemp seeds and organic hemp oil in salads, sandwiches etc. Both these products are deemed unsuitable for human consumption in spite of the fact that in other countries (except New Zealand) they are a normal and highly nutritious food.

Sorry this is handwritten and contains many spelling errors and grammatical mistakes but it comes from our heart as a plea to help promote better understanding of the benefits of cold processed medicinal cannabis to the ill and vulnerable.

Berkeley Ruberach & Peter Ruberach

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