

Ecofibre Industries Operations Pty Ltd



10th April 2015

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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Submission regarding the Regulator of Medicinal Cannabis Bill 2014

Dear Committee Delegates,

I, Phil Warner of Ecofibre Industries Operations Pty Ltd, have been instrumental in developing the Industrial Hemp (cannabis) Industry within Australia and in other countries for nearly 20 years. Throughout my career I have been actively sought to consult with numerous Australian and foreign government bodies as well as many educational institutions, international Medicinal Cannabis entities and media groups with regards to legislation, supply, processing, harvesting technologies and methods, distributing, marketing and the regulation of Industrial Hemp and it's complete cannabinoid profile. and I am one of the only two qualified Plant Breeders for Cannabis Sativa within Australia; myself and Ecofibre's Plant Breeding & Research Scientist. I believe I have the legitimacy and authority to comment on the subject in question.

I am fully supportive of your approach and efforts to bring this subject to light in a rational and logical way. However, I believe there are some core issues that need to be underlined before the enquiry is fully completed. Given my exposure and involvement with industrial hemp in a number of modern world countries, it would appear Australia has taken a technical, hard-line view in addressing the CBD and other non-psychoactive cannabinoids with regards to their use in medicine.

To my knowledge, it is only recently that the TGA included CBD as a schedule 9 narcotic. From information acquired from the TGA, it was explained to me that United Nations Single Convention on Drugs "technically" includes all extracts from the cannabis plant. The TGA stance is completely out of step with the rest of the modern world and causes flow-on issues for those who are legitimately undertaking research to either provide materials and/or clinically analyse its benefits.

On the other hand, I do understand the need for the TGA to quickly address the wholesale exploitation of the public by unscrupulous retailers selling unregulated CBD products. Never the less, a more calculated position should be sought which not only reduces or eliminates exploitation, but allows bona fide entities to make unhindered progress in research and qualified supply. I will not bore you with a list of problems the TGA have created, however, one could say Industrial hemp crops now need to be tested for both THC and CBD if one is to stick to the letter of the law. This would cause significant problems on all levels and indeed halt the industry all together, be it for seed or fibre.



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In more reasonable jurisdictions, governments have embarked on a campaign to penalise companies making unsubstantiated claims about CBD as well as monitor the quality and portions in products that are marketed. In my view, this would be a much more reasonable approach rather than the total ban of a product that it essentially not a drug of dependence/addiction.

Simply put the TGA added CBD to the schedule 9 list without any formal, rigorous scientific analysis to determine whether it was indeed a poison or a substance of dependence/addiction and a danger to public safety. On the contrary there is a mountain of scientific research which would confirm that CBD is neither a danger nor a poison, and therefore does not belong in schedule 9. If the TGA rules are to be followed, it now has to be proved otherwise, at great expense and time due to the hasty addition by TGA. This decision should be reversed.

In the majority of modern-world countries, it is understood that the ban on cannabis was to limit and hinder drug trafficking and the abuse of psychoactive substances. Those jurisdictions have not in this case, taken the same stance as the TGA have.

In these jurisdictions it is clearly understood and appreciated this fact and not abided so strictly to the UN Single Convention, realising that CBD has unwittingly been included with THC in the broad definition given to Cannabis Extracts. Other jurisdictions saw fit to interpret the true meaning of the Convention and not hold fast to a treaty that was written many years ago, a treaty that did not have the benefit of science and the knowledge of the benefits of the non-psychoactive, non-poisonous cannabinoids that exist in Industrial Hemp.

I will be happy to follow through on all points I have made if a request for further information or presentation is required.

Thank you.

Regards

*Phil Warner
Ecofibre Industries*