

Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Commonwealth Restrictions on Cannabis) Bill 2018

17 August 2018

Question no: 1

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Question:

The Committee asked for:

The current Commonwealth view on the harms of cannabis, and the approach of the National Drug Strategy, including the ‘harm minimisation approach it adopts.

Answer:

The Australian Government is committed to preventing and reducing the harms that cannabis has on individuals, families and communities across Australia.

The Australian Government’s views on cannabis are consistent with the principles set out in Australia’s National Drug Strategy, which identifies cannabis as a priority substance and outlines a range of evidence-based approaches to minimise harm associated with cannabis use. These approaches include preventing uptake and delaying first time use, providing access to a range of treatment, support and information services and the disruption in supply to reduce availability.

The potential harms associated with using cannabis can depend on the age of a person, pattern of use, other risky behaviours and other underlying health conditions. Cannabis use has been demonstrated to lead to problems with memory and learning, addiction, decreased motivation and concentration, anxiety, increased risk of respiratory diseases, paranoia and in some cases psychosis.