

REGULATOR OF MEDICINAL CANNABIS BILL 2014

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

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To Whom It May Concern

Thank you for the opportunity to present this short submission in respect of the Regulator of Medicinal Cannabis Bill 2014.

There is plenty of evidence and documentation to support the use of cannabis to relieve chronic pain. The use of medicinal cannabis can both alleviate the suffering that cancer patients (for example) deal with, and significantly improve their quality of life. By association, the pain relief it provides will go some way to ease the strain that must inevitably be placed upon carers of chronic pain sufferers, whether people care being cared for in their own homes, or in a hospital environment.

An environment free from stress is a much healthier environment for all concerned.

I also remind you of the findings from a NSW multi-party Standing Committee into the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes that was released on 15 May 2013. On page 39 of this report it states:

“ . . . Our reading of the evidence gathered during the inquiry – including rigorous scientific evidence – is that cannabis products are emerging as a promising area of medicine, most notably in respect of a number of painful conditions that do not respond to existing treatments. . . . ”

The Australian Medical Association has acknowledged that cannabis has “therapeutic potential”. (<http://www.skynews.com.au/news/politics/national/2014/06/22/senator-says-denying-medical-cannabis--cruel-.html#sthash.wiPMcPXG.dpuf>)

Please also consider that at least 20 countries permit the use of medicinal cannabis to relieve distressing symptoms across a range of serious medical conditions, and its use is legal in: Canada, Israel, Czech Republic, Finland, Netherlands, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, while of the 50 US states, medicinal cannabis use is permitted in 23 of them, and legislation to allow its use is pending in three more.

Australian Greens Senator Richard Di Natale has said: “Medical marijuana is much less addictive than some of the opiate-type painkillers we already give.” This has to be an improvement both for the health outcomes of the patient, and the potential for weaning patients off expensive prescriptive drugs – which can also be stressful for the patients.

(<http://www.skynews.com.au/news/politics/national/2014/06/22/senator-says-denying-medical-cannabis--cruel-.html#sthash.wiPMcPXG.dpuf>)

It is time for Australia to legalise the use of medicinal cannabis and recognise the benefits it can have for people suffering the painful symptoms of so many diseases and conditions.

I close this short submission by asking you to place compassion and common sense before politics and personal prejudices.

Thank you for reading this submission.

Anne Layton-Bennett