

Inquiry into the Regulator of Medical Cannabis Bill 2014

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To Sophie Dunstone
Committee Secretary
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
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My interest in cannabis arose after I drew my attention to the available research around cannabis in the treatment of epilepsy in children with Dravet Syndrome. Her daughter suffers Dravet Syndrome first described by French physician Dr. Charlotte Dravet in 1978, Dravet syndrome (previously known as Severe Myoclonic Epilepsy of Infancy, or SMEI) is a neurodevelopmental disorder beginning in infancy, characterised by intractable seizures.¹

Cannabis is providing relief from seizures in epilepsy patients here in Australia and around the world and the specific profile of the plant is an important part of the process. The TGA cannot provide to my knowledge the framework to allow access to the whole plant therapy and so many other epilepsy patients' need as the substances within the cannabis plants occur in varying concentrations in different strains and the growing conditions, harvesting, storage and processing impact on the final concentration of the products. A separate regulator set up to account for these factors will be necessary moving forward.

From a nurses public health perspective I can see enormous potential in the establishment of a medical cannabis industry in Australia as this plant has the ability to provide so many people with a safe therapeutic alternative when considering their choices in therapy for many medical conditions. Proven past therapeutic uses include migraine, dysmenorrhoea, glaucoma epilepsy and the treatment of Asthma as it is a bronchodilator. It improves appetite, relieves muscle spasticity and is an effective pain management modality. It is proving to provide potent antitumoral effects, helps to regulate hormones in diabetes

¹ <http://www.dravet.org.uk/what-is-dravet-syndrome/>

and menopause, effective treatment in PTSD, inflammatory bowel disease and neurodegenerative processes such as dementia.

Australia needs medical cannabis as an industry now. There is more than enough information available about the benefits of it and many within the industry that can provide important, relevant information to assist in its formation and regulation processes. I also hope to see a robust pro cannabis research program flourishing in Australia running concurrently with the establishment of the industry. There is more than enough international research available to get started now and provide people like

the medical cannabis needs to live a life without seizures.

Federal and State Governments need to work collaboratively to ensure Australians that choose medical cannabis can access it legally now as many already are finding they are gaining substantial relief from symptoms associated with their medical conditions. Legislation needs to provide for these patients nationally and our police force need to be provided with the information about medical cannabis and it's uses in the community so medical cannabis patients, their parents and carers are not arrested and charged and put through distressing situations when they are already facing life and death medical conditions. The courts are recognising this as a major issue currently and it needs to be addressed.

I thank you for accepting my submission for the Regulator of Medical Cannabis Bill 2014 and look forward to seeing a positive progressive response from the good people of the committee, our elected federal and state government representatives and community groups from around Australia.

END OF SUBMISSION