

Submission to Parliament: Supporting the Development of the Industrial Hemp Industry in Australia

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Business Name: True Hemp Culture Eco Store

Location: South Australia

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I am writing in support of the development of the industrial hemp industry in Australia. As the owner of an eco-conscious retail business specialising in hemp clothing, skincare, and health products, I have been working in the hemp sector since 2006. Based in South Australia, our store has championed sustainable, plant-based products that benefit people and the planet.

Having seen first-hand the potential of hemp as a renewable resource, I believe it can play a vital role in supporting sustainable agriculture, Australian manufacturing, regional development, and the transition to a circular economy.

a. The Potential Contribution of an Industrial Hemp Industry

(i) Contribution to Australian Farming Systems

Hemp is an ideal rotational crop for Australian farmers due to its short growth cycle, low water usage, and resistance to pests. It improves soil health through deep root systems and reduces the need for chemical inputs. Hemp can integrate into existing farming systems without displacing staple crops, helping farmers diversify income while regenerating soil.

(ii) Contribution to Australian Manufacturing

Hemp's versatility supports multiple sectors including:

- **Textiles:** Durable, breathable, and biodegradable fabric alternatives.
- **Bioplastics:** Renewable raw material for packaging, automotive, and consumer goods.
- **Health & Food Products:** Nutrient-rich hemp seeds and oils are increasingly popular for their health benefits, supporting the wellness industry.

Local processing infrastructure could stimulate a new wave of plant-based innovation in Australian manufacturing.

(iii) Contribution to the Circular Economy

Hemp's full-plant usability and biodegradability directly support waste reduction. Hemp-based products:

- Break down safely in the environment,
- Replace single-use plastics and synthetics,
- Enable zero-waste production models across industries.

This aligns with national and global goals for a circular, sustainable economy.

(iv) Contribution to the Construction Industry

Hempcrete and other hemp-based construction materials are carbon-negative, non-toxic, and thermally efficient. These materials can revolutionise the building industry by:

- Reducing emissions,
- Providing natural insulation,
- Improving indoor air quality.

However, adoption is limited due to building code restrictions, lack of awareness, and limited supply chains. Addressing these barriers would open a new frontier for green construction in Australia.

(v) Contribution to Australia's Economy

Industrial hemp can boost:

- Job creation in agriculture, manufacturing, and retail,
- Export growth, particularly to markets with established hemp demand (e.g., EU, US, Canada),
- Regional development, as hemp thrives in rural areas and requires local processing.

The industry's growth presents a valuable opportunity to diversify and future-proof the Australian economy.

b. Research and Development Requirements

To realise hemp's full potential, investment in R&D is essential. Priority areas include:

- Crop optimisation for Australian climates,
- Efficient fibre and seed separation technologies,
- Development of high-value hemp-based products,
- Education and training for farmers and processors.

Government-backed R&D partnerships with universities and industry could position Australia as a leader in hemp innovation.

c. Regulatory Framework

The current regulatory environment is fragmented and overly cautious. Key issues include:

- State-by-state licensing inconsistencies,
- Restrictions on hemp-derived products (e.g., low-THC extracts such as CBD),
- Barriers to exporting Australian-grown hemp.

A nationally harmonised regulatory framework is urgently needed, supporting safe and legal access to hemp markets and enabling Australian businesses to compete globally.

d. Other Related Matters

Public education is crucial to dispel confusion between industrial hemp and psychoactive cannabis. Hemp contains negligible THC and poses no drug risk. Government support for awareness campaigns would foster public trust and industry growth.

Support for small businesses and eco-focused retailers should also be considered. As early adopters, we have played a critical role in building the market and educating consumers over the last two decades.

Conclusion

Industrial hemp offers Australia a sustainable, job-creating, and globally competitive industry across agriculture, construction, textiles, health, and more. With the right policy settings, investment, and public support, hemp can contribute meaningfully to a regenerative, low-carbon future.

I urge Parliament to support the hemp industry's development and would welcome the opportunity to contribute further to this important conversation.

Sincerely,

Luci Keats

True Hemp Culture Eco Store