

13th March 2015

Attention: Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Canberra ACT 2600

Regarding: The Moderator of Medicinal Cannabis Bill 2014

Dear Committee Delegates,

As an Australian citizen, I would like to submit my views on Medicinal Cannabis.

At this time there is a wealth of current scientific research on the medical benefits of Cannabis, from universities and labs throughout the world, including the United States, Israel and Europe. Medicinal Cannabis has already been successfully implemented by many other countries and in the US, to alleviate and even cure a vast number of serious diseases and conditions. There is also much research evidencing the potential of medical Cannabis to be useful as a preventative measure against many of these conditions.

I see no reason to bring the members of this Committee up to speed regards the history/research/evidenced benefits of medical Cannabis. I trust that the delegates have thoroughly reviewed the most current scientific and medical research and learned views on the matter, in the course of their duties as moderators of this bill.

However, the public consensus is that there appears to be a knowledge deficit on behalf of the Australian government regarding this issue, who appear to be reviewing outdated, unfounded and politically-biased information instead of the hard, scientific facts on the benefits/risks of medical Cannabis.

Another opinion frequently expressed by the public on this matter, is the suspicion that our government are dragging their heels regards the issue, effectively blocking access to medical Cannabis while colluding with pharmaceutical companies to protect mutual future profits arising from patent medications derived from the plant. Please prove us wrong?

Cannabis was originally classified as a schedule 1 substance...we now know that this classification was based on INCORRECT and unfounded, politically motivated pseudoscience.

The current science makes is glaringly obvious that we were mistaken. It is a source of immense embarrassment and frustration to the Australian people, that while the rest of the world takes giant strides to correct this atrocious error, our country continues to lag behind with ignorant, unsophisticated and naive arguments against the use of medical Cannabis. Meanwhile, real people are dying and suffering unnecessarily.

Furthermore, any child in Australia can access black-market cannabis right now, often from dubious sources. Lets face facts and tell it like it is; if our children can get their hands on this so easily, then the system as it stands does not work. Criminalising our youth is creating more problems in society. Those who are sick and dying ARE ALREADY accessing cannabis, or desperately trying to, in order to alleviate suffering and symptoms of disease. We need to be mature and face this reality also; these unfortunate people are not criminals. They should have the right to access high-quality medical cannabis from a reputable source to help them get well or manage their disease. Black market supply of cannabis is of poor quality and often has undesirable and harmful additives; as is the nature of the underground market in illicit substances. Australians deserve better.

When facing death, disability or suffering, how could you expect someone NOT to seek out medical cannabis for relief, when others are benefitting from this plant all over the world. Anyone in this position will obviously look for and access the plant here too, regardless of the criminal consequences. This situation is simply intolerable. Each delegate on this committee must realise that they or their loved ones may well be directly affected by health issues that could benefit from

cannabis at some point in the future...so I speak not only for myself and my own, but for all ordinary Australians, including yourselves.

By changing our current legislation and **re-legalising** this incredible plant, we can address this injustice. If we were to regulate the supply of cannabis, we could wipe out the black market cannabis trade, while better protecting our children from exposure to the true criminal elements of society. In the hands of local growers, manufacturers and distributors, Australia could proudly create an industry that would create a myriad of jobs, save lives, relieve suffering and reduce the burden of health costs and the related social impact of disease, while increasing productivity and boosting our economy.

Education about the health benefits and low-level risk of cannabis, and regulation of the supply of cannabis, would be more beneficial and less harmful overall than the current situation where we see criminalisation of everyday decent Australians who use it for medical reasons.

Australians ultimately deserve full access to this healing plant, to use at our own discretion.

We want to be able to grow our own plants for use as a preventative whole food, AND also be able to access medical-grade, high-potency cannabis from regulated suppliers for more serious and debilitating medical conditions, or as an adjunct treatment of those conditions.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my views on this matter. I truly hope the Australian people we will be heard on this issue. I look forward to seeing the Committee positively respond to the Medicinal Bill for the benefit of all Australians.

Yours sincerely
Candy Walton