

Committee Secretary

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

I am writing to you to show my support for the legalisation of medical and recreational marijuana. By now I am sure that many Australian policy makers interested in medical science are now aware of the myriad benefits of this beautiful, healing plant.

I began smoking marijuana in my late teens, mostly on weekends with mates and have used it sporadically since. I am married to a wonderful woman, have a three-year-old son and own my own organic garden maintenance business.

I use (smoke) marijuana to

- relieve chronic pain
- alleviate back, hip, neck and muscular pain,
- as a muscle relaxant (I can get painful spasms)
- to relieve symptoms of asthma (yes smoking marijuana alleviates wheezing and tight chest - in controlled doses),
- to help insomnia caused by muscular pain and spasm
- as a stimulant - this one is new to me. In my early years smoking it was as a total relaxant - sitting around with mates having a few beers and a laugh - talking about the universe and everything in between - but these days when I am totally spent from a day at work and I need to be at home to look after my son or my wife (who has chronic fatigue syndrome) or both, marijuana gives me a huge de-stress and energy boost - it kinda makes everything OK and peaceful in my mind and I manage to relax and take each challenge as it comes, rather than getting stressed and short tempered.
- as a creativity enhancer (as many of our best artists, musicians and thinkers often do). I have a Bachelor Degree in Creative Writing and have written many a paper and creative piece while 'high' and I can weave many otherwise unperceived layers into my work.
- as a way to connect with my son - men traditionally are the enforcers or rule makers and our paternalistic society serves to reconfirm stereotypes of masculinity often to the detriment of our children. When high I am able to interact with my son in ways that would be seen from a societal perspective as feminine (more connected to my emotions, softer of voice, time giving). This is also new to me since I have become a father and a value to marijuana use I never could have imagined pre-fatherhood.

If marijuana is or has ever been harmful to me, and therefore indirectly harmful to my family, I would stop using it. I'm not an idiot. The war on drugs, which is unavoidable a war on your own people, is idiocy. What is so frightening about feeling marijuana's 'euphoria'? The euphoria simply lets one feel more connected to the universe, to themselves, to each other, to the 'unknowns' of our world. Who doesn't want that? Perhaps our capitalist, media-driven society is trapped in fear driven, consumerist paradigms? Free thinking is an exposition of truth. Marijuana use has been 'read' as anti-capitalist since the 60's.

When I obtain marijuana it is always buying it from friends, so to possess the dried female flowers what I call 'buds', I am breaking the law. I do not wish to break the law and risk my livelihood and the well-being and security of my family to have access to a plant, a healing herb with grows in the ground.

If I have one gripe it is this: although I know the person who grows, I do not have control over the product I am buying and often the 'buds' are hydroponically grown, have had large amounts of fertilisers and other chemicals poured into it to enhance the plant to Lance Armstrong levels. It's akin to a bodybuilder using steroids to bulk up. Yeah he is massive and that's the point but he's not necessarily healthy. Living as close to nature intended is to optimize health - organic foods, minimised toxins (from air, water, food), surrounded by biodiversity, music, stories and love (intentionally omitting the almighty \$ here, which we can't remove from any equation even if we do remit our 'lifestyle choices').

Marijuana for me is as natural a medicine as you can get. It is also I believe (and this is being backed up by studies) a preventative for chronic and terminal illnesses. I currently take hemp seed oil (illegally, which is ludicrous) and I feel its benefits every day.

When the committee reviews the proposed legislation I urge you to consider that regulation involve the allowances for approved patients (I believe I should be approved with chronic pain) to **grow their own plants**, as well as have access to tailored strains (each strain provides different balance of healing properties). It was only a decade ago that growing up to six plants was not a criminal offence in South Australia. Look at it now - huge black market run by bikies standing over government, police, courts.

Also the benefits of cannabis are optimised by 'whole plant' medicine - to reduce the plants active compounds to single compounds such as THC-only or CBD-only synthetic medicines is to reduce its potency and therefore efficacy as a medicine. Do not let pharmaceutical companies dictate the terms of this legislation. It should be reclassified as a botanical ingredient.

And do not fear. The plant is already **in good hands**. Just let us do it legally and without the anxiety of having to look over our shoulder - a health risk in itself.

Legal marijuana will help me live a longer, happier and more prosperous life.

FREE THE HEALING PLANT!!! It can heal individuals AND societies. If we just set it free.

PEACE & LOVE.