



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Senate inquiry into the current barriers to patient access to medicinal cannabis in Australia

Issue date: 15 November 2019

The Senate Community Affairs References Committee is conducting an inquiry into the current barriers to patient access to medicinal cannabis in Australia.

The committee will be examining the appropriateness of the current regulatory regime, the suitability of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for subsidising access to products and the training and education of doctors in relation to treatments.

The Chair of the committee, Senator Siewert said ‘this inquiry will also look at how Australia’s regime compares to other countries and examine international best practice models for patient access to medicinal cannabis treatments’.

Call for submissions

The committee is seeking submissions from a wide range of people, including families and carers affected by current medicinal cannabis regulations in Australia. The committee has requested that submissions be received by 17 January 2020.

If you would like to make a submission you may find it helpful to read the guide to making a submission available on the Senate website: [Preparing a submission to an inquiry](#).

If you require special arrangements to enable you to make a submission to the inquiry, or if you have questions, or need more time to write your submission, please contact the Community Affairs secretariat.

Further information about the inquiry, including published submissions and hearing programs, is available on the committee website: www.aph.gov.au/senate_ca.

Media enquiries: Office of Senator Rachel Siewert, Committee Chair on (02) 6277 3587

For background information: contact the committee secretariat.

DATE REFERRED

14 November 2019

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE

17 January 2020

NEXT HEARINGS

To be advised

REPORTING DATE

12 February 2020

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Senator Rachel Siewert (Chair)
Senator Wendy Askew
(Deputy Chair)
Senator Hollie Hughes
Senator Malarndirri McCarthy
Senator Deborah O'Neill
Senator Anne Urquhart

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Attending a public hearing

Senate committees often decide to hold public hearings as part of inquiries to enable them to hear from people who have relevant experience or expertise.

The date and location of any public hearings will be published on the inquiry website in due course.

Most committee hearings are held in public and anyone is welcome to come and listen. The audio and video of each hearing will also be broadcast live on the internet:

www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament

Further information about what to expect when attending a Senate committee hearing is available on the Senate website: [Attending a public hearing](#)

Inquiry Terms of Reference

The current barriers to patient access to medicinal cannabis in Australia, including:

- (a) the appropriateness of the current regulatory regime through the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) Special Access Scheme (SAS), Authorised Prescriber Scheme and clinical trials;
- (b) the suitability of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for subsidising patient access to medicinal cannabis products;
- (c) the interaction between state and territory authorities and the Commonwealth, including overlap and variation between state and territory schemes;
- (d) Australia's regulatory regime in comparison to international best practice models for medicinal cannabis regulation and patient access;
- (e) the availability of training for doctors in the current TGA regulatory regime for prescribing medicinal cannabis to their patients;
- (f) the education of doctors in the Endogenous Cannabinoid System (ECS), and the appropriateness of medicinal cannabis treatments for various indications;
- (g) sources of information for doctors about uses of medicinal cannabis and how these might be improved and widened;
- (h) delays in access, and the practice of product substitution, due to importation of medicinal cannabis and the shortage of Australian manufactured medicinal cannabis products;
- (i) the current status of the domestic regulated medicinal cannabis industry;
- (j) the impacts on the mental and physical wellbeing of those patients struggling to access medicinal cannabis through Australia's regulatory regime;
- (k) the particular barriers for those in rural and remote areas in accessing medicinal cannabis legally;
- (l) the significant financial barriers to accessing medicinal cannabis treatment;
- (m) the number of Australian patients continuing to rely on unregulated supply of medicinal cannabis due to access barriers and the impacts associated with that; and
- (n) any related matters.