

**Submission  
No 13**

**INQUIRY INTO LAW REFORM ISSUES REGARDING  
SYNTHETIC DRUGS**

Name: Name Suppressed  
Date Received: 5/04/2012

*Partially Confidential*

5 April 2012

The Committee Manager  
Legal Affairs Committee  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

**Law reform issues regarding synthetic drugs (Inquiry)**

I am a young adult of regional NSW with an interest in the topic of 'drugs'. After first discovering synthetic cannabis in 2010 I have followed the issue as it has progressed and the reactionary actions taken by Governments and anti-drug lobbying groups/individuals.

As a somewhat closeted 'drug geek' I have spent many hours reading about existing and emerging drug issues and responses from around the world. In addition to personal interests in the subject matter I have also attained a degree in Environmental Health which had areas of study relevant to the subject including Chemistry, Toxicology, and Epidemiology.

The real problem legislators face with synthetic drugs is, like other drugs, is that the substances themselves are in demand – People know about their existence, they are readily available to those that want them and they have the effects users are seeking from them.

Synthetic Cannabinoids became popular with those subject to drug testing including people engaged in employment that conducts drug testing as part of their OH&S policies and those required to pass drug tests as part of their parole conditions or rehabilitation requirements – Why else would they pay more money for a something comparable to cannabis, with a higher price tag? People that want to get high but have not got the responsibility of a job will continue to buy regular cannabis because it is cheaper in the majority of cases than its synthetic counterparts.

Recently Bob Carr spoke up regarding the failure of the 'drug war' joining other prominent Australians including former Australian Federal Police Chief Mick Palmer and former NSW Director of Public Prosecutions Nicholas Cowdery with a report to be produced.

I have made reference to this particular story as it supports my stance – The reason people are using these potentially dangerous 'research chemicals' is because of the laws that already exist regarding the 'real' substances.

I hold the belief that the only way to address the inadequacies of laws surrounding *newer* and emerging synthetic drugs is to better legislate the drugs they mimic which we have more detailed information on with a greater understanding that has come with time – By doing this I believe would eliminate much of the demand for the substances your inquiry is focusing on.

The legal smoking 'blends' that regulators are playing legislative cat and mouse with the manufacturers over should demonstrate that psychoactive substances with effects comparable to cannabis can be sold in a (somewhat) responsible manner as well as provide income in the form of taxes – Money that could fund intervention strategies for users identified as being, or becoming mentally dependant on them.

There are plenty of case studies around the World that have demonstrable evidence in favour of relaxing existing laws on cannabis (among other drugs) – The Netherlands and Portugal being prime examples.

How can you strengthen the current laws? My solution is to regulate cannabis in a manner that acknowledges the evidence regarding usage and impacts so they can actually achieve outcomes that suit those other than views prohibitionists maintain a death-grip on.

Have a working strategy towards cannabis and the need to strengthen new laws on synthetic cannabinoids won't be an issue.

As for the other synthetic drugs such as amphetamine-like stimulants, I hope you have been provided with some possible working solutions to addressing these concerning substances.

Kind regards,