



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 1 – PREMIER AND FINANCE

## MEDIA RELEASE

### CANNABIS COMMITTEE TABLES FIRST REPORT

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, 31 October 2024

Today, Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance handed down its first report for its inquiry into the impact of the regulatory framework for cannabis in New South Wales. It makes a number of findings and recommendations for the NSW Government as part of the upcoming NSW Drug Summit.

The committee found that prohibiting cannabis has not deterred its use, and that criminal prosecution for cannabis offences can cause considerable harms to individuals. It also found that criminal justice costs of cannabis laws are unreasonably high.

The Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC, Chair of the committee commented: 'It has been clear from the evidence that cannabis laws are unfairly punitive and ineffective. Bold law reform is needed. We have recommended a suite of preliminary reforms to lessen the serious ongoing harms of cannabis laws. The committee intends to build upon these recommendations in its final report'.

These include reducing maximum penalties for possession of cannabis, limiting when police can search a person based on suspicion of cannabis possession, and conducting trials of administrative non-enforcement of cannabis possession laws in certain locations.

Mr Buckingham continued: 'The recommendations in this report are just the beginning. As we have seen from various jurisdictions around the world, there is a growing shift towards legal and regulated cannabis markets. With this in mind, it is important for New South Wales to take a staged approach to its cannabis law reform process, ensuring an iterative and gradual process supported by the community'.

Mr Buckingham concluded: 'We are incredibly grateful to all witnesses who have given evidence at this inquiry so far, particularly those with lived experiences who have provided invaluable insight into the impact of cannabis laws in New South Wales'.

The committee continues its inquiry with a further two public hearings confirmed for Wednesday 11 December and Friday 13 December 2024. The committee will table its final report by 8 April 2025.

The committee's first report and further information about the inquiry can be found at the inquiry [webpage](#).

-ENDS-

*For further information please contact Committee Chair, the Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC, on (02) 9230 2651*