

**Submission
No 122**

INQUIRY INTO USE OF CANNABIS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES

Organisation: Industrial Hemp Association NSW

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Submission

The use of Cannabis for Medical Purposes

The Industrial Hemp Association NSW (Inc)

Industrial Hemp crops are the ideal source of *Cannabidiol* (CBD) rich medicinal hemp extracts because **CBD-rich extracts** have the same efficacy as the THC varieties **without any of the psycho-tropic properties** that have caused controversy.

Cannabis species (*Cannabis sativa* and *indica*) are amongst humanity's oldest cultivated plants and have found extensive use in many cultures as a source of fibre, food and medicine. Prior to the prohibition, Cannabis was widely used by western doctors to treat a multiplicity of human ills, having been introduced from India. The American Medical Association of the day made an impassioned plea that the prohibition not include medical cannabis, as it was a valued therapeutic.

1. Following the isolation and characterisation of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) by Dr Ralph Mechoulem in Israel, the scientific investigation of the chemistry of the cannabinoids proceeded. Judge Francis Young stated in court records: "Marijuana, in its natural form, is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man."
2. Notwithstanding the negative position adopted by the DEA, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration licensed synthetic THC, in the form of Marinol, to be supplied on prescription. These preparations have been available since the 1970's and have been placed in Schedule III (the same as codeine), while plant cannabis remains in Schedule 1, with extreme restriction. Most medical cannabis patients exposed to Marinol have found it to have less medical value than phytocannabis. Due to activists obtaining court orders, the US government has been obliged to supply plant cannabis to several registered medical cannabis patients since 1976, using cannabis grown at the University of Mississippi, for the treatment of glaucoma and other conditions unresponsive to conventional therapy.
3. G.W. Pharmaceuticals, a British company specialising in the investigation and production of cannabis based medicine has produced Sativex, a standardised whole plant extract of cannabis, available for clinical trials with varying ratios of THC and CBD (cannabidiol). Many thousands of patients have received Sativex, principally for the treatment of multiple sclerosis associated spasticity. Side effects have been few and easily managed.
4. As quoted by Justice Young, cannabis has been shown to be amongst the safest of all therapeutically active substances. Despite widespread use by many millions of people not a single death has been attributed directly to the pharmacological effects of cannabis. Further, unlike alcohol and tobacco, no organ associated damage has been attributed to cannabis.
5. There are numerous anecdotal reports of the use of concentrated cannabis extracts in the treatment of advanced cancer, including well documented cures of previously intractable conditions. Medical cannabis is gaining acceptance overseas.
6. The recent voting in the United States has established 18 states with large scale medical cannabis access schemes and 2 with legal recreational access. Israel, Spain and many European countries run compassionate medical programs. In 2003 the then premier Carr promised a compassionate access scheme: - "The working group found that law-abiding people had been forced to turn to the black market to ease their pain. The president of the NSW branch of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Choong-Siew Yong, said the medical association supported the trial. He said there was strong anecdotal evidence that cannabis eased the symptoms of sufferers of the diseases listed and could be more effective than drugs now available.

7. The preferred option for cannabis law reform would involve the complete repeal of the cannabis prohibition and only enough regulation to ensure safe conduct in public and protection of minors. A proposal is as follows: - The Industrial Hemp Act of 2008 has paved the way for the establishment of industrial hemp crops around the state. To qualify as industrial hemp the mature inflorescences must have less than 1% THC and generally a CBD/THC greater than unity. It is well established that CBD significantly moderates the psychotropic effect of THC, allowing for much more robust dosing than would be possible with THC dominant therapy. Additionally, CBD and THC appear to act synergistically and via somewhat different pathways, again a therapeutic advantage.

The legislative and/or regulatory change required to establish this program is minimal, as hemp cultivation is already controlled under current legislation. The initial medical cannabis trial could be conducted under section 23(4) (b) of the NSW Misuse of Drugs Act, which permits the use of otherwise prohibited plants for scientific research and analysis. Such permits are issued by the chief health officer. In the alternative, the Industrial Hemp Act could be modified to facilitate the collection and extraction of the inflorescences.

Related Reading

- [Experts back medical marijuana trial - theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au)

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May 21, 2003 – People who expressed outrage at a planned trial of *marijuana* for medicinal ... and analgesia researcher Professor *Laurie Mather* described it.

- [Survey of Australians using cannabis for medical purposes](http://www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/2/1/18)

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- [Laurence Mather, Professor of Anaesthesia and Analgesia ...](http://www.zoominfo.com/#!search/profile/person?personId...targetid...)

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Laurie Mather, a professor of Anaesthesia and Analgesia research at the University of Sydney, was invited to investigate the medicinal potential of *cannabis* for ...

- [Experts Tip Cannabis Pill, Spray](http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v03/n749/a01.html)

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May 22, 2003 – The company's website said that while smoking *cannabis* was an effective ... Sydney medical researcher Professor *Laurie Mather* said an ...

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www.prnewswire.com/.../can-cannabidiol-cbd-fight-metastatic-cancer...

Sep 21, 2012 – Can *Cannabidiol* (CBD) Fight Metastatic Cancer? According to the latest research the answer is yes. Important news for Medical Marijuana, ...

Getting the Flax Straight about Cannabidiol - Philadelphia medical ...

www.examiner.com/article/getting-the-flax-straight-about-cannabidiol

Oct 13, 2012 – A research team based in Poland may have discovered that CBD is a major component of the flax plant. The Cannabis plant also makes CBD ...

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by G Irvine - 2011 - [Related articles](#)

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Harm Reduction Journal 2005, 2:18 doi:10.1186/1477-7517-2-18 ... Australian *medical* cannabis users are risking *legal* ramifications, but consistent ongoing support; and *Graham Irvine*, Franjo Grotenhermen, Laurie Mather, Wayne Hall ...

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