

**INQUIRY INTO ROAD TRANSPORT AMENDMENT
(MEDICINAL CANNABIS-EXEMPTIONS FROM
OFFENCES) BILL 2021**

Name: Mr Scott Ford

Date Received: 10 April 2022

I am a military veteran of 25 years and approved medical cannabis patient for the past two years.

I own a 120 acre property and, at times, use heavy machinery in arduous conditions. I do this safely and my medication choice has not impacted on my ability to operate the heavy machinery.

Using medicinal cannabis has been extremely effective for me and I have not had any adverse side effects. The safety profile for the cannabis medications is far better than my previously trialed Schedule 8 medications and I feel confident in using medicinal cannabis safely.

The only ongoing side effect that I have noticed using the cannabis medications has been a lift in my overall mood.

I know how much medication to take and when. I did have more than required in the early days of use but quickly identified the correct dosage. This was all done under the supervision of my prescribing doctor.

The slight heady feeling from a higher dose was obvious, undesirable & avoidable once the optimal dosage is determined.

In my opinion it is easier to identify any feeling of impairment using medicinal cannabis than it is using opioids. I found the use of opioids to be mind numbing and it slowed my cognitive abilities but without being easily recognised. Whereas with medicinal cannabis I can easily recognise a lowering of cognitive abilities.

I live in a rural area without access to public transport. Without my driver's licence I am unable to access basic needs such as access to food and healthcare. So basically I have no choice but to drive my car. When I need to use my car I don't take my medication that morning and get the trip out of the way before medicating. This is only done to lower the detectable amount of cannabinoids in my saliva, I know that I will still have detectable amounts of cannabis in my system, but I can hand on heart say I am 100% not impaired in any way - except for having pain to contend with.

I find it really hard to accept that each time I drive my car on the road I face a drug driving charge for using a prescribed & legal medication.

The current NSW drug driving laws are resulting in the criminalisation of average Australians for using legal cannabis medications under the guise of road safety.

There are many medications open to abuse, however, using them is still considered acceptable when it comes to operating a motor vehicle on a public road. The current law is simply unjust. All prescribed Schedule 8 medications should be treated equally.

The current roadside drug testing regime doesn't test for impairment of drivers, it only looks for traces of banned substances. As such a driver can be impaired by a legal drug and pass the test.

A new roadside testing initiative must be implemented that uses unbiased and objective means to identify impairment, from any cause.

There are now software based impairment identification applications that are able to do this and something along these lines should be implemented in NSW as a priority.

In conclusion the current penalization of medicinal cannabis users is completely unjust and a legal defence of 'using any prescribed Schedule 8 medication as directed' must be accepted in a court of law.

Furthermore the NSW road safety initiatives should be 100% evidence based and inclusive of all intoxicants.