

Submission  
No 72

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE REGULATORY  
FRAMEWORK FOR CANNABIS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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## Submission Re: Legalisation of Cannabis

Cannabis should be legalised because every aspect of society benefits in doing so.

I am a Registered nurse and I am also 25 years old. Based on my own personal experiences and both medical and social self researching on the usage of cannabis, a significant amount of the population has at least tried cannabis in their life and most of them recently. I find this particularly to be the case for those my age.

Research and logic will also show that the most harm that cannabis has is when people fear or actually become persecuted for engaging with the drug. Although there is not denying that there are health risks to the consumer and even those close to the consumer when taking the drug, the impact on people's health and burdens and cost to society are small when compared to other substances and behaviours, many that are legal - e.g. tobacco and alcohol consumption.

Frequency of cannabis use as well as other forms of substance usage or misuse can be seen disproportionately high in minority and disadvantaged populations, e.g. low-social economic, those with mental illness, those with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, etc. Because of this they are also disproportionately affected and targeted by the harm that accompanies prosecution. This is the complete opposite of what is needed to help and support these potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups within society. In fact, taking a harm reduction approach has show to yield positive result where people are provided with safety resources and education to make calculated risks and to help minimise negative outcomes associated with substance use behaviours. Legalising cannabis can reduce negative outcomes associated with prosecution, incarceration and legal interactions. It would also reduce a large burden off the Police and Legal systems, putting government funding and tax-payers monies to better use.

Another reason why Cannabis should be legalised is that it would stimulate the economy. With regulation, it would draw in businesses that with safely grow and dispense cannabis to the public. This would be taking money away from the black market, increased tax revenue and, therefore, stimulate the economy. Furthermore, many harms can be reduced due to the poor, and often harmful, Black Market growing standard, where harmful chemicals are sprayed onto the growing plants that are known to cause various health issues.

The legalisation of cannabis may even make research on the drug easier, helping to expedite breakthroughs in medical knowledge and therapies. Cannabis research in Australia is still in very early stages and is small scale compared to other parts of the world. So far, what can be said about cannabis is that there are some many things that we have to learn about the plant and how it interacts with the systems within the human body. So far we know that it has certain interactions with pain, appetite and nausea pathways. We can get to understand these interactions and more, utilising it to our advantage to better health care and society.

Lastly, legalisation and De-criminalisation of cannabis has seen great success in countries all over the world that support the above arguments.

It doesn't matter if you're a user or not. As you can now understand we all stand to benefit on the legalisation of cannabis. So let's start enjoying the benefits.