

Submission  
No 73

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My mental health issues began almost fifteen years ago when I was forced to take early retirement after forty years as a Registered Nurse. At the time I suffered from PTSD and depression, and insomnia for which my GP prescribed antidepressants and benzodiazepines.

I remained on these medications for years with partial relief of symptoms however the side effects were out of proportion to the benefits and on several occasions I attempted to stop the prescribed medications but found the withdrawal process traumatic and I was forced to remain on them despite the troublesome side effects.

I had some experience using cannabis in my younger years (I am 75) but have avoided drugs and alcohol for many years as they contribute to my depression and anxiety and other issues such as insomnia, as well as cannabis being illegal in NSW.

Almost two years ago I read about the change to the law allowing usage of medical cannabis and out of desperation I arranged online appointments with the nurse and doctor at Alternaleaf. It was a life changing decision that improved my quality of life to the extent that I have reduced my antidepressant consumption dramatically and aim to stop using it completely in the near future.

At first I was sceptical of the improvement in my mental outlook however the fact that I am almost completely off antidepressants and benzodiazepines has been enough to confirm that medical cannabis oil and flower has been responsible for my new lease on life.

Unfortunately the law in NSW has not kept pace with reality of medical cannabis and its continued benefit to thousands of patients. Whilst I would never vape cannabis and drive a vehicle I am always aware that RBT testing could indicate THC in my system days after using it, despite my not being in any way incapacitated. I therefore rarely drive my car since commencing as a medical cannabis patient. Living in a regional area with limited access to public transport this seriously impacts my mobility.

Another issue is access to subsidised medical cannabis as the cost is currently prohibitive for pensioners such as myself. Some degree of subsidised cost of medical cannabis would be cost effective to the government as a saving in other prescription medication would result, at least in my own case.

Through my using prescribed medical cannabis I understand how doing so is a victimless crime and the legalisation of cannabis for personal use is a move in the right direction.

Despite its remaining a criminal activity, I have been made aware of how widespread is the illegal (as well as legal) use of this drug, a drug that is harmless compared to alcohol and tobacco. I welcome the day when an adult could legally grow a small number of cannabis plants for personal use. Meanwhile I will continue treatment with cannabis products as long as the beneficial effects are experienced and I can afford the prescribed medical cannabis products.