

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I have a number of comments on the current regulation of cannabis, both from personal experience and observations on the impacts on society:

1. Recreational cannabis use is so widespread and socially accepted that efforts to police it are utterly pointless. The impact of treating it as a criminal justice issue leads to a significant waste of police and court resources for little benefit. The negative impact of convictions, particularly for young people (often already disadvantaged) can be lifelong, especially in terms of employment opportunities.

2. Cannabis is a relatively benign drug with minimal social harms attached to it, other than organised crime. There are much greater harms caused by smoking and alcohol (including violence and DV, motor vehicle and other accidents, anti-social behaviour etc) which are and will remain legal drugs.

3. The widespread legalisation of cannabis internationally makes it all but inevitable that Australia will follow suit as public support increases over time - especially given the huge uptake of medicinal cannabis. NSW should start the process of decriminalisation now to help this transition take place in a measured way rather than put its head in the sand. When pensioners, barristers and kindergarten teachers etc are using cannabis it would seem better for its sale and distribution to be regulated (and taxed) rather than in the hands of organised criminals.

4. Medicinal cannabis has been a game-changer for many people who suffer from chronic illness (myself included) and the current driving laws are deeply unfair given the many prescription and OTC medications which have the capacity to impair driving performance but cannot be detected on roadside drug tests. The test should be for impairment and not presence of THC - this is the case in many other jurisdictions and it is simply lazy policy to suggest that it can't be done in NSW. As a person with longstanding chronic pain and insomnia, I am a much safer driver when I take medicinal cannabis at night and am well rested. Drivers can be impaired for numerous reasons (illness, shift work, newborn babies, mental illness, pain medications, antihistamines etc) yet face no penalty. To criminalise medicinal cannabis users simply for having THC in their system is incredibly unfair and should be dealt with as a priority. It is denying people the ability to take advantage of an approved medicine or forcing them to risk prosecution/loss of licence by continuing treatment.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.