

Submission
No 122

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

I can't help feeling this is probably a waste of time. I voted for Premier Minns on his stance that he would take a more realistic approach to legalising cannabis. Now, he says he'd like another enquiry. Why? How many expert opinions do our politicians need? And when they do get those expert opinions, the politicians ignore them.

My personal position is that I support the legalisation of cannabis for both, recreationally and for medicinal purposes.

I don't use cannabis (or any drugs) recreationally. I don't mind if other people choose to use drugs recreationally if done so responsibly. Alcohol is a far more insidious substance with a much larger social impact on our communities, and it has been legal for almost 100 years.

My reason for supporting legalisation of cannabis is for medical reasons. In 2021 I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. This is a terminal condition with no known cure.

While my response to the chemotherapy and the Stem Cell transplant has been very good, I have as a result of chemotherapy, a very severe case of chemo-induced neuropathy. In my toes, feet and shins constantly, and up to my waist and back on episodic pain spikes. I have numb and painful forearms, from my elbows to my second, third and fourth fingers.

After several admissions to hospital for intense pain, I have been on a regime of pain medications that have helped somewhat– but with their own very significant side effects. Sleep walking, parasomnia, nausea, and the list goes on. Palexia IR and Targin for break through pain, Lyrica, Gabapentin, Endone and more. I have also tried interventional treatments – like sympathetic lumbar injections and bilateral radio frequency ablation.

None of these have provided long term relief, and all came with serious side effects.

Despite being under the care of pain specialist Dr _____ at the SAN, and Sydney Pain Centre.

Did I drive while on these medications? No I did not. I was impaired. I did not even contemplate driving.

Now, 2 years on, I have had to cease all medications – and just recently, I have tapered off Palexia only to find it wasn't helping as I had developed a tolerance to the drug. I am also on a maintenance dose of one of the drugs used during chemotherapy - Lenalidomide. It has been proven that it delays the onset of as relapse however, many patients experience increased neuropathy in the long nerves, insomnia and a colourful collection of other stomach issues and psychological.

Most nights come with pain to the point that I can often go three or four nights with less than an hour's sleep a night. Not to mention the frequent pain "spikes".

I have had to stop work due to the inability to function.

I have trialled cannabis oil after consulting a qualified GP to write prescriptions. The initial trial was effective in reducing my baseline pain to 3 to 4, on specific areas – the baseline pain.

But, I can't continue because if I am subjected to a MDT, I will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law because of the "mere presence" of THC, regardless of whether I am impaired or not. Then being convicted of a criminal offence - I can't ever travel (if I ever get well enough to travel with my wife). I would lose my licence. I would be prohibited from working in areas where drug tests are mandatory for workers. I could never get a home loan, my motor vehicle insurance provider would cease my access to cov.

But did I consider driving while on the CBD and THC trial? No. Did I feel I could drive safely? Absolutely. Would I drive if I was affected? Of course not. I am sure if you take enough of anything, it would have an undesirable affect.

However, there are plenty of overseas examples about how to assess drivers who test positive to the presence of cannabis in MDTs. There are also plenty of guidelines about nanogram measurements in blood to help assess the likelihood of impairment - very effective when combined with a physical "observational" roadside tests.

The published research in the US show a substantial number of participants have had beneficial relief from cannabis therapies. Greater than 40% in many cases. That's better than most pain treatments for neuropathy.

Those who oppose its legalisation have no idea what it's like to experience this frustration and pain. And they have no right to interfere with my choice for medical care.

I also support the recreational use of cannabis. Only because I have seen first-hand the impervious, omnipresent consequences of alcohol abuse, and feel that cannabis is a far more tolerable social drug with significantly less aggressive outcomes.

Meantime, I somehow must pay my taxes – even though I can't work. My landlord insists I must pay my rent, even though I can't work. My life insurance insist that while no one can guarantee I will live for two years, they won't pay up on terminal illness claims because I might live longer than two years.

A sensible review of the driving laws in NSW would go a long way to help me become productive again.

This is one inequity, and a right, that the government can rectify - today. Give me an avenue to reduce pain, and let the increased demand fund even more treatments that are cannabis based, in other areas of medicine.

Please don't ask for more summits and more research. Not all of us can afford to wait.

I would be happy to provide extra information or assistance if required.