

The Hon John Graham MLC

Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts,
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, Minister for Jobs and Tourism,
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council



Ref: LC PETITION

The Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC
President of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Re: LC PETITION 10,000+ BUCKINGHAM, JEREMY - MEDICAL CANNIBIS EXEMPTIONS

Dear Mr President,

I write in response to the petition lodged in the Legislative Council on 6 February 2024, by The Hon Jeremy Buckingham, regarding the amendments to the Road Transport Act 2013 to allow for medical cannabis exemption.

The NSW Government understands the difficulty faced by some people who will not drive so they can use medically prescribed THC containing cannabis. The NSW Government has committed to further research to consider evidence, options and impacts of potential law reform in this area and holding a Drug Summit at which this issue may be discussed.

THC from cannabis can affect cognitive and motor skills necessary for safe driving such as attention, judgement, memory, vision and coordination. In NSW, between 2018 and 2022, approximately 15 per cent of all fatal crashes involved drivers/riders with presence of THC.

The NSW Government is committed to balance road safety initiatives aimed at driving road trauma down through reform where appropriate, enforcement, targeted programs, including technology, working alongside education and public awareness campaigns.

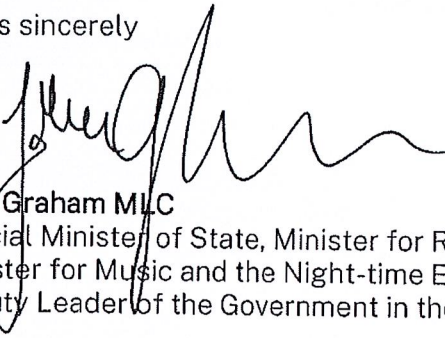
Unfortunately I am advised, there is currently no reliable way to distinguish at the roadside whether the source of THC detected is illicit or prescribed medicinal, or whether the driver has used cannabis illicitly in addition to their prescription.

I note that when a similar bill was introduced in 2021, a Parliamentary Inquiry found: "Balancing the significant public interest inherent in road safety, it appears to the committee that a better understanding of the impairing effects of medicinal cannabis products that contain THC is a fundamental and necessary precursor to law reform in this area. Without this information, it appears to the committee that any risks to road safety cannot be properly evaluated or mitigated".

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Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely



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28/2/24.

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Thursday 7 March 2024
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