



Hon Steven Miles MP
Minister for Health and
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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition numbers 2993-18 and 3046-18, tabled in Parliament on 14 November 2018, in relation to cannabis law reform. As these petitions are similar in nature, I have taken the liberty of responding to both petitions in this letter. I therefore ask that this response be noted against each petition.

The Queensland Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987 are administered by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice through the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Cannabis is a dangerous drug under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987. Any person unlawfully possessing, producing, supplying or trafficking in cannabis commits a criminal offence and is liable to imprisonment. No State or Territory government has legalised the use of recreational or unregulated cannabis.

The Palaszczuk Government is aware of the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments' recent inquiries into the legalisation of cannabis and will continue to monitor developments in other jurisdictions within Australia and overseas.

Cannabis cultivation and manufacture for medicinal and related scientific purposes is regulated under the Narcotic Drugs Act 1967, which applies throughout Australia and provides the Commonwealth with powers to meet these obligations under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961. Consistent with this convention, narcotic drugs may be manufactured in Australia only under a licence issued by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth also requires States and Territories to issue State-based approvals for manufacture. The amount that a licensed manufacturer may manufacture and possess, and over what period, is specified in a permit issued by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Medicinal cannabis products are regulated as medicines in Australia, therefore medicinal cannabis is regulated under both state legislation and the Commonwealth's Therapeutic Goods Act 1989.

Approval from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) must be obtained to allow lawful access and use in Australia. All medicinal cannabis products in Australia must also meet the standards set by the TGA for minimum quality requirements and microbiological standards.

Medicinal cannabis products need to be consistent, contaminant free and high quality so doctors can make safe prescribing and dosage decisions.

The Palaszczuk Government has supported access to Epidiolex (an oral solution of pure plant-derived cannabidiol) for children with intractable epilepsy through a Compassionate Access Scheme administered through the Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service. There are 34 children currently receiving Epidiolex through this scheme.

In Queensland, activities involving medicinal cannabis including possessing, obtaining, issuing, selling, administering and prescribing medicinal cannabis are regulated under the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016.

The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016 establishes a regulatory framework under which medicinal cannabis products may be prescribed and dispensed to patients in Queensland. Whilst cannabis for medicinal purposes has been legalised federally and in Queensland, this does not mean all cannabis use is legal.

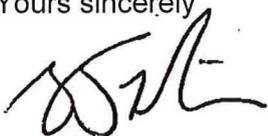
The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016 does not exclude the use of whole plant products, however this use must be under medical supervision. Medicinal cannabis products that have been prescribed by Queensland doctors include products that are derived from the cannabis plant or synthetic products that act in the same way and are used for a therapeutic purpose.

The State and Commonwealth have committed to completing the approval process and providing a decision within two business days (48 hours) once a completed application is made. Recent amendments to the Queensland Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Regulation 2017 expanded the prescribed class of specialist medical practitioners to all specialist medical practitioners (this includes specialist general practitioners) treating an expanded class of patients.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to further streamlining access to medicinal cannabis for patients, doctors and pharmacists balanced with the need to maintain the quality and safety of medicines provided to patients. I refer the petitioners to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 currently before Parliament, and explanatory notes.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



STEVEN MILES MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services