

Submission
No 316

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
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Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Cannabis Legislation

Subject: The Case for Legalizing Cannabis

Date: 25/7/2024

Introduction

I am writing to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Cannabis Legislation to advocate for the legalization of cannabis. My personal experiences and the broader societal implications of current cannabis laws highlight the need for reform. The irony of being criminally penalised for self-medication via growing a plant that I then legally obtained with two phone calls and through a prescription exemplifies the inconsistencies and inefficiencies in our current legal framework.

Cannabis is a natural plant, a natural herb and has been in our societies for thousands of years. Cannabis is not a hard drug, or a chemical based drug that does cause suffering to society.

Reasons for Legalization

1. Medical Benefits and Accessibility

Cannabis has been proven to have significant medical benefits for a range of conditions, including chronic pain, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis. Legalizing cannabis would improve accessibility for patients who rely on it for their well-being. The current system, which criminalizes individuals for growing their own supply while allowing others to legally obtain it through prescriptions, is inconsistent and unjust. This discrepancy underscores the need for a more coherent policy that acknowledges the legitimate medical uses of cannabis – especially for safe home grow situations.

2. Economic Benefits

Legalizing cannabis would create a new industry, generating significant tax revenue and creating jobs. In regions where cannabis has been legalized, the economic impact has been substantial. The regulated market for cannabis can also reduce the burden on law enforcement and the judicial system, allowing resources to be redirected to more pressing issues.

3. Public Health and Safety

Regulating cannabis and allowing for home grows ensures that it is produced and consumed safely. Current laws force users to obtain cannabis from the black market, where the quality and safety of the product cannot be guaranteed. Legalization would enable regulation of production standards, ensuring that consumers have access to safe and consistent products. Furthermore, it allows for better education and harm reduction strategies, promoting responsible use.

4. Social Justice

The criminalization of cannabis disproportionately affects certain communities, leading to unnecessary criminal records that can impede future opportunities. Legalizing cannabis would reduce these social injustices, allowing individuals to contribute positively to society without the stigma of a criminal record for actions that are, in many cases, no more harmful than legal substances such as alcohol or tobacco.

5. Irony and Inconsistency in Current Laws

My personal experience highlights a significant irony and inconsistency in our current laws. I was charged with cultivating a plant in my backyard, only to be able to legally obtain the same product with a prescription within the week – resulting in me having 1 ounce of buds and 50ml of THC oil sent via Australian post.

This situation is not unique and underscores the absurdity of criminalizing individuals for actions that are legally permissible under slightly different circumstances. It is a clear indication that the current legal framework is outdated and in need of reform.

Conclusion

The legalization of cannabis is a logical and necessary step towards a more just, economically beneficial, and health-conscious society. The current laws are inconsistent and often unjust, penalizing individuals for actions that should be within their rights. By legalizing cannabis, we can create a regulated market and education that ensures safety, accessibility, and economic growth, while also addressing social justice issues and reducing the burden on our legal system.

I urge the NSW Parliament to consider these points and move towards a legal framework that reflects the realities and benefits of cannabis use in modern society.

Thank you for your consideration.