

Mr. Robert Hansen  
Health, Communities, Disability Services and  
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000  
Email: [health@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:health@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Hansen,

Re: HCDSDFVPC - Inquiry into the health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Thank you for providing the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) with the opportunity to contribute to the *Inquiry into the health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018* (30 November 2018).

As the pre-eminent and national leader of the nursing profession and a community of dynamic and passionate nurses, ACN has a particular interest in the repeal of the *Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016*, and subsequent amendments to the *Health Act 1937* for streamlining the regulatory framework around prescribing medicinal cannabis in Queensland (QLD). ACN understands that the Australian government has also made changes to the regulation of medicinal cannabis at the national level to align with amendments in the QLD Bill.

ACN is supportive of changes to health legislation that protect and improve the health of individuals, and we have consistently promoted the need to improve access to care for all. We acknowledge that amendments to the QLD Bill will 'remove barriers for patients and doctors seeking access to medicinal cannabis treatment', by ensuring medicinal cannabis is regulated as a schedule 4 or schedule 8 medicine by the Therapeutic Goods Administration under the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996.

ACN understands that any specialist can now prescribe medicinal cannabis for any patient they believe will benefit from treatment; visitors to QLD from other jurisdictions with a valid prescription for medicinal cannabis will no longer require a specific QLD approval; pharmacists will no longer require an approval to dispense medicinal cannabis; and researchers will not need an approval to conduct a clinical trial.

In light of these legislative changes it would be important for relevant health practitioners involved in the prescribing, dispensing and supply of medicinal cannabis to be appropriately educated about their obligations (e.g. specialists, pharmacists, nurses, researchers). ACN recommends the availability of guidelines or other information relating to changes to the regulation of medicinal cannabis in QLD. ACN is particularly supportive of electronic approaches to distributing legal and clinical information amongst relevant health professionals.

It is important to note that ACN continues to acknowledge there are inherent risks associated with cannabinoid use, which may outweigh any potential benefits, particularly around drug interactions, side effects and potential toxicity. As noted in ACN's submission to the *Department of Health's Chronic Pain Medicinal Cannabis Guidance consultation* (November 2017), in order to strengthen the evidence base, we recommend further clinical trials regarding the use of medicinal cannabis for various conditions and post-marketing surveillance alongside community use of medicinal cannabis.

It would also be appropriate for relevant organisations, bodies and stakeholders to engage in discussions concerning the prescribing, supply and use of medicinal cannabis. Some examples include Palliative Care Australia, and the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), who have expressed caution and concern in the use of medicinal cannabis.

ACN is committed to promoting equality, dignity and respect for all people receiving and accessing care within Australia's health system. We are dedicated to our intent of advancing nurse leadership to enhance health care for all. As such, ACN is supportive of amendments to the QLD Bill around the prescribing of medicinal cannabis in QLD.

If you have further enquiries regarding this matter, please contact Carolyn Stapleton, Manager - Policy and Advocacy, at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



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Chief Executive Officer  
RN, MMgt, Dip App Sci (Nursing), Acute Care Cert, FACN, Wharton Fellow, MAICD

21 December 2018