

Queensland Family and Child Commission Submission

To: Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Date: [Date of approval]

Topic: Queensland Family and Child submission on Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016

Submission contact:

Recommendation: The QFCC supports the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 as it currently stands. The QFCC urges Queensland Health to establish policies and practices, relating to the regulatory framework, which promote prompt application processes for qualifying patients.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is pleased to provide a submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee on the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 (the Bill).

The QFCC supports the policy objective of the Bill to allow for greater use of medicinal cannabis products under certain circumstances and for specific patients.¹ Formal clinical trials to understand the long term effects of medicinal cannabis have been somewhat limited due to the strict regulations of the drug internationally.² However, the evidence which does exist indicates medicinal cannabis is an important treatment for certain conditions where conventional medicine is no longer responding or has failed.

The QFCC has been consulted by Queensland Health along with our partner agencies throughout the drafting of the Bill. Through this process we were pleased to have contributed to the addition of provisions which provide for the wellbeing of children. This included Clause 15, Chapter 3, the recognition of the child's ability to provide consent when age and developmentally appropriate as per 'Gillick competency principles' and supporting the inclusion of out-of-home care services in Clause 62, Chapter 4, Restricted Access Patients.

The QFCC strongly recommends Queensland Health develop policies and practices which promote prompt application processes for medical officers, qualifying patients and dispensing pharmacists. Consideration should also be given to prompt provision of information and advice which encourages pharmacies and Medical Officers to apply to become approved providers and thus ensure eligible patients have accessible agents to support their application for medicinal cannabis.

¹ Queensland Government 2016, *Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016 Explanatory Notes*, p1.

² Australian Capital Territory Government 2015, *Inquiry into the exposure draft of the Drugs of Dependence (Cannabis use for medical purposes) Amendment Bill 2014 and related discussion paper*, Attachment B, Specialist advisor report, p.3.