



The voice of aged care

11 July 2016

Research Director
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention
Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Via email: medicinalcannabis@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re: Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016

Dear Research Director

Thank you for seeking Leading Age Services Australia's (LASA) comments in response to the Inquiry into Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016.

LASA, the voice of aged care, is the peak body for service providers of retirement living, home care, and residential aged care. LASA is committed to improved standards, equality and efficiency throughout the industry and in so doing, helping older Australians live well. We advocate for the health, community and accommodation needs of older Australians, working with government and other stakeholders to advance the interests of all age service providers, and through them, the interests of older Australians.

We support the Queensland State Government's action to create a new regulatory framework under which medicinal cannabis products may be prescribed and dispensed to patients in Queensland while also preventing their unauthorised use. We acknowledge that the regulatory framework in the Bill provides two pathways for a patient to receive treatment with medicinal cannabis. These are explained under the single-patient prescriber pathway and the patient-class prescriber pathway. However, and taking into consideration current state variations, LASA suggests that any legislation pertaining to medicinal cannabis should also fit within a national framework and not only within State-by-State legislation. This would ensure that the availability of medicinal cannabis could be addressed within a national poisons and regulatory framework.

As acknowledged in the Hon. Cr Dick's speech on the 10th May 2016

"there is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the possible therapeutic benefits of medicinal cannabis products for a range of conditions. The evidence shows that medicinal cannabis may be an appropriate treatment option, particularly when used to complement traditional treatments."



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LASA sees a direct application of medicinal cannabis products as a suitable treatment option for people requiring specialist palliative and end of life care.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines palliative care asⁱ:

“...an approach that improves the quality life of patients and their families facing problems associated with life threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical psychosocial and spiritual.”

Palliative care is wide-reaching and is designed to provide relief from pain and other distressing symptoms for people requiring end of life care, and to affirm dying as a normal process in the continuum of life. Palliative care is offered to patients and applied early in the course of the dying process, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to support this process. LASA advocates that all people have the right to safe, compassionate and appropriate care as they approach the end of their life.

LASA believes that the proposed regulations currently being considered would give the framework required to guide the safe prescribing and dispensing of medicinal cannabis products to palliative care patients. This access would provide palliative care patients with the opportunity to enhance their end of life care. Any medical product needs to conform to Australia’s laws and regulations governing therapeutic goods. Therefore, pharmaceutical cannabis products that can be assessed through the usual procedures for therapeutic goods handling and management would provide the best way to obtain the benefits of medicinal cannabis for treatment.

Should you have any questions regarding the LASA submission, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Richards".

National Policy Manager
Leading Age Services Australia

ⁱ World Health Organisation, WHO definition of Palliative Care, 2008.