




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszcuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2015

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Medical Cannabis

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.07 pm): As members of both sides of the House will be aware, the ongoing debate on the benefits or otherwise of medical cannabis is one that is both confronting and controversial, but this is a debate that must be had. It needs to be had because we need to get to the core of the issue: whether medical cannabis can be beneficial to thousands of Queenslanders who suffer from a range of debilitating diseases.

I have recently spoken with the families of children who suffer from conditions such as epilepsy and who are convinced the most effective treatment is medical cannabis oil. I have heard their stories and my government has listened. I defy anyone in this place to look these families in the eye and tell them that we are not at least willing to investigate. I defy anyone in this place to deny these families the opportunity to have their government thoroughly investigate this important issue. That is what these families want—a government that is willing to step up and at the very least investigate. That is why my government has committed to a partnership with the New South Wales government in the establishment of a trial of medical cannabis for treating children with severe drug resistant epilepsy.

At the meeting prior to COAG, I congratulated the Premier of New South Wales on his national leadership on this issue. I have received a significant amount of correspondence from Queensland families urging our government to take part in a clinical trial being run by the New South Wales government. I do not want Queensland to be standing on the sidelines on this issue. I want us to be an active participant, and I want to add that this is a prime example of how governments from both sides of the political divide can work together on such important issues. We have started discussions with our New South Wales colleagues who have already undertaken initial work in this area.

We do need to be clear that the trial will not involve crude cannabis in plant form but cannabis oil. Public health and safety concerns require appropriate standards of manufacture and research, and clinical trials are needed to prove the safety of any pharmaceutical product. The type and design of the clinical trial will be established by the relevant research bodies, who will also set the inclusion criteria for participants.

In the event of a successful clinical trial, pharmaceutical cannabis preparations will still need to be approved for use under the current regulatory framework by the Commonwealth government's Therapeutic Goods Administration. I am hopeful the trial will give us a better picture of the potential applications of pharmaceutical cannabis preparations, including benefits or risks. Queensland and Victoria will join with New South Wales, and I am hopeful that we will be able to give Queensland children suffering from epilepsy some fresh facts that will emerge from that trial and at the same time some fresh hope.