




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Medicinal Cannabis

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.52 am): The extent to which medicinal cannabis and cannabis products can be beneficial to treat a range of debilitating conditions suffered by thousands of Queenslanders is a discussion we need to have as a community. Today I can confirm that the Queensland government is doing its part to make sure Queensland can be part of that discussion.

The Palaszczuk government through Queensland Health will commit \$3 million towards a medicinal cannabis trial to be undertaken in conjunction with the New South Wales government. This trial will be run out of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital and will assess the value of these products in treating children with severe drug-resistant epilepsy. We will partner with the New South Wales government to access cannabis products provided by GW Pharmaceuticals. Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, is a member of the committee developing and overseeing the clinical trial. I can confirm that the trial will begin next year. As a tertiary paediatric facility treating the sickest children from all over Queensland, the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital is the best placed facility in Queensland to coordinate the trial.

Furthermore, I can announce today that the Queensland government will act to support the delivery of a vital cannabis related treatment that will benefit people with multiple sclerosis. Multiple sclerosis is a chronic disease of the central nervous system that affects more than 3,700 Queenslanders. Three years ago the Commonwealth approved a cannabis related product to treat this disease but its use also required changes to state legislation. Today I am proud to announce that our government will be making those changes. We will be legalising the use of Sativex, a pharmaceutical medicinal cannabis product for the treatment of multiple sclerosis symptoms offering sufferers a new treatment option for their condition.

This oral spray can be used by people with multiple sclerosis to help alleviate moderate to severe spasticity. While this does not represent a cure for MS, it may help relieve some symptoms in adults resistant to other treatments and in doing so improve their quality of life. This drug will remain highly regulated in Queensland. It will only be available to adults and it will need to be prescribed by a neurologist. Through our participation in the clinical trial and through the legalisation of Sativex, we are taking the next step in our commitment to give Queenslanders with multiple sclerosis and children with epilepsy fresh hope for a better life.