



Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**


**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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**MEMBER'S PRIVATE STATEMENT**

**Medicinal Cannabis**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.45 pm): I rise to speak to the House on an issue that has the potential to provide economic benefits, health benefits and research opportunities in Queensland. Currently, the cultivation of cannabis is prohibited in Queensland. This also includes the cultivation, possession and use of cannabis for the relief of pain by terminally patients and by children with drug-resistant epilepsy. Medical cannabis has many other benefits, but that is not what I am here to speak about today.

In the last few months, as the federal government moves closer to legalising the cultivation of medical cannabis, I have been approached by farmers in my electorate who tell me that they would embrace the opportunity to work with the government as growers of this new emerging medical crop. The warm and wet Atherton Tablelands is well situated climatically for the production of medical cannabis and, despite over 80 per cent of the state being in drought, this small area in my electorate, adjacent to the Wet Tropics, has reliable rainfall and consistent annual averages with well-drained fertile soil. The Atherton Tablelands is an ideal place to become the centre of cultivation for growing medical cannabis in Queensland. The area has the capacity to grow consistent crops. The emerging hydroponic industry in Tolga is a strong testament to the availability of good agricultural ground, secure growing conditions and reliable supply.

I make one point clear: I am not supporting the legalisation of cannabis as a recreational drug. I support legalising a new crop that will bring not only much needed pain relief and health benefits to those who need to use it, but also an alternative crop for Queensland farmers. The more we support new agricultural industries in Queensland, the greater our state will be.

Queensland is leading the way in the research and development of new and innovative medicines. Recent headlines showcase just how well the state is performing in research and development. The National Health and Medical Research Council has awarded a total of almost \$54 million to 84 projects. In the very recent nationwide announcement of competitive research funding, the National Health and Medical Research Council also revealed that it would fund two new collaborative centres of research excellence at the University of Queensland. Queensland has everything that is needed to cultivate, process and trial medical cannabis. I urge the state government to move out of its comfort zone and embrace the opportunity to become a leader in this new industry.