




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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ADJOURNMENT

Medicinal Cannabis

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (11.05 pm): Tonight I would like to speak about and pay tribute to the Whitelaw family from my electorate. They visited me about a year ago. They are in the unfortunate situation where their son Jai suffers from severe epilepsy. That means that he has numerous seizures throughout the day that can go into the tens and tens and tens of seizures. Michelle Whitelaw is the mum of the family. She came to see me to talk to me about the benefits of medicinal cannabis in her particular family. She showed me quite clearly photos of Jai over the years when he had been on normal medication and then showed me in a very real fashion by bringing Jai into my office to see the effects that she believes medicinal cannabis has had on him.

What really impressed me about Michelle is that she is not a lobbyist or an activist; she is a mum. She is a mum who believes that medicinal cannabis is something that has brought about great improvements to Jai where now he has only occasional seizures and is incredibly more functional and able to go to school. As I said, she puts this down to medicinal cannabis.

I understand that this is a very contentious issue. While we were in government we agreed to support the trials that were taking place in New South Wales by the New South Wales government in relation to medicinal cannabis. With something like this it is necessary to go through the appropriate medical trials, as is the case with any new drug. I was very pleased that our government, when we were in power, agreed to do that. I am also pleased that the current government has said that it will support these trials which shows that there is bipartisan agreement on this particular way forward.

To date we have not heard any detail about how this government might be involved in those trials. We have not heard anything about any funding or any of the practicalities of that. I know there are many families like the Whitelaw family who are waiting to get some details about these trials so that they can have some sort of assurance that this issue is being progressed and investigated fully. I commend the government for supporting this process but I would ask it to be a bit more forthcoming with regard to details about what that support will actually look like and that the support would be practical and not simply in word.