




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Medicinal Cannabis; Sigma Pharmaceuticals

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to exploring the benefits new medical treatments can provide for people living right across our state. I am pleased to inform the House that just last week the Queensland government approved Australia's first medically supervised prescription and use of medicinal cannabis. This approval is specific to an individual patient and does not constitute an open approval for the use of medicinal cannabis in Queensland. However, this landmark decision does pave the way for other Queenslanders wishing to apply for the use of medicinal cannabis. That is because we know there are patients in the community right now who may benefit from some relief that can be delivered through medicinal cannabis.

Our government will ensure we protect patients by applying a proper and rigorous clinical assessment process. Clinicians need to balance effective treatment by any drug and its ability to relieve symptoms with potential side effects. It is important we acknowledge that medicinal cannabis is a dangerous drug and should be regulated properly. While the federal government, through the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act 1989, regulates the use of therapeutic goods in Australia including cannabis products, the state government has a broader obligation to approve the safe and appropriate prescription, dispensing and administering of medicinal cannabis products. Our government has taken concrete steps to make possible its prescription and safe use in Queensland.

Later today I will introduce groundbreaking legislation into the House to establish a framework for the legal use of medicinal cannabis following overwhelming public support from Queenslanders. A draft of the bill was released for broad consultation from 1 March 2016 to 1 April 2016. Of the 1,052 people who completed our online survey over 96 per cent were in favour of treatment with medicinal cannabis. Under amendments made to the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation late last year, the chief executive of the Department of Health already has limited powers to approve treatment with certain medicinal cannabis products. To manage medicinal cannabis use in the future, particularly if patient demand for this type of treatment increases, a more specific, transparent and robust regulatory framework is required. The new legislation will provide that framework. It will allow the use of medicinal cannabis products in Queensland provided they are based on medical evidence and supported by clinical treatment plans.

For this government, our priority is patient safety. The Palaszczuk government will continue to look at opportunities that new medical treatments can deliver and ensure we protect patients by applying a proper and rigorous clinical assessment process. Following on from the Premier's comments earlier this morning, as Minister for Health and as the state member for Woodridge, I welcome the decision by Sigma Pharmaceuticals to develop a \$65 million distribution centre at Berrinba in the state electorate

of Woodridge. This facility will be the base for Sigma Pharmaceuticals to distribute medicines throughout Queensland and will create 50 jobs. This is a vote of confidence in the city of Logan. I welcome Sigma's commitment to Queensland and especially their move to create more jobs in the Logan area.