




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Medicinal Cannabis

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.18 pm): The people of Queensland wanted access to medicinal cannabis for those it might help, and the Palaszczuk government has responded with nation-leading legislation. The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016 was unanimously supported in this House and is now in effect. These new laws mean a more streamlined approach for medical specialists to prescribe medicinal cannabis. What this means for everyday Queenslanders is that, for those who think they or their children may benefit from medicinal cannabis, there is now a clear, legal pathway to seek access.

Under the new laws, there are now three ways to access medicinal cannabis in Queensland. First, any doctor is able to apply for a medicinal cannabis approval to treat their patient. Second, certain medical specialists—such as neurologists, palliative care specialists and oncologists—can become a patient class prescriber. This means that specialists can fast-track the treatment of patients with certain medical conditions. Third, access can be obtained as part of an approved clinical trial.

Approval through the TGA is still required by the Commonwealth government. However, these new state laws are designed to minimise duplication during the application process. The Palaszczuk government has listened to Queenslanders and has provided a legal pathway for patients to use safe medicinal cannabis. The affordable supply of medicinal cannabis is the Commonwealth government's responsibility. Last week the federal government announced it would allow the bulk importation of certain medicinal cannabis products. While this move by the Commonwealth government goes some way towards addressing supply issues, affordability of the product still remains an issue for many patients.

It has never been the responsibility of state governments to subsidise medicines. The Commonwealth manages and regulates the cost of medicines across Australia. Last week I wrote to federal health minister Greg Hunt asking the Commonwealth to accelerate steps to make sure the product is affordable by placing it on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The Queensland government is determined to provide safe, effective, efficient health care for all Queenslanders.