

Submission Regarding Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Commonwealth Restrictions on Cannabis) Bill 2018

Introduction

I'm making this submission as a private citizen of Australia in support for this bill. Before I present some evidence on common misunderstandings around cannabis I'd first like to say a little about myself to help set the stage of why I've made this submission.

I work for a private Australian company in a full time job to support my beloved family. I'm a productive member of society and a law abiding citizen. In regards to common substances and actives that people commonly abuse, I don't drink, smoke or gamble.

I have used cannabis before (during my travels where it is legal to consume) and have had only positive experiences with it. I've suffered minor depression in the past and found with just one use of cannabis my symptoms had faded for several months. It also helped muscle pains I was experiencing at the time.

It upsets me greatly that I live in a country where we have a chance to legalise a plant with various health and social benefits and we're hanging on to outdated beliefs and misconceptions around it.

Misconceptions

Cannabis is a gateway drug (false)

On April 17, 2018 Health Minister Greg Hunt went on record stating "marijuana is a gateway drug". When asked to provide evidence the Department of Health was unable to do so [1]. Research shows that the vast majority of people who use it do not go on to use other illicit drugs. [2]

Cannabis causes Schizophrenia/Psychosis (false)

A Harvard Medical School study found that there was no link between cannabis use and Schizophrenia [3]. While more research is needed to understand if the age of onset is effected by cannabis it is unlikely to be the cause of the illness.

Legalising cannabis causes an increased use in teens (false)

A study done by Deborah Hasin a professor of epidemiology at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health found that legalising cannabis has no increased use of the drug by teens [4]. The study analysed information from 11 previous studies that looked at teen cannabis use from 1991 to 2014.

Cannabis Legalisation around the world

We should also look at the world around us to see that other nations are starting to realise the benefits of cannabis legalisation and the the citizens are starting to demand it. Canada has just passed a bill that will soon make Cannabis legal nation wide. The USA are well on their way to full federal legalisation. Our neighbours in New Zealand will be holding a referendum on recreational cannabis use soon.

Conclusion

I fully support this bill and any further bills to path the way to cannabis legalisation. Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

References

- 1] https://www.buzzfeed.com/bradesposito/gateway-drug?utm_term=.ew0ezdYQV#.ymMREG5Aw
- [2] https://www.drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/DebunkingGatewayMyth_NY_0.pdf
- [3] <https://psychcentral.com/news/2013/12/10/harvard-marijuana-doesnt-cause-schizophrenia/63148.html>
- [4] <https://www.livescience.com/61829-medical-marijuana-does-not-increase-teen-use.html>