

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1.10 Working Age Payments

Question No: SQ17-000310

Topic: Drug Testing

Hansard page: 82

Senator Louise Pratt asked:

In terms of someone's capacity to maintain employment, how does the government differentiate between someone who gets up and smokes cannabis at nine o'clock in the morning versus someone who starts drinking heavily at nine o'clock in the morning in terms of their substance abuse and their prospects of employment?

Answer:

This question was answered during the Budget Estimates hearing on 31 May 2017, refer to Hansard pages 82-83. The below information provides further context in relation to this question.

Cannabis is a narcotic drug that is tightly controlled in Australia. The cultivation, production, manufacture, import, export, distribution, trade, possession, use and supply of cannabis and cannabis derived products, is regulated by a number of Commonwealth laws.

In addition, various state and territory laws provide penalties for possessing, using, making, selling, or driving under the influence of cannabis.

Some jurisdictions have decriminalised minor cannabis offences, such as the possession of a 'small amount' of the drug for personal use. This means that the offence can be dealt with by a civil penalty, such as a fine, rather than by receiving a criminal charge. If an offence is decriminalised, it does not mean that it is legal.

The Drug Testing Trial is focused on the use and misuse of illicit drugs. While legal drugs such as alcohol are not included under the trial, the other measures announced in the Budget to address substance misuse encompass alcohol and other drugs.