



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DR CHRIS BOURKE MLA (CHAIR), MR ANDREW WALL MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), MS NICOLE LAWDER MLA, MS MEEGAN FITZHARRIS MLA

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 13 August 2015

Inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the *Drugs of Dependence (Cannabis Use for Medical Purposes) Amendment Bill 2014* and related Discussion Paper

Today the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services tabled its report on the Inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the *Drugs of Dependence (Cannabis Use for Medical Purposes) Amendment Bill 2014* (the Draft Bill) and related ACT Greens discussion paper, titled 'Medicinal Cannabis'.

The Chair of the Committee, Dr Chris Bourke MLA, said 'the evidence presented to the Committee does suggest that cannabis has a medical potential, and the ACT should therefore look further into the regulations, costs and medical trials needed to progress a medicinal cannabis scheme'.

However, the Committee recommended that the ACT Government reject the Draft Bill in its current form. Dr Bourke said, 'the Draft Bill presented here is naive and ill considered. The Committee does support the compassionate principle behind the Bill, for those who are terminally ill or have serious medical conditions. However, the Bill doesn't provide a workable regulatory framework or a proper means of supply.'

Dr Bourke noted particular concerns of the Committee, saying 'the Bill does raise some significant medical, legal and public health risks, and under any scheme there needs to be an assurance of a quality supply of medicinal cannabis.'

The Committee made a number of other recommendations including support for medical research on cannabis and cannabis products as well as on access to cannabis-derived or synthesised pharmaceutical products. The Committee was supportive of a national approach to medicinal cannabis, also suggesting that State, Territory and Commonwealth governments work together on advancing clinical trials of cannabis-based pharmaceutical products and crude cannabis.

The Committee listed a number of features that it felt should form part of any medicinal cannabis scheme, including the use of government-sourced or controlled cannabis, the issuing of a prescription from a medical practitioner, and ongoing education for medical practitioners and the community.

Dr Bourke thanked his fellow members of the Committee, Mr Andrew Wall MLA, Deputy Chair, Ms Nicole Lawder MLA and Ms Meegan Fitzharris MLA, as well as Ms Yvette Berry MLA who was a member of this Committee during the initial period of the inquiry.

[Click here](#) for a copy of the Report on the Legislative Assembly website.

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A media conference will be held at 1:00 pm Thursday 13 August 2015 in the Media Conference Room.