



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

Minister for Health

Minister for Families and Community Services

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Member for Kurrajong

Mr Peter Cain MLA

Chair

Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (Legislative Scrutiny Role)

scrutiny@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Chair *Peter*

As required under ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Order 182A, I write to provide the Committee with Government amendments to the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021 (the Bill) for consideration prior to debate in the Legislative Assembly. I enclose a copy of the proposed Government amendments to the Bill and supplementary Explanatory Statement for the Committee's consideration.

The proposed Government amendments were foreshadowed in the Government Response to the Report of the Select Committee Inquiry into the Bill, which I tabled on 9 June 2022. The amendments will ensure that the Bill will achieve its policy goals of reducing the harm caused by illicit drugs by treating personal use principally as a health issue and not a criminal-justice issue.

The Bill's goal of further reducing harm associated with illicit drug use will be realised through the proposed Government amendments by supporting people who have health needs to access the care that they need and reducing the stigma associated with illicit drug use to facilitate that access. The Government Amendments will ensure that the potential for diversion away from the criminal justice system is maximised, and improve consistency of the reforms across different drugs, so that the changes are clearer for people who use drugs and those involved in enforcement.

For the committee's awareness, I am currently finalising proposed subordinate legislation that would be enabled pursuant to clause 13 proposed through the Government Amendments. Prior to debate in the Assembly, I will also circulate proposed regulations to ensure members are appropriately informed of the Government's intentions under the reform.

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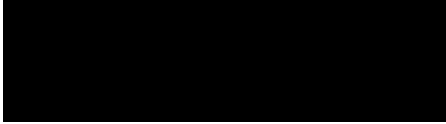
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I intend to introduce the amendments during debate in the Legislative Assembly following the Committee's consideration. I have also provided the amendments to the Clerk for circulation to Members out of session.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
6 July 2022