



MEDIA RELEASE - 17.10.15

The MCUA is Australia's leading advocacy body for the rights of all Australians to use whole plant medical cannabis products. It appears that the Federal government plans to give pharmaceutical companies control over medical cannabis products and seeks to restrict use to the terminally ill and those people who the government determines have "extreme medical conditions". We find this position unacceptable and we consider it to be a breach of human rights.

It should not be left to politicians to determine who has a right to quality health care, who has a right to relief from suffering and who has a right to live. It should not be the decision of governments to deny people access to a plant that has a wide range of positive benefits for consumers. People have the right to make informed decisions about their health. The governments' current position is discriminatory and ensures the continuation of the black market, putting people who don't meet the governments "criteria", at risk from inferior products and leaving them at the mercy of unscrupulous suppliers.

Our police resources should not be used to continue to prosecute some members of the public, whilst a limited number of people, determined by politicians, are able to benefit from medical cannabis products. The Single Convention on Narcotics is an outdated treaty which criminalises the use of cannabis on the single premise that cannabis is a dangerous substance with no medicinal properties. Clearly this is not based in fact or scientific evidence and our government representatives should be challenging the UN's position and calling for Cannabis to be removed from the schedule.

The federal health minister, Sussan Ley, has been quoted as saying "At the end of the day, cannabis is classified as an illegal drug in Australia for recreational use and we have no plans to change that." In 1994, the Australian Institute of Criminology at the request of the National Task Force on Cannabis, presented its findings to the then federal government and determined that cannabis prohibition in Australia caused more harm to the Australian society, than the actual use of cannabis.

The government's current position will ensure the continuation of a multi-billion dollar black market recreational industry, which is not taxed, does not benefit our farmers or economy. Pharmaceutical drug abuse, especially of codeine based pain killers, is currently one of the most concerning issues in Australia. Evidence from other countries shows that decriminalising the use of cannabis leads to a considerable reduction in deaths from overdose on pharmaceutical products.

The government is condemning the Australian population to continued decline in health and an increase in alcohol and pharmaceutical related drug issues. We support extensive education of our medical professions and public education on the potential uses of cannabis and the human endocannabinoid system. We believe

Australia should be drawing on extensive research already available world-wide, rather than asking the Australian people to continue suffering for a further 5 years whilst the government conduct limited clinical trials for a very small number of people and medical conditions.

The MCUA will continue to advocate for the end of prohibition across the board and the right for the people of Australia, no matter what their medical condition or reason to consume whole plant cannabis, to make informed decisions about their health and personal lives. We support a licenced, regulated scheme that allows for people to grow their own predetermined number of plants for personal use, make their own whole plant medicine, and for the introduction of testing facilities where people can have their own products tested. We call for an end to the prosecution of people who are not criminals.

We welcome consultation between the government and the people, for a positive and progressive resolution to Cannabis related policy in Australia