

Good morning and thank you for inviting the MCUA to speak today.

MCUA is all about patient advocacy.

Our aim is to expedite access to **a safe**, legal and uninterrupted supply of natural, whole-plant based cannabis medicine that will give an improved quality of life to thousands of people suffering from a myriad of conditions.

A great number of our members have been long term cannabis users. Many stumbled on the fact that when they smoked cannabis their pain went away .. or their depression was lifted .. or their insomnia was alleviated - most, without consciously recognising for many years, their cannabis use was “medicinal” rather than recreational.

They have also found that cannabis reduces or excludes the need for long term pharmaceutical drugs that have been unsuccessful and that have, in many instances, led to iatrogenic conditions. (ee at ro genic = illness that is caused by a medication or physician.←---- dont read this bit- just to explain the meaning and pronunciaiton ;)

Today, doctors are trained in **prescription pad medicine. These drugs are tax payer funded at ridiculously high levels, which sees huge chunks of our health budget funnelled out of our economy and off to intentional drug companies who don't find cures but do create ongoing business.**

Home grown cannabis would cost the tax payer nothing if it were permitted.

Many patients have lost faith in prescribed medications and even tho **their** cannabis may not be consistent or reproducible to exacting standards, they TRUST it unequivocally.

People want to come off prescribed drugs. They are reluctant to seek medical interventions. They look for alternatives because they fear the health system is broken.

They are instead, seeking answers from Dr Google and turning to diet to address their medical problems.

The internet is where they learn about cannabis and the endocannabinoid system which was discovered in the late 1980s and which has largely been ignored in academic circles.

They are finding that Cannabis and hemp food must be included in a healthy diet to maintain homeostasis or keep the body's systems in balance to prevent ill health.

Doctors are bound to “Do no harm” but in the current situation., it is their fear of the law that is causing harm and grief to thousands of suffering Australians.

They **fear speaking out** about the results they are witnessing in their own surgery. They **fear of loosing their registration** and ultimately, their livelihood.

Their **fear of being unskilled** in cannabis treatment, and this is delaying access, while the knowledge bank out here is being ignored.

Our people live in fear.
They **Fear their illness**,
they **fear the treatments** and
they fear speaking out about their cannabis use.
They fear being caught and prosecuted and

they fear having to deal with the criminal element to obtain their needs - leaving a great many Australians to suffer in silence.

Sick people should not have to live in fear . We have a right to medicine that will alleviate our suffering.

Our rights are being trampled by ignorance and mis information, cultivated by years of baseless propaganda - and its time we moved on.

Over-cautiousness, as demonstrated in this Bill, will continue to hold up the process of alleviating peoples suffering.

The catch cry of “**harm reduction**” as a reson for prohibiting the use of cannabis is no longer defensible or believable. There is no harm to the absolute majority of people who try it or use it regularly.

The level of acceptable evidence attesting to its benefits, from respected and credible institutions grows daily.

But where is the science-based evidence that proves conclusively that cannabis IS harmful?
There is no lethal dose
no toxicity and
no risk of death from using it.

The biggest harm being done right now is the law that prohibits access. In US states where they have enacted medical cannabis laws, they have experienced a 25% drop in fatal opioid overdose and a significant decline in alcohol abuse and suicide rates.

We are hearing from our people that cannabis is being used as a GET AWAY drug – helping to get them off these highly addictive substances. This does not equate to harm.

The RE-introduction of raw, non-psychoactive cannabis into our diet could prevent many chronic illnesses that now plague society and burden our health budget. Home growing is an integral part of getting the goodness and health benefits of fresh cannabis to the people.

If we in Australia, want to “lead the way” we must learn from other countries.

Canada for instance has just this week had to change its regulations yet again, to allow home grow when a court ruled it was a violation of the patients rights to deny it. In order to avoid all these costly and lengthy court battles and delays, the decision to authorise patients and / or carers to grow their own plants should be included in this legislation.

The over cautious approach to cannabis use will lead to lengthy delays and will drive people to the black market.

There is no valid reason or justification to keep cannabis wrapped up so tightly in authorisations to the point where it unreachable by the majority of those who need it now.

This proposed legislation does not give ease of access and patients will be forced to continue to seek out illegal supplies that could be unsafe.

Home growing rights must be included if the public interest is to be properly and adequately served by this proposed legislation.

The MUA have been in negotiations with TMCI Global Education in the US regarding their internationally recognised courses for cannabis clinicians. They have invited the MUA to become an affiliate of their organisation allowing us to offer their courses at substantially reduced rate.

TMCI provides online medical education for healthcare professionals who want to learn about medical cannabis and its potential clinical application. Our science-based, accredited courses help professionals deliver quality care and address patient questions. TMCI works with organizations that are recognized as pillars of medical cannabis learning and brings their valuable medical expertise to the healthcare community via an ever-growing online course catalog. Through TMCI's online course offerings, healthcare professionals will learn about everything from the basics of the endocannabinoid system and the importance of patient education to specific medical cannabis treatments for pain, cancer and other diseases. Medical courses and the nursing curriculum are certified for continuing medical education (CME) credits and continuing nursing education (CNE) contact hours, respectively. TMCI will continue to expand its medical education offerings in order to meet the diverse needs of healthcare professionals around the globe.