



mcua

Medical Cannabis Users Association of Australia

MEDICAL CANNABIS COMPASSIONATE HEALERS ONGOING FIGHT WITH GOVERNMENT WHO REFUSE TO PROVIDE

"We fought the law and, while the law won, it was only by a nose, it was almost a draw", Matt Pallett posted to the Medical Cannabis Users Association (MCUA) Australia's Facebook page, about the case against him and his wife Elizabeth, from Carrum Downs, Victoria. "I reckon financially it cost them more than us, but they did not lose people on the way, as we did, like Randolph Pullen. He was truly the bravest of us all", Matt said, referring to the sad death of cancer sufferer, patient and friend, Randolph Pullen (RIP).

The two disability pensioners (Elizabeth has a heart condition and suffered a number of attacks just prior to attending court, whilst Matt suffered a spinal injury at age 12 and discovered cannabis' medicinal properties at 17) were charged in Melbourne's County Court with one count each of cultivating, after cannabis and paraphernalia were found in their home by police. As organic, whole plant cannabis is wrongfully deemed a narcotic under Australian law, thousands of tax-payer dollars were wasted yet again in an attempt to convict these compassionate growers and healers involved in the non-violent 'crime' of propagating a medicinal herb and making medicine to donate to those who have chosen to use a natural alternative rather than suffer the damaging, toxic side effects of pharmaceuticals (more people die from chemotherapy than cancer and cannabis is entirely non-toxic).

The couple who grew cannabis to help people were fined \$1,000 and escaped criminal conviction (again). Elizabeth said after sentencing they would lodge an appeal in the next couple of weeks. "This battle is a long way from finished", she posted on social media. In court the Pallett's maintained their innocence, despite admitting to police and the court to growing. They argued they did it to make medicinal products for people suffering conditions such as epilepsy and terminal illnesses like cancer. County Court Judge Bill Stuart fined each \$500 – double what they had previously been fined for the same offence (in May 2015 police charged the couple with possession, cultivation and trafficking offences).

The prosecutor argued they should receive criminal convictions, as they had previously avoided them for the same crime. Matt said the federal government had introduced laws to licence medicinal cannabis growers, stating, "a criminal conviction would wipe us out of being involved and that would punish people in Victoria, they would lose the knowledge we have". Judge Stuart said in light of this he would issue fines without recording criminal convictions. The couple's legal responsibility for the crime was 'low' and moral responsibility 'negligible' he said.

The judge was satisfied their motives were entirely altruistic and not commercial. "The use of cannabis for such purposes is gradually being realised and there are moves to provide such medication to those who suffer from epilepsy which cannot be medicated conventionally. Whilst there must be some denunciation of your conduct that is as high as it gets". Judge Stuart stressed growing cannabis remains a crime and people could not "pick and choose what behaviour they will engage in that are proscribed by Parliament. A civilised society requires all

to abide by the same rules and laws. Without it there would be chaos”, he reminded the court. Elizabeth thanked Judge Stuart and the prosecutor noting, “The courts are restricted in what they can do, the judge stuck his neck out and I recognise that”.

With more and more law enforcement officials reluctant to charge or imprison people providing or using cannabis for medicinal purposes in all Australian states and territories, should we tolerate laws that both state police and judges are more and more reluctant to enforce? These same law enforcement officials need to start advising state and federal politicians and governments about the abject waste of tax-payer funds on more and more increasingly fruitless attempts at prosecution. That’s the problem with a politics-based approach rather than an evidence-based approach and a distinct lack of up-to-date science and education. Politicians and the Australian Medical Association still stubbornly proclaim more research is needed. Well of course it is, but they are deliberately dismissing the available robust and supportive evidence provided by the likes of Matt and Elizabeth and other compassionate carers and healers just like them in the Cannabis Community, Australia-wide.

Upon handing down of their sentence Elizabeth stated she had no words to express how she felt. But she assured everyone that the prosecutor and all involved in their cases had been as just as the parliament permitted. She could not begin to explain what she felt about each of those people, except to say they all earned her respect and she was privileged to have met such good men and women who still believe in rule of law and would like to see justice returned to our courts.

Elizabeth thanked their supporters, stating that they were all heroes in her eyes and she hoped that every one would be in her life until the end. She thanked the media for their honesty and well wishes during the past 18 months. Finally Elizabeth asked only that the media and the Cannabis supporters not drop the ball now, as Australia and the world need this plant free for everyone. “Let us together fight for change. We have a long road ahead, let’s all work together to bring the changes to law required in order to heal the sick and relieve the suffering of all”.