



MEDIA RELEASE

4 July 2014

INQUIRY INTO MEDICAL USE OF CANNABIS

A Legislative Council Committee has initiated a parliamentary inquiry into legalising the use of cannabis for medical purposes.

The Legislative Council's Government Administration Committee A has agreed to the inquiry following widespread public debate about the issue in recent days.

Inquiry Chair, Ruth Forrest MLC, said the purpose of the Inquiry was to thoroughly examine all aspects related to the legalisation of the use and cultivation of cannabis for medical purposes and any barriers that prevent access for medicinal purposes.

"The Committee will provide a robust process in which the many claims and counter-claims being made about the issue can be tested," Ms Forrest said.

"The Committee agreed to set up the inquiry in light of evidence that cannabis does have a beneficial role in medicine including in the area of palliative care use, treatment of the adverse side effects associated with chemotherapy and some forms of epilepsy.

"The commercialisation of growing cannabis for medicinal purposes could also provide some economic benefits to Tasmania, including much needed employment," she said.

"At the same time, there are some concerns being expressed about the proposal and these need to be properly examined to ensure that there would be no negative impact from legalising cannabis, even in such a very limited way."

Ms Forrest acknowledged that the State Government has recently rejected further consideration of this matter, however, the findings of a thorough investigation may provide an opportunity for future consideration.

“As there have been a range of conflicting claims about enabling access to cannabis for medicinal purposes and providing a regulatory framework to enable its cultivation, the best way to ensure a fully-informed debate is for the Committee to examine it in detail and present its findings to the Government and the wider community,” she said.

"As part of this Inquiry the Committee will also consider the various modes of administration of cannabis for medicinal purposes which is an important aspect of any therapeutic product used in treating patients with challenging health needs."

“Any measure that has the potential to bring positive benefits to people suffering serious and debilitating illnesses, deserves to be given serious and in-depth consideration by all Tasmanians,”Ms Forrest said.

The Committee will place newspaper advertisements next week formally inviting written submissions on the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference.

ends

Media Note: Terms of Reference attached

For further information or comment: Ruth Forrest MLC – 0419 879 524

Legislative Council
Government Administration Committee A
Inquiry Terms of Reference

That Government Administration Committee A inquire into and report on the use of natural botanical medicinal cannabis flower and extracted cannabinoids for medical purposes, in particular:

1. The efficacy and safety of natural botanical medicinal cannabis flower and extracted cannabinoids for medical purposes;
2. If, and how, natural botanical medicinal cannabis flower and extracted cannabinoids could and/or should be supplied for medical use;
3. The legal implications and barriers to the medicinal use of natural botanical medicinal cannabis flower and extracted cannabinoids in Tasmania;
4. The legal implications and barriers to the growing and commercialisation of cannabis flower and extracted cannabinoids in Tasmania to ensure:
 - (a) a scientific-based approach;
 - (b) quality control;
 - (c) consistency;
 - (d) reliability; and
 - (e) ongoing research and development of cannabis-based medicines.
5. The potential impact on agricultural or other sectors within Tasmania; and
6. Any other matters incidental thereto.

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