

15 August 2014

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Enquiries to:

Mr Tom Wise
Secretary
Government Administration Committee A
Inquiry into Legalised Medicinal Cannabis
Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Mr Wise

Inquiry into Legalised Medicinal Cannabis

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission into the Government Administration Committee A's Inquiry into Legalised Medicinal Cannabis.

The Huon Valley Council municipal area occupies an area of 5,497km² and has 15,841 (2011) residents. The main industry in the Huon Valley has traditionally been timber and the pome and small fruit industries. These industries have changed dramatically over the past 50 years. The pome fruit industry is now almost non-existent and the timber industry has suffered significantly, and will continue to do so, due to the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. These changes have meant a decrease in employment opportunities. This has caused a myriad of issues including increased poverty, general economic downturn and migration away from the Valley and away from the State in order to find employment.

To combat the downturn in the forest industry, these local communities have sought other economic development opportunities, to create jobs and deliver economic growth.

In Southern Tasmania the Huon Valley Council and the Derwent Valley Council have both provided support for a trial of growing medicinal cannabis and an expansion of the industrial hemp industry.

The Huon Valley Council unanimously passed the following resolution:-

b) The Council's policy position in respect of medicinal cannabis be as follows:-

- 1. The Council supports the promotion of new industries in Tasmania, and in particular in the Huon Valley, that improve the economic outcomes for residents.*
- 2. The Council supports and advocates for further investigation and consideration of the legalisation of the cultivation, production and supply of medicinal cannabis. This should include considerations in relation to an appropriate regulatory*



framework including arrangements that need to be in place to manage foreseen risks.

3. *The Council advocates for this further investigation to be undertaken as a matter of urgency due to:-*
 - a. *the economic potential of this industry*
 - b. *that it is believed that it relieves ongoing suffering for a variety of conditions*
 - c. *people using cannabis for genuine medicinal purposes are at continual risk including of criminal charges*
 4. *As a minimum the Council calls for the State Government to reconsider its position in relation to the proposed drug trial.*
 5. *The Council welcomes the Legislative Council's Inquiry in relation to the use of medical cannabis and commends the Legislative Council on the initiative taken in relation to this matter.*
- c) *Pursuant to Regulation 15(9) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2005, having considered privacy and confidentiality issues, the Acting Mayor is authorised to release information associated with paragraph b) of this decision.*

The Council has been advised that there are a number of parties who are interested in undertaking a trial of growing medicinal cannabis and extracting the product. It is a similar situation for industrial hemp.

The opportunity for Tasmania to be a leader in this new industry is significant. We are urging leadership from the Tasmanian Government to ensure that this trial is able to take place. There is strong community support for a trial and have no reason to think that any community concerns couldn't be alleviated through careful planning.

Tasmania has had great success in growing poppies for the pharmaceutical industry, with this proven track record of growing such a product. We believe Tasmania is the perfect location for a trial of growing medicinal cannabis and would welcome the economic benefits associated with any trial and expanded industry.

If you require anything further then please don't hesitate to contact myself on 6266 0319 or swatson@huonvale.tas.gov.au.

Kind regards



SIMONE WATSON
GENERAL MANAGER