MEDICAL CANNABIS — PRESCRIPTIONS

894. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

Can the minister please provide the following information regarding access to medicinal cannabis in Western Australia.

(1) Will the government allow GPs to be able to submit a category B application for both schedule 4 and schedule 8 medicinal cannabis products without the need for specialist approval, as is done in New South Wales; and, if not, why not?

(2) Will the government remove the need for a patient-signed consent form as it is unnecessary and Western Australia is the only state that requires this document; and, if not, why not?

(3) Will the government eliminate the need for script approval for patient prescriptions as this already gets done at the federal level with the Therapeutic Goods Administration; and, if not, why not?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I am advised as follows.

(1) There are no additional approval requirements through the Western Australian Department of Health for prescribers in Western Australia for medicinal cannabis in schedule 4. Category B applications refer to the special access scheme under the commonwealth's therapeutic goods legislation and are not a matter for the Western Australian government. With respect to approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis when included in schedule 8, the minister has recently asked the Department of Health to conduct a review of this policy, with any changes to be considered, dependent on new or emerging medical evidence around the risks and benefits of this therapy.

(2) Although informed patient consent for treatment is ideal, the minister will ask the department to explore the need to provide evidence of consent as part of the approval process.

(3) Approvals required by the Department of Health to prescribe medicinal cannabis are provided under the authority of the Medicines and Poisons Act 2014. The issues being considered, such as harm arising from dependence and overuse, are different from and independent of any decisions of the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Authorisation requirements of the TGA relate to matters of product quality, not of dependence or individual patient-controlled drug usage patterns.