

CANNABIS — SUNFLOWER PLANTS — ROADSIDE TEST

1593. Hon Dr Brian Walker to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer the Minister to a recent study, highlighted in the May edition of *Nature Magazine*, which has shown that a fast growing sunflower plant used as a traditional herbal medicine in South Africa produces some of the same compounds found in the cannabis plant, and I ask:

- (a) would the roadside tests commonly undertaken by the Western Australian Police be able to differentiate between the compounds now shown to be present in *helichrysum umbraculigerum*, and those detected when the user has consumed cannabis; and
- (b) if no to (a), given the size of the South African community here in Western Australia, will the Minister now be forced to give sunflowers a category of their own in the schedules that underpin the *Misuse of Drugs Act*, rather than admit to the potential for false positives?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

The Western Australia Police Force advise:

- (a) Compounds that have a similar structure to the target compound may produce a positive result if present in sufficient quantities. Ultimately the validity of the presumptive roadside test would be proven during the laboratory confirmatory analysis.
- (b) No.