

CANNABIS — RESEARCH

369. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to World Health Day, which falls this year on 7 April—it is almost upon us—as well as recently published research that suggests that cannabis can reduce the liver damage caused by alcohol.

- (1) Does the Department of Health accept figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics late last year that showed alcohol-related deaths to be at a 10-year high across the country, and is the minister able to share any WA-based figures that give a local picture of the costs of alcohol abuse to both lives and livelihoods?
- (2) Is the minister aware of the new research coming out of the Xi'an International Medical Center Hospital in China, published in the *Journal of Biochemical and Molecular Toxicology* in December 2022, suggesting that cannabinoids can inhibit ethanol-induced activation of liver toxicity?
- (3) Will the Department of Health consider this and any future research in the field with an aim to supporting cannabis as a potential treatment for alcohol-induced liver damage?

The PRESIDENT: Before I give the call to the Leader of the House, I draw the member's attention to standing order 105, which requires that questions are concise. I remind him again of that standing order. We will see whether the Leader of the House is able to provide a brief answer, as required.

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

As always, I am guided by your advice, President.

- (1) Yes, the Department of Health accepts figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Department of Health does not have readily available local data on the costs of alcohol abuse to both lives and livelihoods.
- (2) No.
- (3) The Department of Health supports and facilitates the safe, high-quality and sustainable use of medicines and health technologies for Western Australian patients. Consideration of relevant research is part of this function.