

CANNABIS — SYNTHETIC

1167. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer the minister to recent studies, including one from academics at Georg-August university in Germany, that conclude that exposure to synthetic cannabinoids can be more harmful to the brain than naturally occurring ones.

- (1) Does the Criminal Code currently distinguish between natural and synthetic cannabis?
- (2) If yes to (1), in what ways do current laws here in Western Australia distinguish between the two?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?
- (4) Does the Cook government have any plans to crack down on the synthetic, as opposed to the natural, drug market?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Police.

- (1)–(4) The Western Australia Police Force advises that the Criminal Code is not the relevant act that deals with the criminalisation of synthetic cannabinoids. These substances are dealt with under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981. There are many synthetic cannabinoids listed in the schedules to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981 that determine court of trial, presumptive amounts for selling and supplying and drug trafficker declarations. The maximum penalties for major offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981 that involve synthetic cannabinoids are higher than those that apply for offences involving cannabis.