

MEDICAL CANNABIS — MELANOMA

1039. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to a recent study published by researchers at RMIT University in Victoria, with input from colleagues at the University of Western Australia, looking at constituents and derivatives of cannabis sativa as an effective treatment for patients suffering from melanoma.

- (1) How common is melanoma in Western Australia?
- (2) What is the Cook government doing to reduce and better treat melanoma cases in our community?
- (3) Will the Department of Health consider this latest research and its recommendation that cannabis sativa constituents and derivatives are strong candidates for ongoing evaluation as a potential treatment for the disease?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) In 2019, melanoma was the second most common cancer for both males and females in Western Australia, with 953 cases for males, representing 12 per cent of cancer cases for men, and 681 cases for women, representing 10.9 per cent of cancer cases for women.
- (2) The Western Australian government continues to fund the ongoing management of melanoma cases through its support of the statewide multidisciplinary WA Kirkbride Melanoma Advisory Service—WAKMAS. In addition, each major teaching hospital in Perth has its own skin cancer multidisciplinary team clinic that manages referrals within these hospitals.

The Future Health Research and Innovation Fund is the state government's primary vehicle for the provision of health and medical research and innovation funding. To date, \$1.84 million has been awarded to research in which melanoma is the primary focus. This includes support for two new clinician researchers in the area of melanoma research: one at South Metropolitan Health Service and another at the University of Western Australia. The WA government is assisting the Cancer Council with ongoing SunSmart campaigns to prevent melanoma.

- (3) The Department of Health supports and facilitates the use of safe, high-quality and sustainable medicines and health technologies for Western Australian patients. Consideration of relevant research is part of this function.