



Tracey Sharpe
Committee Clerk

Select Committee into Alternate Approaches to Reducing Illicit Drug Use and its Effects on the
Community Legislative Council Committee Office
Parliament House, GPO Box A11
PERTH WA 6837

Submission to Select Committee re Illegal Drug Use.

Thank you for the opportunity of making this submission. These are my personal views and are not necessarily the views of the City of Bunbury Elected Council.

I also declare my wife and I through our Self-Managed Superannuation Fund are very minor shareholders of Auscann a registered medicinal cannaboid pain relief development public company based in WA.

In the past 4 years my wife and I have travelled to Portugal and more recently in August 2018 we travelled to Anchorage Alaska, Vancouver Canada, Seattle Washington State and Portland Oregon in North America. As the Committee would be aware each of the American States mentioned and more recently Canada have legalised the sale and recreational use of cannabis.

I support the decriminalisation of personal recreational use of cannabis. The Portuguese model is one I support as I understood the legislation some years ago provides for a certain quantity by weight that can be carried by an individual is deemed to be for personal use. Quantities above that level are either considered a health issue requiring education programs or deemed to be of a criminal intent when relevant penalties apply. I haven't researched the current legislation in Portugal to determine if the law has changed since my visit. My interest was based on a request from one of my City Councillors to establish how that government has responded to recreational use of cannabis.

I am not qualified to state if there is a connection between recreational cannabis use and more harmful and more addictive illegal drug use such as meth. I imagine that question would weigh on the Committee Members minds and there may not be an easy answer. The Police Commissioner may have the data to provide the Committee with annual costs involved in terms of "manpower" and other operational costs in dealing with breaches of legislation involving small or recreational use of cannabis. I recall many years ago the decriminalisation of being drunk in a public place was based on the inordinate costs to Policing when more serious community safety matters needed to be addressed.

I pose a similar question are Police resources better used in pursuit of more serious matters if recreational use of cannabis was legalised?

Health professionals I have spoken to in Bunbury advise me alcohol abuse is far worse for individuals and more costly to our health system than use of illegal drugs. Perhaps the Committee could establish if that view is widely held across Western Australia. The same could apply to abuse of over the counter and prescription medicine.

I suggest that individuals apprehended for first time illegal drug use and if they voluntarily admit to doing so should be required to undergo a health education program that explains what is likely to happen to themselves, their family and their future if the use continues. Repeat offenders should face the consequences of penalties already in force.

Any person involved in manufacturing, processing, dealing or trafficking illegal drugs including excessive amounts of cannabis should face the full consequences of the law that currently exists.

The sale of recreational amounts of cannabis of related products should be through authorised retailers. This removes the criminal element and possibly the temptation to try other illegal drugs the dealers may be pushing as well.

I wish the Committee well in its endeavours.



Gary Brennan
MAYOR OF BUNBURY

CC Don Punch MLA
Member for Bunbury