

QUEENSLAND COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

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Watching Them While They're Watching You

MEDIA RELEASE MEDICINAL CANNABIS - MORE ACTION NEEDED

On 15 February the Queensland Parliament's Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee released its report on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, which will repeal the 2016 medicinal cannabis legislation.

QCCL President, Michael Cope says, "The QCCL **welcomes the repeal** of the 2016 medicinal cannabis legislation, which the Council believes has completely failed to deliver any useful outcomes to Queenslanders who could benefit from cannabis medicines."

"QCCL commends the Health minister's attempt to progress the issue but has serious concerns about the **prohibitive costs** of the pharmaceutical-style medicines currently available. These costs range from a few hundred dollars a month for low impact illnesses, to thousands of dollars a month for serious illnesses," Mr Cope said.

"To address the cost issue the QCCL supports the Tasmanian scheme whereby successful applicants have their cannabis medicines prescribed from **public hospital pharmacies** at a **PBS-equivalent price** subsidised by the government," he said

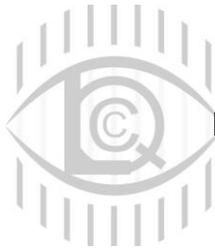
However, the Tasmanian scheme is wedded to an extremely tough filtering process. People should have access to cannabis if the conventional medicine has failed and they are obtaining benefits from using cannabis. Scientific evidence of effectiveness should NOT be a prerequisite to treatment as scientific research into medicinal cannabis has been suppressed for 50 years.

"Medicinal cannabis users also need protection from overzealous police" said Mr Cope

In NSW Police officers can **exercise their discretion** not to charge terminally ill adults for possession of cannabis, if they are registered with the government. Due to the discretion in the police they take up of this scheme has been poor." he said.

Mr Cope said the council's submission argued that in a truly compassionate scheme, the terminally ill person would only have to produce a **medical certificate** confirming terminal illness.

"The certificate would be a complete defence against prosecution, removing any element of police discretion"



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“In a Queensland scheme the medical certificate would not have to say the doctor approved the patient’s use of unregulated cannabis, or even acknowledge that the patient was using unregulated cannabis”, Mr Cope added.

“We welcome to government’s latest efforts to make this medication available to ill people. But more can and must be done,” says Mr Cope

For further information contact Michael Cope President QCCL on 07 3223 5939 during office hours and at all times on 0432 847 154

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ENDS