



ACT
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**Canberra Health
Services**

Our reference: **FOI19/65**

Dear [REDACTED]

DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act), received by Canberra Health Services (CHS) on 8 October and rescoped on 21 October 2019.

This application requested access to:

- *"Briefings prepared for the former Minister for Health and Wellbeing, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health related to the proposed legalisation of cannabis from 1 November 2018 until the current day.*
- *Canberra Health Services' contribution to the whole of government submission to the ACT Health, Ageing and Community Services committee inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill and related correspondence.*
- *Correspondence with ACT Health and other relevant ACT government directorates and agencies related to the legalisation of cannabis dated from 1 November 2018.*
- *Other relevant correspondence related to the proposed legalisation of cannabis including with Michael Petterson, the Australian Medical Association and other organisations from 1 November 2018."*

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of CHS under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act. CHS was required to provide a decision on your access application by **Monday 18 November 2019**.

I have identified 8 documents holding the information within scope of your access application. These are outlined in the schedule of documents included at [Attachment A](#) to this decision letter.

Decisions

I have decided to:

- grant full access to 7 documents; and
- refuse access to 1 document.

My access decisions are detailed further in the following statement of reasons and the documents released to you are provided as [Attachment B](#) to this letter.



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In reaching my access decision, I have taken the following into account:

- The FOI Act;
- The contents of the documents that fall within the scope of your request; and
- The *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Full Access

I have decided to grant full access to 7 documents relevant to your request. These documents are at folios 1-2, 4-8.

Refuse Access

I have decided not to grant access to 1 document at reference 3. The information contained in this document is comprised of Cabinet information and I therefore considered contrary to the public interest to release, under Schedule 1, 1.6 (1) Cabinet Information.

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable to this request.

Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CHS maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. The scope of your access application, my decision and documents released to you will be published in the disclosure log not less than three days but not more than 10 days after the date of this decision. Your personal contact details will not be published.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/freedom-information/disclosure-log>.

Ombudsman review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in ACT Health's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Via email: ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au.

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Level 4, 1 Moore St
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>



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Further assistance

Should you have any queries in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Coordinator on (02) 5124 9831 or email HealthFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen Grace'.

Karen Grace
Executive Director
Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drugs Services

13 November 2019



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS

Please be aware that under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*, some of the information provided to you will be released to the public through the ACT Government's Open Access Scheme. The Open Access release status column of the table below indicates what documents are intended for release online through open access.

Personal information or business affairs information will not be made available under this policy. If you think the content of your request would contain such information, please inform the contact officer immediately.

Information about what is published on open access is available online at: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/public-information/consumers/freedom-information>

APPLICANT NAME	WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST	FILE NUMBER
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Briefings prepared for the former Minister for Health and Wellbeing, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health related to the proposed legalisation of cannabis from 1 November 2018 until the current day.</i>• <i>Canberra Health Services' contribution to the whole of government submission to the ACT Health, Ageing and Community Services committee inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill and related correspondence.</i>• <i>Correspondence with ACT Health and other relevant ACT government directorates and agencies related to the legalisation of cannabis dated from 1 November 2018.</i>• <i>Other relevant correspondence related to the proposed legalisation of cannabis including with Michael Pettersson, the Australian Medical Association and other organisations from 1 November 2018.</i>	FOI19/65

Ref Number	Page Number	Description	Date	Status Decision	Factor	Open Access release status
1.	1-2	Email – FW: Cannabis with attachments	10/01/2019	Full release		Yes
2.	3-19	Attachments 1 and 2 to above email: Exposure Draft, Draft Explanatory Statement		Not for release	Schedule 1, 1.6 Cabinet Information	No
3.	20	Attachment 3 to the above email – Cab Sub Legalising cannabis – MH impacts	10/01/2019	Full release		Yes
4.	21-26	Emails- RE: Cannabis	13-14/01/2019	Full release		Yes
5.	27-30	Email- RE: Cannabis legislation and treatment services	8/05/2019	Full release		Yes
6.	31-33	Email- FW: Invitation: The Canberra Drug Policy Series – Cannabis legislation in the ACT: 23 July 2019	9/07/2019	Full release		Yes
7.	34- 37	Email- FW: Information – Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 – Friday 3 May 2019	15/10/2019	Full release		Yes
8.	38-40	Email- FW: Information – Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 – Friday 3 May 2019	24/10/2019	Full release		Yes
Total Number of Documents						

Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Shuhyta, Amber
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:37 PM
To: Hemming, Michelle; Aloisi, Bruno (Health); Ord, Jon (Health); Moore, Elizabeth (Health); Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing; Riordan, Denise (Health)
Subject: FW: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: Exposure draft.pdf; ES.pdf; Cab Sub Legalising Cannabis - MH impacts

UNCLASSIFIED Sensitive: Cabinet

Hi all here is the email from Kathy Denis in relation to my previous email flagging that we'd like your subject matter expert views on MH related matters regarding legalising Cannabis. MH Policy will then write the word for the Cab Sub to add to Kathy's developing draft.

Your input by midday tomorrow back to Jon would be good so our policy staff can finalise our contribution for AOD Policy.

Kind regards,

Amber Shuhyta

Executive Branch Manager Mental Health Policy
 Health Systems Policy and Research
 Level 4, 2-6 Bowes Street, WODEN
 Ph 02 5124 9737 | Ext 49737 | 0481 905 301



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From: Dennis, Kathy (Health)
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:28 PM
To: Shuhyta, Amber (Health) <Amber.Shuhyta@act.gov.au>
Subject: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED Sensitive: Cabinet

Hi Amber

As discussed, we are pulling together a cab sub on the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill being debated in the Assembly in February. I have attached the Bill and the Explanatory statement, Basically the Bill proposes to change the laws to allow for the personal use of cannabis up to a limit of 50g and the cultivation of up to 4 plants for persons over the age of 18. As part of the Cab Sub we are outlining the health issues in relation to cannabis use. I have copied below the draft paragraphs we have at the moment.

- 1) In considering the legalisation of cannabis for personal use it is important to understand the health issues associated with cannabis use. Most studies report adverse effects from:
 - a) Short-term cannabis use (e.g. impaired short-term memory and motor coordination, altered judgment and, in high doses, paranoia and psychosis).

- b) Long-term or heavy cannabis use (e.g. addiction, altered brain development, symptoms of chronic bronchitis and increased risk of chronic psychosis disorders, including schizophrenia, in persons with a predisposition to such disorders).
- 2) The evidence associating regular cannabis use with specific long-term health conditions and adverse effects is of variable quality. However, the daily use of cannabis over years and decades appears to produce persistent impairments in memory and cognition, especially when cannabis use begins in adolescence (World Health Organization 2016).
 - 3) There is sufficient evidence to indicate that cannabis use is a risk factor for some chronic health effects and conditions such as chronic bronchitis and cardiovascular disease (World Health Organization 2016).
 - 4) Cannabis, like other drugs of abuse, can result in addiction. During intoxication, cannabis can interfere with cognitive function (e.g. memory and perception of time) and motor function (e.g. coordination), and these effects can have detrimental consequences (e.g. motor-vehicle accidents).
 - 5) Cannabis use is highly correlated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other illicit drugs, all of which have potential adverse health effects.
 - 6) Cannabis is not known to directly cause fatal overdoses because it does not have respiratory depressant effects like opioids or alcohol.
 - 7) Cannabis intoxication only modestly increases road accident risk (roughly twofold) by comparison with alcohol (six to tenfold) (International Journal of Drug Policy, 2017).
 - 8) It is difficult to establish causality between cannabis use and mental illnesses because of other confounding factors, such as alcohol use or pre-existing undiagnosed mental health issues. There is little evidence to suggest that cannabis use increases depression or suicide risk.
 - 9) Notwithstanding the potential harms that can arise from cannabis use, based on current use patterns, alcohol abuse and tobacco still pose much greater harms to individual and public health in Australia than cannabis. Illicit drug use overall (e.g. cannabis, cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants) contribute 2.2 per cent to the total disease burden in the ACT in 2011. This compares to 5.4 per cent of the total burden attributable to tobacco use and 4.2 per cent attributable to alcohol use. (*ACT Chief Health Officer's Report 2018*).

I would be grateful for your feedback by COB tomorrow.

Kind regards

Kathy Dennis

Senior Manager | Health Improvement Projects | Preventive and Population Health

Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Shuhyta, Amber
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:28 PM
To: Ord, Jon (Health); Riordan, Denise (Health); Aloisi, Bruno (Health); Moore, Elizabeth (Health)
Subject: Cab Sub Legalising Cannabis - MH impacts

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi all,

I just got off the phone to AOD Policy Senior Manager Kathy Denis here in ACT Health and her team have been requested this morning to write a Cabinet Submission due by COB tomorrow on the impact of legalising Cannabis in the ACT. They would like to include some sentiments from a MH perspective about what legalising Cannabis means – positive and negative.

Kathy is going to email me a more formal request for information on this in the next hour and I'll send it though to you, I just wanted to get the thinking started beforehand. MH Policy will then submit a coordinated response back to Kathy.

I hope you can appreciate the tight timeframe she is under that is out of her control.

Amber Shuhyta

Executive Branch Manager Mental Health Policy

Health Systems Policy and Research

Level 4, 2-6 Bowes Street, WODEN

Ph 02 5124 9737 | Ext 49737 | 0481 905 301



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Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Riordan, Denise (Health)
Sent: Sunday, 13 January 2019 6:59 AM
To: Moore, Elizabeth (Health); Aloisi, Bruno (Health); Shuhyta, Amber; Hemming, Michelle; Ord, Jon (Health); Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Subject: RE: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED] [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thx
 I have no other comments to what has been added
 Regards
 Denise

From: Moore, Elizabeth (Health)
Sent: Friday, 11 January 2019 11:55 AM
To: Aloisi, Bruno (Health) <Bruno.Aloisi@act.gov.au>; Shuhyta, Amber (Health) <Amber.Shuhyta@act.gov.au>; Hemming, Michelle (Health) <Michelle.Hemming@act.gov.au>; Ord, Jon (Health) <Jon.Ord@act.gov.au>; Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing <OfficeforMHW@act.gov.au>; Riordan, Denise (Health) <Denise.Riordan@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

One change to 8

Kind regards
 Elizabeth

Dr Elizabeth Moore | Coordinator-General Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing
 Phone: 6205 4996 | Email: elizabeth.j.moore@act.gov.au
Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing | ACT Health | ACT Government
 Level 5, 6 Bowes Street, Phillip 2606 | GPO Box 825, Canberra City, 2601 | www.health.act.gov.au

From: Aloisi, Bruno (Health)
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 5:58 PM
To: Shuhyta, Amber (Health) <Amber.Shuhyta@act.gov.au>; Hemming, Michelle (Health) <Michelle.Hemming@act.gov.au>; Ord, Jon (Health) <Jon.Ord@act.gov.au>; Moore, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.J.Moore@act.gov.au>; Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing <OfficeforMHW@act.gov.au>; Riordan, Denise (Health) <Denise.Riordan@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Amber,
 Have also shared with our ADS Clinical Director Raj Parige for comment as well.
 Cheers
 Bruno

From: Shuhyta, Amber (Health)
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:37 PM
To: Hemming, Michelle (Health) <Michelle.Hemming@act.gov.au>; Aloisi, Bruno (Health) <Bruno.Aloisi@act.gov.au>; Ord, Jon (Health) <Jon.Ord@act.gov.au>; Moore, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.J.Moore@act.gov.au>; Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing <OfficeforMHW@act.gov.au>; Riordan, Denise (Health) <Denise.Riordan@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED Sensitive: Cabinet

Hi all here is the email from Kathy Denis in relation to my previous email flagging that we'd like your subject matter expert views on MH related matters regarding legalising Cannabis. MH Policy will then write the word for the Cab Sub to add to Kathy's developing draft.

Your input by midday tomorrow back to Jon would be good so our policy staff can finalise our contribution for AOD Policy.

Kind regards,

Amber Shuhyta

Executive Branch Manager Mental Health Policy

Health Systems Policy and Research

Level 4, 2-6 Bowes Street, WODEN

Ph 02 5124 9737 | Ext 49737 | 0481 905 301



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From: Dennis, Kathy (Health)

Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:28 PM

To: Shuhyta, Amber (Health) <Amber.Shuhyta@act.gov.au>

Subject: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED Sensitive: Cabinet

Hi Amber

As discussed, we are pulling together a cab sub on the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill being debated in the Assembly in February. I have attached the Bill and the Explanatory statement, Basically the Bill proposes to change the laws to allow for the personal use of cannabis up to a limit of 50g and the cultivation of up to 4 plants for persons over the age of 18. As part of the Cab Sub we are outlining the health issues in relation to cannabis use. I have copied below the draft paragraphs we have at the moment.

- 1) In considering the legalisation of cannabis for personal use it is important to understand the health issues associated with cannabis use. Most studies report adverse effects from:
 - a) Short-term cannabis use (e.g. impaired short-term memory and motor coordination, altered judgment and, in high doses, paranoia and psychosis).
 - b) Long-term or heavy cannabis use (e.g. addiction, altered brain development, symptoms of chronic bronchitis and increased risk of chronic psychosis disorders, including schizophrenia, in persons with a predisposition to such disorders).
- 2) The evidence associating regular cannabis use with specific long-term health conditions and adverse effects is of variable quality. However, the daily use of cannabis over years and decades appears to produce persistent impairments in memory and cognition, especially when cannabis use begins in adolescence (World Health Organization 2016).

- 3) There is sufficient evidence to indicate that cannabis use is a risk factor for some chronic health effects and conditions such as chronic bronchitis and cardiovascular disease (World Health Organization 2016).
- 4) Cannabis, like other drugs of abuse, can result in addiction. During intoxication, cannabis can interfere with cognitive function (e.g. memory and perception of time) and motor function (e.g. coordination), and these effects can have detrimental consequences (e.g. motor-vehicle accidents).
- 5) Cannabis use is highly correlated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other illicit drugs, all of which have potential adverse health effects.
- 6) Cannabis is not known to directly cause fatal overdoses because it does not have respiratory depressant effects like opioids or alcohol.
- 7) Cannabis intoxication only modestly increases road accident risk (roughly twofold) by comparison with alcohol (six to tenfold) (International Journal of Drug Policy, 2017).
- 8) It is difficult to establish causality between cannabis use and mental illnesses because of other confounding factors, such as alcohol use or pre-existing undiagnosed mental health issues. There is little evidence to suggest that cannabis use increases depression or suicide risk. Epidemiological studies make a consistent case that early and/or heavy cannabis use is linked to a significantly increased risk of schizophrenia (Global Burden of Disease 2010 Study)
- 9) Notwithstanding the potential harms that can arise from cannabis use, based on current use patterns, alcohol abuse and tobacco still pose much greater harms to individual and public health in Australia than cannabis. Illicit drug use overall (e.g. cannabis, cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants) contribute 2.2 per cent to the total disease burden in the ACT in 2011. This compares to 5.4 per cent of the total burden attributable to tobacco use and 4.2 per cent attributable to alcohol use. (*ACT Chief Health Officer's Report 2018*).

I would be grateful for your feedback by COB tomorrow.

Kind regards

Kathy Dennis

Senior Manager | Health Improvement Projects | Preventive and Population Health

Phone: (02) 5124 9499 | Email: kathy.dennis@act.gov.au

Health Systems, Policy and Research | ACT Health Directorate | ACT Government

Level 3, 2-6 Bowes Street, Woden | GPO Box 825 Canberra City ACT 2601 | www.act.gov.au

"We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and region."

Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Parige, Raj (Health)
Sent: Monday, 14 January 2019 8:50 AM
To: Aloisi, Bruno (Health)
Cc: Hughes, Jill (Health)
Subject: RE: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED] [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Good Morning

There has been an increase in potency of cannabis over the years and we are seeing more presentations with psychosis associated with cannabis use. Advice from psychiatrists will be very useful as they see these patients in ED and manage them.

Kind regards
 Raj

DR R PARIGE

MBBS FACHAM FASAM (USA)
 Senior Specialist
 Clinical Director
 Alcohol and Drug Services
 ACT Health

From: Aloisi, Bruno (Health)
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 6:15 PM
To: Parige, Raj (Health) <Raj.Parige@act.gov.au>
Cc: Hughes, Jill (Health) <Jill.Hughes@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Raj

Just thought I would also distribute this to you and Jill if you have anything you would like to contribute on this subject regarding legalising cannabis. This is required for a cabinet submission with tight deadlines unfortunately but if you do have any comments could you please provide to Michelle by tomorrow noon.

Cheers
 Bruno

From: Shuhyta, Amber (Health)
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:37 PM
To: Hemming, Michelle (Health) <Michelle.Hemming@act.gov.au>; Aloisi, Bruno (Health) <Bruno.Aloisi@act.gov.au>; Ord, Jon (Health) <Jon.Ord@act.gov.au>; Moore, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.J.Moore@act.gov.au>; Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing <OfficeforMHW@act.gov.au>; Riordan, Denise (Health) <Denise.Riordan@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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Kind regards,

Amber Shuhyta

Executive Branch Manager Mental Health Policy
 Health Systems Policy and Research
 Level 4, 2-6 Bowes Street, WODEN
 Ph 02 5124 9737 | Ext 49737 | 0481 905 301



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From: Dennis, Kathy (Health)
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:28 PM
To: Shuhyta, Amber (Health) <Amber.Shuhyta@act.gov.au>
Subject: Cannabis SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED Sensitive: Cabinet

Hi Amber

As discussed, we are pulling together a cab sub on the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill being debated in the Assembly in February. I have attached the Bill and the Explanatory statement, Basically the Bill proposes to change the laws to allow for the personal use of cannabis up to a limit of 50g and the cultivation of up to 4 plants for persons over the age of 18. As part of the Cab Sub we are outlining the health issues in relation to cannabis use. I have copied below the draft paragraphs we have at the moment.

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- 2) The evidence associating regular cannabis use with specific long-term health conditions and adverse effects is of variable quality. However, the daily use of cannabis over years and decades appears to produce persistent impairments in memory and cognition, especially when cannabis use begins in adolescence (World Health Organization 2016).
- 3) There is sufficient evidence to indicate that cannabis use is a risk factor for some chronic health effects and conditions such as chronic bronchitis and cardiovascular disease (World Health Organization 2016).
- 4) Cannabis, like other drugs of abuse, can result in addiction. During intoxication, cannabis can interfere with cognitive function (e.g. memory and perception of time) and motor function (e.g.

coordination), and these effects can have detrimental consequences (e.g. motor-vehicle accidents).

- 5) Cannabis use is highly correlated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other illicit drugs, all of which have potential adverse health effects.
- 6) Cannabis is not known to directly cause fatal overdoses because it does not have respiratory depressant effects like opioids or alcohol.
- 7) Cannabis intoxication only modestly increases road accident risk (roughly twofold) by comparison with alcohol (six to tenfold) (International Journal of Drug Policy, 2017).
- 8) It is difficult to establish causality between cannabis use and mental illnesses because of other confounding factors, such as alcohol use or pre-existing undiagnosed mental health issues. There is little evidence to suggest that cannabis use increases depression or suicide risk.
- 9) Notwithstanding the potential harms that can arise from cannabis use, based on current use patterns, alcohol abuse and tobacco still pose much greater harms to individual and public health in Australia than cannabis. Illicit drug use overall (e.g. cannabis, cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants) contribute 2.2 per cent to the total disease burden in the ACT in 2011. This compares to 5.4 per cent of the total burden attributable to tobacco use and 4.2 per cent attributable to alcohol use. (*ACT Chief Health Officer's Report 2018*).

I would be grateful for your feedback by COB tomorrow.

Kind regards

Kathy Dennis

Senior Manager | Health Improvement Projects | Preventive and Population Health

Phone: (02) 5124 9499 | Email: kathy.dennis@act.gov.au

Health Systems, Policy and Research | ACT Health Directorate | ACT Government

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Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Hughes, Jill (Health)
Sent: Wednesday, 8 May 2019 3:28 PM
To: Hull, Philip (Health)
Cc: Ginich, Penelope (Health); Parige, Raj (Health); Gardner, Kate (Health)
Subject: RE: Cannabis legalisation and treatment services [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Phil,

In my humble opinion it could have an impact on our counselling and Inpatient Withdrawal Service at this stage. At this stage Cannabis is the 3rd highest drug of concern for admissions to the Inpatient Withdrawal Unit (for April 19). These figures are very small as we only have 10 beds in this unit.

I hope this is helpful.

Thanks

Kind Regards

Jill Hughes

Operational Director of Alcohol and Drug Services
 Division of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services
 Level 1, 1 Moore St

T (02) 51241609
 M 0413312841
 F (02) 62058380
 E jill.hughes@act.gov.au

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From: Hull, Philip (Health)
Sent: Wednesday, 8 May 2019 1:07 PM
To: Hughes, Jill (Health) <Jill.Hughes@act.gov.au>
Cc: Ginich, Penelope (Health) <Penelope.Ginich@act.gov.au>; Parige, Raj (Health) <Raj.Parige@act.gov.au>; Gardner, Kate (Health) <Kate.Gardner@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Cannabis legalisation and treatment services [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Jill,

Apologies, I should have put in more background information.

Michael Petterson MLA has introduced a bill into the assembly which would remove criminal penalties for up using cannabis, possession up to 50g or cultivating up to 4 plants (Drugs of Dependence — personal cannabis use — Amendment Bill). This is being referred to in most of the discussions as ‘legalisation’ of cannabis but some researchers would describe the ACT proposals as partial legalisation as growing and possessing larger amounts of cannabis will remain illegal, as will trafficking. Cannabis will not become a legal good like alcohol or tobacco that can be commercially produced and sold.

The changes would only apply to over 18s, not under 18s.

The private subject of a hearing before the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services. The Chief Minister is appearing before the committee this afternoon to answer questions.

The Government appears to be broadly supportive of the bill and has suggested amendments. You can read the Chief Minister’s letter to the enquiry [here](#).

<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-health,-ageing-and-community-services/inquiry-into-drugs-of-dependence-personal-cannabis-use-amendment-bill>

My assumption is that the Bill in its current form would presumably mean that people would not longer be referred for minor cannabis offences under the IDD (except for under 18s) – since using cannabis and possessing or growing for personal use would no longer be an offence. However, I need to check the fine print of the legislation. A lot of discussion so far has been around the SCON rather than the IDD.

However, on the other side you would expect that more people are likely to present to services if they coming to discuss/seek treatment for their use of a drug that is legal, rather than a drug that is illegal. We wondered what your comments on this would be from a clinical perspective.

Evidence doesn’t tend to point to a predictable effect of reducing cannabis penalties leading to increased use. So the effect would be more likely to be related to existing users feeling less of a barrier to approaching services.

Let me know if you need more information or this isn’t clear.

Phil

From: Hughes, Jill (Health)
Sent: Tuesday, 7 May 2019 5:59 PM
To: Hull, Philip (Health) <Philip.Hull@act.gov.au>
Cc: Ginich, Penelope (Health) <Penelope.Ginich@act.gov.au>; Parige, Raj (Health) <Raj.Parige@act.gov.au>; Gardner, Kate (Health) <Kate.Gardner@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Cannabis legalisation and treatment services [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

Hi Phil,

I’ve included the ADS Clinical Director for feedback as well.

At this short notice I agree with Kate’s response. Sorry I’m not up to date with what is meant by the proposed changes to the legal status of Cannabis (is this just for medicinal cannabis?). There may be an impact on inpatient withdrawal beds and AOD specialist counselling where there may be an increase in referrals for people seeking treatment. For general use there may also be an increase in the uptake of young people and this could lead to an increase in drug induced psychosis presentations. This is just my opinion.

I hope this is helpful.....

Kind Regards

Jill Hughes

Operational Director of Alcohol and Drug Services
Division of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services
Level 1, 1 Moore St

T (02) 51241609
M 0413312841
F (02) 62058380
E jill.hughes@act.gov.au

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**Canberra Health
Services**

From: Hull, Philip (Health)
Sent: Tuesday, 7 May 2019 3:31 PM
To: Hughes, Jill (Health) <Jill.Hughes@act.gov.au>
Cc: Ginich, Penelope (Health) <Penelope.Ginich@act.gov.au>
Subject: Cannabis legalisation and treatment services

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Jill,

We are asked yesterday by CMTEDD what the potential impact on treatment services might be of the proposed changes to the legal status of cannabis in the ACT — this is in advance of the Chief Minister's appearance at the Standing Committee on Health and Community Services tomorrow.

It is anticipated that legalisation of personal use and possession would reduce stigma associated with cannabis use and therefore make people more likely to attend services.

It would be good to know your thoughts on this issue, particularly on the potential impact on ACT Government-funded services.

If people are mainly encouraged to attend their GP as a result of the legislation there is only limited direct impact for the ACT Health Budget. Similarly the impact would be more constrained if people attend lower intensity services like counselling rather than rehab.

It occurred to me yesterday that a predictable impact will be to end IDD diversions for cannabis, apart from for under-18s (if the final Act resembles the Bill). This impact is easier to anticipate than the increase since we know how many were diverted in recent years. However, any increase in clients will be voluntary referrals.

I spoke to Kate Gardner briefly today and she is concerned that there could be an increase in drug driving diversions if the legislation were to encourage more occasions of smoking.

We provided a high level answer yesterday to CMTEDD as our timeframe was short, but would greatly appreciate any additional thoughts you have. We could potentially get a call tomorrow from the committee hearing if this comes up.

Regards

Phil

Philip Hull | Senior Policy Officer, Health Improvement Projects

Preventive and Population Health ACT Health Directorate

PH (02) 5124 9511

Level 3, 2-6 Bowes Street, PHILLIP ACT 2606 | GPO Box 825, Canberra City, ACT, 2601

E philip.hull@act.gov.au W health.act.gov.au

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"We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and region."

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Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Hughes, Jill (Health)
Sent: Tuesday, 9 July 2019 9:45 AM
To: #ADS Staff
Subject: FW: Invitation: The Canberra Drug Policy Series - Cannabis legislation in the ACT: 23 July 2019 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi

Fyi

Kind Regards

Jill Hughes

Operational Director of Alcohol and Drug Services
Division of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services
Level 1, 1 Moore St

T (02) 51241609
M 0413312841
F (02) 62058380
E jill.hughes@act.gov.au

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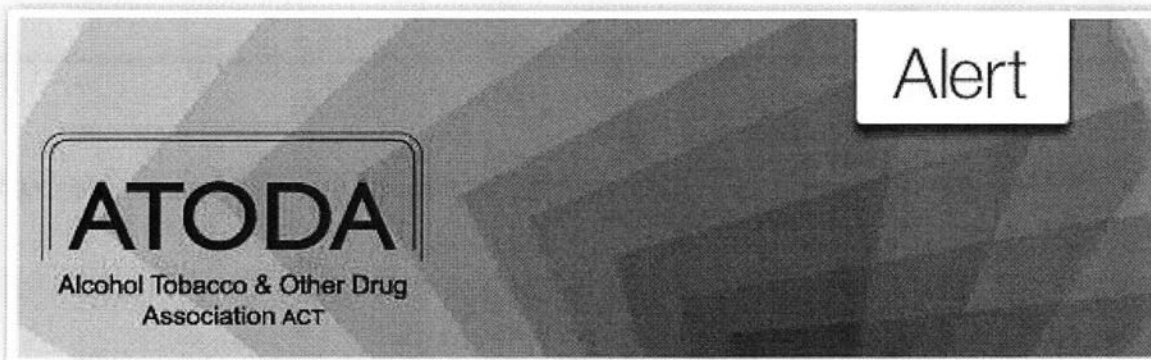


ACT
Government

**Canberra Health
Services**

From: ATODA eBulletin [mailto:ebulletin@atoda.org.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 9 July 2019 9:12 AM
To: Hughes, Jill (Health) <Jill.Hughes@act.gov.au>
Subject: Invitation: The Canberra Drug Policy Series - Cannabis legislation in the ACT: 23 July 2019

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What everyone needs to know about Cannabis legislation in the ACT: A conversation with Professor Beau Kilmer

The Canberra Drug Policy Series

Canberra decriminalised personal cannabis in 1992 and now, 27 years later, more legal changes are on the horizon. On 6 June 2019, the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services **released** its inquiry report into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018. The report recommends legalising cannabis for personal use, but what does "legalising cannabis for personal use" really mean? How have other countries changed their cannabis laws? What have been the benefits and the harms?

Join us for an evening with Professor Beau Kilmer, codirector of the RAND Drug Policy Research Center in the USA. Professor Kilmer is a global leader in understanding cannabis law reform. His current research examines the consequences of cannabis legalisation. His presentation will inform Canberrans on what models for cannabis legalisation are available, and will examine the ACT government's proposed model which is currently under development.

Cannabis legalisation has seen a rise globally in recent years, but not all legalisation models look the same. But with the numerous legalisation models available, what will Canberra's legalisation model look like?

The event will invite the audience to look beyond the binary of illegal vs legal and into a discussion of the different models. This is the second event of 2019 for the Canberra Drug Policy Series.

Free Public Forum
Tuesday 23 July 2019, 7:30pm – 9pm (arrival from 7:15pm)
Ian Wark Theatre, The Shine Dome

Register for the event through **Eventbrite** or **Facebook**.

This event is brought to you by ATODA, Uniting, ANU School of Sociology, and RAND

The Canberra Drug Policy Series brings international speakers, cutting-edge ideas and stimulating conversations about drug policy to our city.

Contact ATODA:

Phone: (02) 6249 6358

Email: info@atoda.org.au

Mail: PO Box 7187, Watson ACT 2602

Visit: 11 Rutherford Crescent, Ainslie

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The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) is the peak body representing the non-government and government alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) sector in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). ATODA seeks to promote health through the prevention and reduction of the harms associated with ATOD.

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This email was sent to jill.hughes@act.gov.au

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Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Stevenson, Nicole (Health)
Sent: Tuesday, 15 October 2019 11:34 AM
To: Daly, Kelly (Health)
Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi Kel

This is the only email I have

Nic

From: Stevenson, Nicole (Health)
Sent: Monday, 15 April 2019 4:15 PM
To: Kohlhagen, Linda (Health) <Linda.Kohlhagen@act.gov.au>; Tzavalas, Olivia (Health) <Olivia.Tzavalas@act.gov.au>
Cc: Chatham, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.Chatham@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi Linda

Yes, I agree this should be a HD led item with no rep from CHS.

Nic

From: Kohlhagen, Linda (Health)
Sent: Monday, 15 April 2019 2:56 PM
To: Tzavalas, Olivia (Health) <Olivia.Tzavalas@act.gov.au>; Stevenson, Nicole (Health) <Nicole.Stevenson@act.gov.au>
Cc: Chatham, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.Chatham@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi all

This email trail was started by the Directorate, do you know if Bernadette specifically wants CHS represented at this hearing- I tend to agree with Bruno's suggestion that the CHO is better placed to attend.

Linda

From: Aloisi, Bruno (Health)
Sent: Monday, 15 April 2019 2:48 PM
To: Kohlhagen, Linda (Health) <Linda.Kohlhagen@act.gov.au>
Cc: Chatham, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.Chatham@act.gov.au>; Hemming, Michelle (Health) <Michelle.Hemming@act.gov.au>; Tzavalas, Olivia (Health) <Olivia.Tzavalas@act.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Hi Linda

I wonder whether this would be more appropriate for the CHO with support from the ACT Health Directorate ADS policy unit as this Bill is more of a population health issue rather than a clinical service one per se. Just my initial thoughts though.

Cheers

Bruno

From: Kohlhagen, Linda (Health)

Sent: Monday, 15 April 2019 2:29 PM

To: Aloisi, Bruno (Health) <Bruno.Aloisi@act.gov.au>

Cc: Chatham, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.Chatham@act.gov.au>; Hemming, Michelle (Health) <Michelle.Hemming@act.gov.au>; Tzavalas, Olivia (Health) <Olivia.Tzavalas@act.gov.au>

Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Importance: High

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Bruno

Please see below- I think either yourself and/or divisional rep would be most appropriate to attend this – thoughts/comments most welcome

Linda

Sent: Friday, 12 April 2019 6:57 PM

To: Chatham, Elizabeth (Health) <Elizabeth.Chatham@act.gov.au>; Kohlhagen, Linda (Health) <Linda.Kohlhagen@act.gov.au>

Cc: DDGClinical <DDGClinical@act.gov.au>

Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Importance: High

Good afternoon Liz and Linda

Bernadette has asked if you could coordinate who attends the Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019?

Could you please let me know by COB Monday who you think should attend, so I can let the Ministers Office know.

Thank you

Christine

From: Pearson, Karen (Health) **On Behalf Of** Canberra Health Services Ministerial

Sent: Friday, 12 April 2019 8:32 AM

To: CEOHealth <CEOHealth@act.gov.au>

Cc: CHS DLO <CHSDLO@act.gov.au>

Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Importance: High

Hi Christine

Further to my email earlier in the week, can you please follow up if there any CHS attendees nominated to attend this Hearing?

Many thanks
KP

Karen Pearson
Manager
Assembly and Ministerial Liaison
Communications and Government Relations Unit
Canberra Health Services
Phone: 02 5124 9524 | Email: CHS.Ministerial@act.gov.au

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From: ACT Health DLO
Sent: Monday, 8 April 2019 1:46 PM
To: Canberra Health Services Ministerial <CHS.Ministerial@act.gov.au>; CHS DLO <CHSDLO@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019
Importance: High

Hi team

Just following up on advice re CHS attendees to the committee hearing

Chadia

Chadia Rad | Directorate Liaison Officer | ACT Health
Phone: 02 620 50499 | Mobile: 0403 606 847 | Email: acthealthdlo@act.gov.au
Office of Meegan Fitzharris MLA | Minister for Health and Wellbeing | Minister for Medical and Health Research | ACT Government
Office of Shane Rattenbury MLA | Minister for Mental Health | ACT Government
Level 2, London Circuit | GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

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From: ACT Health DLO
Sent: Monday, 1 April 2019 4:57 PM
To: Wijemanne, Naveen (Health) <Naveen.Wijemanne@act.gov.au>; GovernmentBusinessHealth <GovernmentBusinessHealth@act.gov.au>
Cc: Dal Molin, Vanessa (Health) <Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au>; CHS DLO <CHSDLO@act.gov.au>; DGACTHealth <DGACTHealth@act.gov.au>; Kelly, Angeline (Health) <Angeline.Kelly@act.gov.au>; DDGHSPR <DDGHSPR@act.gov.au>
Subject: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019
Importance: High

Hi everyone

I have been informed that the Chief Minister will now be attending the hearing on behalf of the Government.

Minister Fitzharris will not be attending – therefore briefing requested under GBC19/169 are not required. However the MO have requested that all relevant ACTHD/CHS officials attend the hearing to address/support the CM with any health related questions.

Can you please provide me a list of all attendees by the end of this week for inclusion on the witness list through CMTEDD DLO.

Note, I am following up on advice from Minister Rattenbury's office as the above information was only provided by Minister Fitzharris' office – will advise shortly.

Thank you
Chadia

Chadia Rad | Directorate Liaison Officer | ACT Health

Phone: 02 620 50499 | Mobile: 0403 606 847 | Email: acthealthdlo@act.gov.au

Office of Meegan Fitzharris MLA | Minister for Health and Wellbeing | Minister for Medical and Health Research | ACT Government

Office of Shane Rattenbury MLA | Minister for Mental Health | ACT Government

Level 2, London Circuit | GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

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Daly, Kelly (Health)

From: Hemming, Michelle
Sent: Thursday, 24 October 2019 11:23 AM
To: Daly, Kelly (Health)
Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Importance: High

Categories: To Action

Regards

Michelle Hemming | Director / Executive Officer | Office of the Chief Operating Officer

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Phone: 02 6205 7361 | Mobile: 0434 566 705 | Email: michelle.hemming@act.gov.au

From: Hemming, Michelle (Health)
Sent: Monday, 15 April 2019 2:33 PM
To: Aloisi, Bruno (Health) <Bruno.Aloisi@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Information - Inquiry Hearing into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 - Friday 3 May 2019 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

Actually – I think CHO / ADS policy would be better placed to attend – we could also – but we aren't the best for this

Regards

Michelle Hemming

Executive Officer

Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services

1 Moore St, level 3

Phone: 5124 1099

Mobile: 0434 566 705

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**Canberra Health
Services**

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Karen Pearson

Manager

Assembly and Ministerial Liaison

Communications and Government Relations Unit

Canberra Health Services

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To: Wijemanne, Naveen (Health) <Naveen.Wijemanne@act.gov.au>; GovernmentBusinessHealth <GovernmentBusinessHealth@act.gov.au>

Cc: Dal Molin, Vanessa (Health) <Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au>; CHS DLO <CHSDLO@act.gov.au>; DGACTHealth <DGACTHealth@act.gov.au>; Kelly, Angeline (Health) <Angeline.Kelly@act.gov.au>; DDGHSPR <DDGHSPR@act.gov.au>

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Chadia

Chadia Rad | Directorate Liaison Officer | ACT Health

Phone: 02 620 50499 | Mobile: 0403 606 847 | Email: acthealthdlo@act.gov.au

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