

The Green Revolution Australia

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The Legalising Cannabis Bill 2023 was put forward by Senator David Shoebridge in August of 2023. In support of the Bill, and legalisation of Cannabis in general, The Green Revolution Australia has catalogued every submission put forward by the public, as well as the evidence presented by individuals in Parliament.

The Green Revolution Australia has simplified the evidence and submissions to make it easier to cross-reference and understand the information, in the most objective way.

We focussed mainly on the evidence provided by those against The Bill, but have logged all sources and information for both sides, which is as follows:

**SUBMISSION INFORMATION:**

* Of the 202 submissions put forward on the bill, 10 public submissions were against the Bill.
* The 10 public submissions against the bill came from the following individuals and groups: Drug Free Australia, Dalgarno Institute, Drug Advisory Council of Australia, Oz Medicann, Australian Medical Association, Southcity Medical Centre, as well as submissions by the following Authority organisations – The Northern Territory Police Force, The South Australian Police Force, The Police Federation of Australia and The Department of Home Affairs.
* The Department of Home Affairs did not support, nor deny, the bill – they had 3 areas of concern about how the bill would be implemented in relation to the current regulations and laws. The South Australia Police Force also did not outright deny the bill in their submission.
* 3 of the organisations that put forward submissions against the bill are a part of a taskforce called “The Australian Taskforce for Drug Prevention”, alongside other organisations, not among the submissions. Until recently, the taskforce was trying to raise “$35,000 to disseminate news of the best scientific studies on cannabis via an extensive social media campaign with full accountability to donors.” They raised $415 before closing their Gofundme.
* Only 5 of the submissions against the bill provided sourced information that supported their argument.
* Collectively, there were 118 sources used in those 5 submissions, however a portion of these sources are general statistics and a smaller portion are not critical of Cannabis.
* Southcity Medical Centre only provided sources written by Dr Stuart Reece, a doctor in the clinic, and provided no outside sources.
* The main reasons put forward against the legalisation of Cannabis are as follows:
  + The potential increase of Cannabis Use in Australia, based on studies from Countries and States who had legalised Cannabis recreationally.
  + The potential “associated health and social burdens of cannabis [use and] misuse” (*NT Police Force)*
  + How Cannabis affects those who are driving or intend to drive, and how long alleged impairment lasts for those driving after consuming Cannabis.
  + The supposed “negative impacts” that legalising Cannabis would have on our Indigenous Communities and Rural Communities.

* Other, more extreme, reasons were put forward:
* Cannabis causes Mass Shootings (*Drug Free Australia)*
* Cannabis causes more cancer than Tobaccoo (*Drug Free Australia)*
* Cannabis withdrawal has led to “violence and homicides including mass shootings” *(Dalgarno Institute)*
* Cannabis Causes “IQ Regression” (*Dalgarno Institute)*
* The narrative around Cannabis being lethal or leading to murderous tendencies alone has absolutely no scientific backing, and is frankly an outright lie.
* The common theme through the submission against the bill was that the choice is between Legalising Cannabis, and use increasing explosively or without legalisation, and increased policing, Cannabis use would slow, or even cease. This essentially overlooks the mass consumption of Cannabis in Australia already existing, via the Black Market. Cannabis is Australis’s most consumed illicit drug, with 11.5% of people having used it in a year, which was on par with the year before it. (2019-2020 *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).* The use of Cannabis recreationally already exists, through an unregulated, criminal industry.
* All sources used against and for the Bill have been compiled in their own documents.
* All submissions have been broken down into smaller summaries (for and against).

Moving now to the evidence given in Parliament in May of 2024, which is expected to be true and legitimate evidence, as it’s conducted under oath. The following quotes come directly from the transcript of this Public Hearing. Focussing specifically on the against evidence, we have fact-checked quotes against objective evidence (medical studies, reports, statistics, ER data and other sources of information) to confirm what was presented was centred in legitimate information, and have included fact-checks alongside those relevant quotes.

**PARLIAMENTARY SECOND PUBLIC HEARING QUOTES:**

**Drug Advisory Council Australia**

**Representatives: Mrs Jan Kronberg (National President) & Dr Karen Broadley (Executive Member and Researcher)**

Mrs Kronberg, first witness against The Bill, is speaking in the capacity of the National President of DACA, and previously spent 8 years as a member of the Legislative Council in Victorian Parliament.

DACA is against the Bill.

**Direct quotes from Mrs Kronbergs’ opening statement:**

* “My electorate office, in Suburban Ringwood, addressed problems with the nearby public housing estate.. the home of single-parent families and people with serious mental health and drug addiction problems”, “mothers and their little children lived under a hellish siege, terrified by the violence of drug dealers and users who continuously gained building access”.
* “This proposed legislation causes us great concern. We see an illusion of responsibility, darkly cloaked with a tone of businesslike reasonableness – namely the siren song of a tax yield through registration of strains of cannabis.. growing.. selling and manufacturing, and the establishment of CANA.”
* “DACA says legalising something harmful never removes the harm”
* “There was little to no regard for the negative impact on individuals or Society. Frankly, [The Bill] is the same as putting lipstick on a pig; it’s still a pig.”
* Using any illicit drug is a sign of a sick person and a sick Society.”
* “The son of one of our team members is a recovering Cannabis addict, [using] from age 13 to 22… (in relation to his withdrawal) he collapsed after an hour under hot water.. [he was] writhing in pain as the built-up toxicity of Cannabis had to be flushed out through his skin… Sliding down the walls was a toxic brown slime from his tortured body.”

**(This claim has been fact-checked in relation to general withdrawal and this seems to be the first instance of “brown slime”).**

**Responses to Questions posed by Senators:**

**QUESTION (Senator Scarr):** One of the issues that have been raised is whether or not

there are adequate mental health services and rehabilitation services available to respond to the issues we've got in society at the moment, and then, if a policy such as this were

introduced, what would be required in terms of additional mental health services and rehabilitation services to address the demand for such services. Do you have any views with respect to that?

**RESPONSE: “**in the state budget handed down here in Victoria on

Tuesday night, the government cut funding for 35 proposed mental health clinics. We were looking to have those clinics to absorb the patient load and provide people with mental health problems with adequate care, and now we don't even have those 35 centres because the funding has been cut. His [Douglas Ross, Leader of the Conservative Party in Scotland] view is that, as a possible worst-case scenario, where drugs are legalised, we would then, under a human right sapproach, be compelled to make sure that, for every drug-affected person, you've funded, provided and ensured access to a publicly funded bed for their recovery. We'd like to see that right-to-recovery approach enshrined in this country.”

**QUESTION :** Have you got access to any research or evidence relating to the most up-to-date assessment of the impact of the policies contained in this bill in other jurisdictions where they've been tried? (Canada, Portugal, California, Oregon etc.)

**RESPONSE: “**Yes, I'll be able to. I can table a document. It comes from the United States Association for the Study of Pain. It appeared in the *Journal of Pain*, volume 25, No. 4 in April 2024. The featured article is 'Cannabidiol (CBD) products for pain: ineffective, expensive and with potential harms'”.

**(This Article does not test on, or speak to, THC products, which have been proven to be effective, as indictive of our legal system in Australia.)**

**QUESTION:** Mrs Kronberg, is it your position that medicinal cannabis is ineffective? That's your position—that it doesn't work?

**RESPONSE: “**There's a lot of literature coming through in terms of medicinal cannabis. A lot of it is unproven and, for some people, the access to it is making people's position worse. There is evidence regarding the impact of medicinal cannabis dosage being administered to young children with epilepsy. There is some consternation about that.”

**QUESTION (Senator Shoebridge):** You oppose medicinal cannabis being given to young children who have such severe epilepsy that they may otherwise die? Those are the circumstances in which young children get access to medicinal cannabis for epilepsy. Do you oppose the use of medicinal cannabis in those circumstances?

**RESPONSE:** We question it.

**QUESTION:** And you oppose the use of medicinal cannabis for otherwise untreatable chronic pain as well?

**RESPONSE:** The evidence I'm tabling underpins that argument. That's what I just referred to.

**QUESTION:** You have a lot of consternation, but do you have any evidence?

**RESPONSE:** There's abundant evidence, yes.

**QUESTION:** Well, do you have any evidence at all that the hundreds of thousands of people

getting access to medicinal cannabis in the last few years have caused any social harms? You said you have consternation; I'm asking if you have any evidence.

**Mrs Kronberg does not respond to this question directly.**

**QUESTION (Senator Scarr):** Is there any recent, up-to-date evidence or literature on the outcomes in Canada as a result of their policies?

**RESPONSE:** The title of it is *Legislative review of the Cannabis Act: final report of the expert panel*, given that the Cannabis Act was enacted in Canada in 2018 and that it's gone through its legislated review process.

**This Report noted “we believe that there has been significant progress made on several of the key objectives of the legislation. Notably, these include:**

* **the establishment of a licensing framework supporting a legal industry that is providing adult consumers with a quality-controlled supply of a variety of cannabis products.**
* **steady progress in shifting adult consumers to the legal cannabis market.**
* **For the most part, adherence to rules on promotion, packaging and labelling, including prohibitions about making claims about health or lifestyle benefits.**
* **A significant reduction (95% between 2017 and 2022) in the number of charges for the possession of cannabis and minimizing the negative impact on some individuals from interactions with the criminal justice system”**

This Concludes Mrs Kronbergs’ Evidence.

Second Witness is Dr Karen Broadley, Executive Member and Researcher for DACA.

**Direct quotes from Dr Broadleys’ opening statement:**

* “I worked for 20 years in child and family services, particularly in child protection and youth justice, and after that I studied as an academic. I've done quite a bit of research. Jan and I worked together to put the submission together.”
* “Thinking about knowledge and different ways of knowing is interesting.. there are different ways of knowing. We can know because of the research, and we can also know from our, and other people's, experience and our collective experience.”
* “I just want to draw a little bit on my experience of working as a child protection worker and a youth justice worker as a way of knowing.”

**Responses to Questions posed by Senators:**

**QUESTION (Senator Scarr):** I'm interested in your views on the argument that's being made that one of the impacts of existing policies is that young people are left with criminal records and are criminalised by the system, and that this is perhaps an avenue to provide greater justice for that cohort of people.

**RESPONSE:** “[My first point is] I am intrigued and puzzled by this sort of claim that there are these people who are going through the court system and potentially being put in prison just because of their drug use or, in this case, their cannabis use. The police don't have powers just to search warrant someone or search their pockets, car or house for a cannabis plant unless there is something that has brought the police's attention to them. So that does mystify me.”

**(This response contains inaccurate information, and is corrected by former Magistrate David Heilpern in his testimony – “That's an absurd statement. It's demonstrably incorrect…I'm sure that everybody here is aware of the police integrity commission inquiry into thesearching of children and the aggressive dog-detection policing that goes on [In NSW]. Police have power. It's simply false to say that the police don't have power to search.”)**

**CONTINUED RESPONSE:** “The second point I'd make—**and this is somewhat confirmed in the research, but I wouldn't say what I'm going to say now is strongly research based**—is that, in my experience, there are two types of drug users—two types of cannabis users. There are the children and young people with families that come to the attention of child protection services or youth justice services, and they often have what we call multiple and complex needs… My comment about this group of people is that they do often become involved in the criminal system, and their criminal involvement is really connected to the fact that they need to do crime—they do crime for all sorts of reasons, but one of the reasons they do crime is to get money for their drugs. Prior to legalisation they get involved in the criminal system, and then after legalisation they get involved in the criminal system. They're a very different group of people to the middle-class people who work and have a full-time job and can afford to buy cannabis. They don't get involved in criminal system prior to legalisation, and they don't get involved in the criminal system after legalisation.

**(This response generalises entire groups of people, but middle-class people buy cannabis through criminal enterprise, and are able to pay fines, or hire lawyers if need be, which is why their existence in the Criminal Justice System is less than those without financial access and stability, for clarification.)**

**FINAL RESPONSE: “**we do not yet know the impact of cannabis legalization on over-all crime rates. We don't know.”

**This concludes Dr Broadleys’, and DACA’s, evidence.**

The Third Witness against The Bill is Mr John Venditto, Assistant Commissioner of the South Australian Police Force.

**Direct quotes from Mr Vendittos’ Opening Statement:**

* “The basis for opposing the bill is the prevention of a manifestation of drug related crime, as well as public safety and road safety.”
* “The key policing issues are how the bill will address or safeguard effectively managing compliance and policing of the industry; managing obvious work health and safety conflicts; Aboriginal participation and effects to populations, particularly in remote areas; mental health as it relates to the police front line; road safety; and child protection. I want to emphasise that of critical importance is the potential impact that legalising cannabis may have on making domestic and family abuse worse.”
* “The area of serious concern in the bill was found in child protection. The South Australian Controlled Substances Act punishes supplying cannabis to children as a major indictable offence which carries life imprisonment. The bill penalises it as a summary offence, with a maximum of six months imprisonment or a fine, and this effectively means that there is hardly any penalty at all.”

**Responses to Questions from Senators:**

**QUESTION (Senator Scarr):** The first point that I wanted to get your views on is in relation to laws concerning driving under the influence… I'm interested in your views, or any thoughts the South Australia Police have, in relation to that issue. The distinction between someone who's gone to a doctor and is taking prescribed medicinal cannabis as opposed to getting access to cannabis otherwise is noted in your submission. I'm interested in your views on that issue.

**RESPONSE:** “That's a good question, because it affects a broad range of the population and it affects, importantly, non-criminals who are trying to do their best with their treatment. The situation in South Australia is that we don't test for impairment when testing for drugs like cannabis… if you've had an operation and you're taking other traditional medicine, you have a warning not to drive for four or six weeks, and you normally comply with that. You should apply the same test for cannabis as the laws currently stand in South Australia. We don't test for impairment.”

**CONTINUED RESPONSE:** “The other issue is that we can't see the impairment. Your traditional drink driver, who can't walk the line or who has bloodshot eyes or slurred speech, has an obvious impairment that we can work with. But with a person taking cannabis we can't see or test for the impairment, but that doesn't mean there isn't one.”

**QUESTION:** A lot of medication which we're given… will have a generic warning, 'This may impact your ability todrive or to operate heavy machinery.' You get this overall warning or injunction about needing to take care with respect to this medicine and how it may impact you. If I'm pulled over and I'm taking one of those medicines, even though it might be having an impact on me which isn't terribly visible, I wouldn't trigger an offence, whereas if I was taking medicinal cannabis and it wasn't having a negative effect, noting it could have an effect, but it might not have an effect either, then I have committed a driving offence… Do you understand? When I look at that, I can see the discrepancy in how we're treating different drugs, both of which are being taken under a prescription from a medical practitioner.

**RESPONSE:** “…to take your point, say you don't show any effects and you're fine, sure, technically you don't commit an offence if you're not impaired, whereas with the other one, if you can't see or test the impairment, just the mere presence of it means you're being penalised.. It's not a surprise that we test for THC. This might be a call or a question for other services that people who are taking medicinal cannabis for legitimate reasons might need to have, like driving assistants, like I have for my relatives… This might be a question for a broader solution.”

**QUESTION:** It could well be. Are you aware of any research that's being done in relation to impacts of medicinal cannabis on driving ability and the different range of responses? Is there any research you're aware of that is being done in that regard?

**RESPONSE:** “I'm personally not aware. Road safety is not my particular area of expertise.”

**(TGRA has 11 Medical and Case studies discuss driving ability and medical Cannabis that will be attached)**

**QUESTION:** I've seen a number of studies, including out of Canada, which have said implementation of the policies there has led to a greater incidence of children ingesting cannabis related products and presenting to emergency wards of hospitals with respect to the impacts of that. Is that one of the issues that concerns you? What are the child welfare issues of particular concern from your perspective?

**RESPONSE:** Firstly, I acknowledge that, if a home has legally got a jar of cookies, it's just another jar that child can access in a relaxed, non-legally-threatening way… My concern is that, if a home brings home cannabis because it's legal, you're now socialising those young children into accepting that cannabis is good because Mum and Dad are smoking it or however they consume it. The fundamental issue for me is that this bill potentially puts a life-imprisonment offence, which is focusing on child protection, to zero—because six months and a fine means effectively zero.

**QUESTION:** The other issue I'm interested in—and, again, I come back to some comments made by a previous witness who has served on the bench as a magistrate for a number of years. I put to him the discussion in your submission around correlation between violence and cannabis use. His response was, "Well, I saw far more cases before me, when I was on the bench, in relation to alcohol induced violence than I did in relation to cannabis-use violence—far, far more cases in relation to alcohol-abuse violence." How do you respond to that response?

**RESPONSE:** We don't often agree with magistrates, but I agree about the alcohol. I also put forward that it's not the comparison that we're really concerned about; it's the mixture, the volatility that it creates… at the moment, if a male is abusing and consuming cannabis in a domestic situation and we attend, we can take him away even for that reason. When it's legalised, there's nothing we can do in terms of that. We've got to find another substantive offence.

(FACT CHECK)

So one is the policing issue of it, and the second one is the combination of the two: the volatile situation that we don't want.

**QUESTION (Senator Shoebridge):** You didn't have any basis for telling whether someone was or wasn't impaired from cannabis use, and that's one of the reasons that you supported the maintenance of the existing laws. Is that right?

**RESPONSE:** What I'm saying is that, if a person takes cannabis and they're pulled over, we can't tell if they have a sensory impairment on reflexes. You're talking about medicinal cannabis, aren't you?

**QUESTION:**  I'm asking you about your evidence. You said that police at that roadside setting can't tell if someone is or is not impaired from the consumption of cannabis. Is that right?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** But you can tell in a domestic setting. Can you tell me how those two things work? How is it that you give evidence about being able to see cannabis impairment in a domestic setting but not in a driving setting?

**RESPONSE:** In a traffic setting, the person is stationary, static and compliant, and

they're doing their best not to show any sensory impairments. We can't see it, and we can't test for it. Then we go into a domestic situation, and we know that the victim, which is often a woman—not necessarily, but often—will say: 'When he's on the booze and the cannabis, he's violent. He's smashing things up; he's doing this and doing that.' That's what I'm talking about.

**QUESTION:** How much of the South Australian Police resource is directed to policing cannabis use?

**RESPONSE:** Are you talking about the number of police officers?

QUESTION: How many hundreds of millions or millions of dollars of public policing

resources are directed to policing cannabis?

**RESPONSE:** Every police officer polices cannabis, because they've got the authority to issue expiation notices. I'm not sure if you're aware, but for up to less than 100 grams they can issue expiation notices. For instance, nearly 4,000 were issued in 2022-23, so every police officer can police that.

**QUESTION:** How does that compare to the amount of policing directed towards domestic

violence?

**RESPONSE:** It's the same principle.

**QUESTION:** You're telling me you spend the same amount of resources policing cannabis as you spend policing domestic violence. Do you think the public supports that?

**RESPONSE:** That's not what I said. What I said is that the same amount of people have responsibility for and can act in either domestic violence or cannabis.

**QUESTION:** I'm asking you what the equivalent resourcing allocation and outcomes are for domestic violence in your police force.

**RESPONSE:** The same amount of people have the same amount of authority, but, in domestic violence, we're dealing with some 20,000 domestic violence reports a year.

**QUESTION:** How many convictions are there?

**RESPONSE:** A lot.

**QUESTION:** You issued 4,000 criminal notices in relation to cannabis. How many criminal

proceedings did you commence in response to the 20,000 reports of domestic violence last year? It's many less than the 4,000 that were for cannabis.

RESPONSE: Let's break this down into simple mathematics. Let's say there are 5,000 police officers; they're all authorised to act for policing cannabis, and they're all authorised to act under domestic violence. The statistics that you're after are that there were nearly 4,000 expiation notices and another 500-odd detections above expiation that expiation couldn't resolve. How many officers gave that—I don't know the answer, but they're all eligible. If we move into domestic violence, they're all eligible to take action and respond to a domestic violence incident and there have been some 20,000 incidences. You're asking me, 'How many went to trial?' and you expect me to know, without notice. I don't know the answer to that.

**QUESTION:** You commenced 4½ thousand proceedings of one form or another in relation to cannabis. I'm asking how many proceedings you commenced in relation to domestic violence.

**RESPONSE:** …How many do we launch an investigation for? That's a question that I get back to you on, but that's not a question that you would seriously expect me to understand now, in the way you've asked it.

**QUESTION:** What's the community telling you is a greater scourge in South Australia: cannabis or domestic violence?

**RESPONSE:** They're not the only two things we do.

**QUESTION:** What's the community telling you is a greater scourge to which they want police resources in South Australia directed: domestic violence or cannabis? What are they telling you?

**RESPONSE:** That's a rhetorical question.

**QUESTION:** You gave some fairly forthright evidence about criminal offences in relation to the supply of cannabis to a minor. How many of those prosecutions did the South Australia Police commence last year, the year before or the year before that? How many prosecutions did they commence?

**RESPONSE:** I gave the inquiry an opportunity to send me questions; they declined. Now you're asking me a question that I can't possibly respond to unless I check the statistics.

**QUESTION:** You came out of the gates quite aggressively on it, so I'm assuming you did some research before you did that. How many prosecutions were commenced, and do you know if anyone went to jail for it?

**RESPONSE:** There's an offence in our statute where supplying a controlled substance to a juvenile gets life imprisonment.

**QUESTION:**  Have you used it?

**RESPONSE:**  I don't know.

**QUESTION:** You have responsibility, Assistant Commissioner, for policing under the existing laws, and you can't even tell us if you've used it. Is that the case?

**RESPONSE:** No. What I'm telling you is that you're putting an absolutely ridiculous proposition to me—that I should know a statistic that you didn't request in a question on notice—and now you're trying to conjure up a response that says I don't know what I'm talking about. Life imprisonment to zero.

**QUESTION:** How many proponents for cannabis law reform did you speak to—with your open mind—before putting the submission in?

**RESPONSE:** I read all of the submissions you've had so far from organisations and proponents… opened a few of the individual ones but not all of them. I read all of the ones you've posted by witnesses who have already given evidence.

**QUESTION:** Did you speak to anybody who supported legalising recreational cannabis before you put your submission in?

**RESPONSE:** No. I read the documents on your site.

**QUESTION:**  On my site?

**RESPONSE:** On the parliamentary site on this bill.

**QUESTION (The Chair, Senator Green):** On the impacts that you see in the illegal use of cannabis at the moment in the community—you referred to how you come across the use of cannabis in a case of domestic violence—it's a pretty blunt tool to compare the policing of domestic violence and drug offences alone. When your police force is dealing with domestic violence cases, there are a lot of factors involved in those matters not just drug use. Is that right?

**RESPONSE:** That's right. The point I was making was that it exacerbates the violence, and the predisposition to violence, if they're mixing alcohol with cannabis. That's what our victims are telling us, 'When he's on the gear, this is what happens.' **(“Gear” is the colloquial term for Methamphetamines or Heroin, not Cannabis).**

**This ends Mr Vendittos, and The SA Police Force’s, Evidence.**

**That is the conclusion of the relevant evidence against The Legalising Cannabis Bill 2023**

When it comes to argument for the Legalisation of Cannabis, there has been and continues to be extensive evidence that shows this is the best path forward. The small harms, that The Bill recognises and looks to address, will never be worse than the harms of Prohibition.

If Australia accepts the responsibilities of legalising and regulating one recreational drug, Alcohol (which is an objectively more dangerous drug than Cannabis), why would we not be able to accept responsibility of another legalised and regulated market?

Below, we will show the evidence that extinguishes the current arguments against Legalisation, through the Submissions and testimony given in Canberra at the Second Hearing.

**SUBMISSION INFORMATION:**

* Of the 202 Submissions put forward on this Bill, 192 were in support of the Bill.
* 13 Organisations put forward Submissions with direct sources and evidence, while the rest of the Submissions relied mostly on anecdotal evidence from utilising Cannabis or witnessing friends and/or family utilise it.
* Of the 13 Organisations, 9 provided direct outside sources, while 3 other included statistics and facts within their submissions.
* 191 Sources were provided in support of Cannabis, and those sources directly addressed the concerns of those against Legalisation. Some of these sources were statistics or data in relation to Cannabis, both in Australia and globally.
* 2 Organisations, the Public Health Association and the Penington Institute don’t take an official stance on Cannabis Legalisation as collectives, however they both support The Bill and the need to move away from a Prohibition model in relation to Cannabis.

The main reasons constituents support the Legalising Bill 2023, and legalising Cannabis generally are:

* A regulated and safe market where the product they are accessing is as labelled, contains the relevant information needed when consuming a Cannabis product, and a safe pathway to access products instead of having to deal in the Black Market.
* The decline of Criminal enterprises that make billions selling Cannabis illegally, and access to a legal market, with evidence from legalised Countries and States that show increased access to the Legal Market consistently.
* The extensive amount of money that will be made through the taxed sales of Cannabis products, with a “5% tax rate [delivering] a total of $28 billion over 9 years, and a 25% tax [delivering] over $36 billion.” This is quoted from The Green’s Legalising Bill 2023 breakdown.
* Police resources being utilised toward issues that could be prioritised, such as family and domestic violence.
* A decline in over-policing, particularly in relation to Indigenous and First Nations communities.
* That instead of the 90% of Cannabis arrests being consumers, the arrest majority will shift to Suppliers.
* How Legalisation allows room for change and growth in our understanding of Cannabis, and can be tested, studied and researched in actively better ways.
* Being able to grow Medical or Recreational Cannabis at home, which extends access for those who may not be able to access the Medical or Recreational markets traditionally.
* As with Alcohol and driving limits, being able to test for the level of Cannabis in a driver’s system, and being able to scientifically discover the legal and “safe” amount of Cannabis for drivers, in comparison to “unsafe” amounts rather than just the presence alone, which is being developed and utilised in other Countries and States that have legalised Cannabis.
* Legally being able to consume a product that is enjoyable for many people in the same way that Alcohol is accessible for those who enjoy it.

While others testified from mainly medical standpoints on Cannabis, we have summarised quotes specifically from David Heilpern, former lawyer and Magistrate for 22 years, and current Dean of Law at Southern Cross University who testified in Canberra.

Below are those particularly pertinent quotes and information that touch on every argument used against this Bill:

* Last year, there were 22,000 matters involving breaches of AVOs and 32,000 for possession of prohibited drugs.
* There were 225,000 random roadside tests—more random roadside tests in Australia than in the rest of the world put together.
* the police choose their own priorities. If we lived in a country where the police really didn't care too much about drugs and left them alone unless they were in their face, we probably wouldn't be here today because there'd be no need for such a bill. But we don't.
* There is an assumption that simply saying there will be an increased use if legalisation occurs means that it's true. But, in some ways, it's the wrong question. The right question is, 'Will there be an increase in problematic drug use, not just cannabis use, if cannabis is legalised?' The answer overwhelmingly is no. There is no increase in problematic drug use if you legalise cannabis. You can see that in Portugal.
* There is only one document in Canada that counts and it's not the prohibitionist propaganda; it is the *Canadian cannabis survey 2023*, put out by the Canadian government. It shows that there has been an increase in use from2018 to 2023—of under two per cent. There has also been a mass decrease in other problematic drug use.
* Even more interestingly, 'Fewer people'—this is by a rate of 10 per cent—are driving after consuming cannabis.' So if you break down the assumption and ask this question, 'Does legalisation like is proposed in this bill lead to increased cannabis use that is problematic?' the answer is resoundingly no.
* What we do know, in Australia, is this: the one state that has a defence to driving with cannabis if you
* have a prescription is Tasmania. I'm not suggesting this is a causative relationship, but it is the only state where the death toll is going down. There is not a single death in NSW or Australia where a coroner has found it was due to medicinal cannabis, and there are precious few that show recreational cannabis.
* Some—two per cent in Canada; perhaps 1.3 per cent in Portugal—are using more cannabis as opposed to prescription drugs, opioids and alcohol.
* In the 22 years that I was sitting on the bench, I saw one or two cases of domestic violence involving cannabis use. I saw tens of thousands involving alcohol. If we could get communities off alcohol and onto cannabis, my view is that we would see an overall reduction.
* I wouldn't be here if I didn't believe that legalisation was the path to less drug abuse than maintaining our current prohibitionist model.
* In New South Wales, 10,000 people a year lose their licence to drug driving detection laws, and they are not driving under the influence, because if they were and their driving was adversely affected and there was any evidence of that, they'd be charged with a different offence altogether.
* (In relation to Coronial cases that showed a causal connection between cannabis consumption and either driving fatalities or other deliberate acts of violence): “The short answer is no, with one exception. As well as being the magistrate in country, you're also the coroner. Suicide is probably an exception to that. That's because there is, of course, a causation between mental health and seeking to self-medicate on cannabis. Therefore, I would say that there were suicides where there was cannabis use. In terms of violent crimes, there were none. In terms of traffic matters, there were none.”
* Indeed, it is the involvement of the criminal justice system from being busted with a minor amount of cannabis that leads onto an integration to the criminal system. The other factor with that is, of course, if cannabis is legalised and people want to use cannabis, they can do so without having to go to an illicit dealer, an underground criminal element that leads to all sorts of other problems, including debt, harder drugs et cetera.
* By far the largest illicit drug use in Australia in cannabis. If cannabis is legalised, it takes those purchasers or consumers of the drug outside the criminal milieu and places them in an entirely different milieu, which is a commercial one, and also a much safer one.
* I think the more drug education we've got, whether it be for illegal, regulated, decriminalised or completely legalised drugs, the better. We all want to see less harmful use, and I think there is a whole range of very simple things that make things clearer… here are safety measures that can be put in place to ensure that any use is safer use.
* (In relation to possible addiction and abuse issues with Cannabis Legalisation): I would use alcohol as the example. We all know that there are people who are alcoholics, and not everyone who drinks is an alcoholic. These people deserve our support. There are people who are going to be abusing cannabis and who will become addicted to it in one way or another. Again, if problematic use does not increase, then issues of addiction do not increase, either.

It is more and more clear that sticking to a Prohibition model around Cannabis is only going to continue to harm our society in multiple ways. The evidence is there, the proof is there and we believe it is time to Legalise Cannabis in Australia.

Thank you for reading this report, and we hope this clarified any information you might have wanted or needed.

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