

Petition No: 136-25

RESPONSE TO PETITION

TITLE OF PETITION NUMBER 5 OF 2026: Cannabis Law Reform

The petition of the undersigned residents of Tasmania draws to the attention of the House:

- That the continued criminalisation of cannabis for personal use is unjust, ineffective, and increasingly out of touch with both evidence and public opinion. Treating ordinary Tasmanians as criminals for personal use of cannabis diverts scarce police and court resources, perpetuates stigma, and fails to reduce harm.
- That Tasmanians lawfully prescribed medicinal cannabis face unreasonable barriers to accessing their treatment. Costs remain higher than in other jurisdictions, supply is unreliable, and patients risk prosecution under driving laws that do not distinguish between impairment and the presence of prescribed medication. This inequity denies many Tasmanians safe and affordable access to the medicine they require.
- Evidence-based law reform is needed. A considered, transparent and community-informed approach must guide change so that regulation is fair, consistent and focused on harm reduction.

The petitions therefore respectfully request the House establish a parliamentary inquiry to examine:

- (1) Cannabis regulation in Tasmania, including medicinal cannabis and the impact and effectiveness of the criminal justice response.
- (2) The social, economic, and public health impacts of current laws.
- (3) The case for reform, including national and international comparisons.
- (4) Options for regulatory change that better serve Tasmanians.

GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

The Tasmanian Government will continue to take a harm minimisation approach when it comes to illicit drugs.

The Tasmanian Government's consistent position not to decriminalise cannabis for recreational use aligns with international obligations under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961, with the National Drug Strategy 2017-2026 and with the great majority of jurisdictions in Australia.

Recreational use of cannabis is illegal for a reason; it can lead to more complex health issues, and misuse can impact families and communities.

The Tasmanian Government has supported the use of medicinal cannabis. Since July 2021 when the Tasmanian Government made changes to enable better access to medicinal cannabis products, there have been over 229,000 unregistered Schedule 8 cannabis products dispensed to Tasmanian patients.

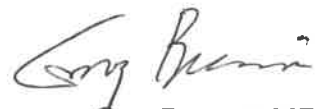
In the past 12 months alone, over 10,700 Tasmanian patients have received an unregistered Schedule 8 prescription cannabis product through a community pharmacy.

Our government's recent changes to recognise interstate prescriptions further enables Tasmanians to have additional options for accessing medicinal cannabis products through interstate prescribers.

Medicinal cannabis can cause impairment and affect fitness to drive, and it is recommended that people do not drive while being treated with medicinal cannabis.

It is ultimately a matter for Tasmania Police as to whether a person will be charged under road safety laws.

Unlike alcohol, a direct relationship between blood levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (the primary psychoactive compound found in cannabis), and levels of driving impairment has not yet been established. The Victorian Government is undertaking a trial to assess the effects of prescribed cannabis on people's driving on a closed-circuit track. This and other clinical research will continue to build our understanding of medicinal cannabis.



Hon Guy Barnett MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice,
Corrections and
Rehabilitation

Date: 5/6/26