

## Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission

### MEDICINAL CANNABIS REFERENCE

<b>Number</b>	34
<b>Name</b>	Christian Business Men Australia, Macedon Ranges Group
<b>Date</b>	20 April 2015

The Secretary  
Victorian Law Reform Commission  
Level 3 333 Queen St  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

#### Submission Re Legalization of Medicinal Cannabis

Dear Sir/Madam

In 2013 the CBMA (Christian Business Men Australia) Macedon Ranges Group arranged for a public information evening in the Kyneton Hall to alert the community to the human and economic costs of illicit drugs. We also sponsored a similar youth program at the Kyneton Secondary College.

At the public meeting we became aware of a local family whose seven year old daughter suffers from Dravet Syndrome and had been subject to around sixteen seizures a day and had been admitted to hospital fourteen times for last ditch resuscitation. As a consequence, her physical and mental development had been severely affected. Standard pharmaceutical drugs were not only ineffective but also had devastating side effects. In desperation her parents obtained medicinal cannabis and the results were immediate and spectacular. The family doctor, the local chemist and the swimming instructor at the Aquatic Centre all attest to the amazing improvement that has taken place with the child since starting the medicinal cannabis treatment.

As a consequence of this development, our CBMA Group began researching the extent of similar successes with medicinal cannabis and the need to make it legal under strictly controlled conditions.

A carefully considered petition for clinical trials and conditional legalization of medicinal cannabis was raised and the collection of supporting signatures commenced in October 2014. To date, some 1000 signatures of support have been collected, mainly from within the Macedon Ranges Shire. This petition does not in any way support the relaxation of current laws against the 'recreational' use of illicit drugs.

As the Victorian Law Reform Commission is now considering the changes that will be required to legalize the production, purchase and administration of medicinal cannabis, we

have been advised by the local MLA member to forward a submission to you, setting out why we are supporting legalization and what items we would hope to see covered in the legislation.

(A) Our reasons for requesting the legalization of medicinal cannabis are :

(1) **Compassion** for children who suffer from frequent and highly debilitating seizures and also for cancer sufferers who are in constant, severe pain where the only known effective treatment has been presently illegal medicinal cannabis. Compassion is also warranted in regard to the agonising dilemma of parents of affected children as they must currently break the law or watch their children suffer and deteriorate mentally and physically.

(2) **Legal Consistency** with existing legislation which allows the prescription, purchase and administration of morphine and codeine etc under strictly controlled conditions even though these are derived from the highly addictive drug heroin and have significant side effects.

(3) **An Expression of Support** for a government willing to expedite the necessary clinical trials and legislative changes in order to minimize the loss of life and/or prolonged suffering associated with the present legal position.

(B) The outcomes that we would wish the clinical trials and subsequent legislation to achieve are :

(1) **Clinical Trials That Identify a Form of Medicinal Cannabis** which is effective in treating seizures in children and the relief of severe cancer pain where existing medications are not effective. The ideal form should have nil or minimal hallucinogenic effects so that it is unattractive to recreational drug users. We would also prefer that inhaled forms of medical cannabis be excluded due to the collateral damage as in tobacco smoking. It is recognized however, that in cases of terminal palliative care, this may be of little consequence.

(2) **Legal Standardisation of the Drug Parameters** so that the product will be of consistent quality and efficacy and so specified that it must be produced in a registered medical laboratory and comply with the specifications. We note that in the UK, it has been possible to produce the comparable legal drug Sativex from cannabis and still achieve the requirements of (1) and (2) above.

(3) **Strict Legal Conditions** defined under which medicinal cannabis can be prescribed, purchased and appropriately administered.

(4) **A Generic Name** for the permissible drug which does not contain the words marijuana or cannabis so that recreational drug users are not attracted to pervert the intention of the law and that the general public are not unnecessarily opposed to the compassionate purpose of the legislation.

CBMA MR retains the right to present the petition to Parliament at a later date if necessary.

Yours faithfully  
Robert Evans  
Chairman, CBMA Macedon Ranges