

## Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission

### MEDICINAL CANNABIS REFERENCE

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The following is a testimony to how my life has been since 2 bad accidents nearly took my life. In 1990 I had an accident where a cast iron pipe fell on me crushing 2 vertebrae in my spine causing disk protusion and a ruptured disc. This required immediate surgery to stop my spine facing and crushing my spinal cord. The operation was performed and I came out of it with what is called a " fixed insitu plates and screws proceedure". Recovery was over 2 years and all through that time the pain was intense and I was sleeping off and on for only 4 to 5 hours a night. I was introduced to Cannabis through a friend of mine who was using it as a pain killer for his Cancer and he explained everything to me about the help he had had through the use of Cannabis so I had nothing to lose trying it as the medication I was prescribed was not effective and I was having to take extra medication to counteract the side effects of the pain killers I was using. 2 days into using Cannabis I new things could only get better if what was happening with pain relief continued and it did. I started sleeping better, was getting 5 times the pain relief pharmaceuticals were giving me and I got my appetite back all with no side effects whatsoever.

I managed to get myself ready for the work force again but for times when I was struck with pain which was often I managed it with Cannabis. I worked up to around 2000 when I had another bad accident. This accident was the cause of being given a massive electric shock which blew me 3 meters back smashing my back against the corner of a bench and as the power set up was in an old building there was no trip fuse is I just kept getting fried. The electricity fused through the plates and screws in my back and damaged my large colon and left kidney. My large colon being damaged leaked inside of me causing peritonitis and the need for an immediate operation. This was another bad time for me in my life but way above my back surgery, this damage took 4 operations to repair and in the end I was left with a colostomy bag and spent months in hospital fighting off infections and then the discovery that the accident and crashing back first into a bench broke 2 screws in the plates in my back. All the time I was in hospital I was given pethadine for pain and once I'd recovered enough to go home, " my Dr wanted me out of the hospital even though I had a large open wound in my stomach his worry was I'd die of a hospital born infection if I didn't get out". So I left the hospital and had home nursing for 6 months as I recovered. The first couple of weeks out of the hospital had me very worried as I was feeling as sick as when I went in and had huge pain. The nurses alerted me to it being withdrawals off the pethadine that was actually making me sick and would do for up to 12 weeks. I still had

the pain to address and I wanted to use Cannabis again but was put on morphine that at first did a great job on the pain but as time went on pain was getting fiercer so up went the morphine dose. I'd lost complete sense of what was going on around me and my sense of balance, appetite, ability to think straight had all deserted me. It was in one of these stupors that saw me fall down 16 steps again hurting myself badly, I broke my left hand side ribs, tore my shoulder from its socket and in doing so tore the tendon in my neck and shoulder ligaments. I pushed my right side diaphragm up and squashed my lung which now has half capacity. I fractured my pelvis but with the massive amount of pain I was in I never really knew the full extent of what I'd done. My right knee was torn and shortly I will be up for a knee replacement. To say I was in a mess is an understatement, I'd given up hope of being able to survive all this again. When the family saw me dieing on the bed taking 700mg a day of morphine and diazapan thrown in to help the morphine with pain family and friends had saw enough. I went from a fit 6' 4" 100 kilo man to a 160 kilo blob and I was slowly dieing, nothing surer, I was waiting on it. I had absolutely no recollection of anything that was going on around me and never spoke about anything anyone could understand. Then family and friends teamed up to firstly get me off the morphine which they did by reintroducing Cannabis back into my life for pain and slowly they kept lowering the morphine dose. It took 12 months to be free of it but my use in Cannabis was now part of my pain control and it works perfectly. Just when you think nothing else could surely happen I started having bowel problems, I lost all bar 12 inches of my large colon in the electrocution. Now I was starting to have blood turn up in my stools and my small intestine was bloating to near exploding point. Then the unthinkable, I went to the bathroom one morning and I passed nearly a litre of blood from my rectum, this happened again a couple of hours later but this time I was sick, dizzy and vomiting blood.

So we call the ambulance and im in hospital again, this time I had multiple scans, Xrays, MRI's and heaps of blood tests. They said the amount of morphine I'd been using was destroying my digestive system and I'd given myself a deep stomach ulcer and ulcers through my small intestine and an unusual lump they thought it might be where I was rejoined after having my colostomy taken off but could not be sure without further tests. I hit the Cannabis oil, "CO" as much as I could as a suppository, I'd read where it had helped with an ulcerative bowel and in tumour growth. I'm made the suppository as potent as I could as there is no phsycoactive effect when used this way. I also ate lots of Cannabis in edibles which was again the massive pain killer I should have been using instead of morphine but I was addicted to it. I medicated myself everyday and night and the further I took the CO the better I was feeling, I was eating again and my stomach and bowel were actually behaving. Well Last Monday was D day for me as it was time for tests to see what damage was done. After all the blood pressure, oxygen levels, bloods etc all came back perfect the big one still had to be answered, the colonoscopy. The surgeon came out and said apart from some very minor scarring which was insignificant everything was perfect. He was as amazed as I was but my happiness about my outcome was overwhelming and I just cried. I still have 2 issues that need addressing and thats the removal of the broken screws which if not controlled with Cannabis leave me in so much pain as one

of the broken ones sit on my back muscle and at times moves a little causing tear bringing pain. And I have what is called a canal stenosis that means the arthritis growing at the level above my back fusion is closing in on my spinal cord. There is not a day I could go without Cannabis for the pain I suffer but I do have to go through it as being a disabled pensioner I cant afford to buy it and when friends have none I just stay in bed hoping someone will help soon. I will never ever go near morphine again and there last offer to give me Methadone left me speechless. I nearly died of morphine, I wasn't touching Methadone. As soon as the weathers good again I'll grow enough for each year and keep using for pain as I suffer not one side effect from Cannabis. It saved my life and ill never forget that. I'm back to 105 kilo's and do ok so long as I have access to Cannabis. Without it I wouldn't wish my pain on my worst enemy. And I still have another surgery so I must have access to Cannabis.

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Dr's Reports, Xrays, CT Scans, MRI Scans and blood test results are all available to confirm my life's story.