



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

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VICTORY or TROJAN HORSE?

“Insisting on government control over production of medicinal cannabis is like insisting that people can’t make their own tomato relish, or jam or whatever, because it can easily be grown in your own backyard and cooked up in your own kitchen.

Instead, you will now be forced to go and buy it from a shop. Even though the home producer has expert knowledge of every element of the process, backed up with experience and research

– NO –

the government says you will go to jail if you support that. You must buy an expensive imported and manufactured product from a shop, one which is subsidised and endorsed by the pharmaceutical industry and the TGA.”

It is not an insignificant coincidence, that Federal Parliament passing of amendments to the *Narcotic Drugs Act 1967*, allowing the cultivation of medicinal cannabis, coincided with the anniversary of the death of medicinal cannabis campaigner Dan Haslam, who died last year following a five-year battle with bowel cancer.

Senators paid tribute to Mr Haslam’s mother Lucy, who has been actively campaigning for change after medicinal cannabis helped her son endure side effects of his chemotherapy treatment.

Labor and the Greens welcomed the laws as a good first step, acknowledging there was still a long way to go before patients could legally use medicinal cannabis.

Rural Health Minister Fiona Nash said the “missing piece” laws will allow patients access to medicinal cannabis legally cultivated and manufactured in Australia. The health department is considering rescheduling medicinal cannabis, which is still classified as an illicit drug.

Australia’s legislation to approve medicinal marijuana must be consistent with international obligations under the *UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961*, however this legislation establishes a licensing scheme for the lawful cultivation and manufacture of medicinal cannabis in Australia.

Queensland health minister Cameron Dick said there was “growing demand” for a move to



help sick people access a currently illegal drug.

The Palaszczuk Government has put forward the *Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016*, which will formalise a process by which doctors can prescribe medicinal cannabis to patients in Queensland.

The government is hopeful of securing bipartisan support for the legislation, which could be law by the end of the year, under which doctors will be able to apply for access to medicinal cannabis, but will require approval from the Queensland Government and Therapeutic Goods Administration.

“It’s going to be a prescribing and dispensing system, so we’ll be authorising doctors to prescribe medicinal cannabis and we’ll be allowing select pharmacists who can control the drug safely to be able to prescribe, so it’s a big change,” Mr Dick said.

The Bill was praised by Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, who said in a statement, “This Bill will create the most progressive laws in the country.”

She said an expert advisory committee would be formed to guide medical practitioners in assisting patients in obtaining Commonwealth approval of

medicinal cannabis products.

Mr Dick said that there would still be careful controls around the substance. “We’re not going to limit it necessarily, but cannabis is a narcotic, it’s a dangerous drug and we need to control it effectively and that’s why we’ll be putting that process in place,” he said.

The Queensland government last year announced medicinal cannabis trials at the Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital for children with drug-resistant epilepsy.

These recent legislative changes will not help one Queensland father facing a 25-year jail sentence.

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