

Parkinson's Australia Position Statement on Medicinal Cannabis

Background

The term 'Medicinal Cannabis' also known as 'medical marijuana' covers a range of cannabis preparations intended for therapeutic use, including pharmaceutical cannabis preparations, such as oils, tinctures and other extracts.

Legislation

The regulation of Medicinal Cannabis in Australia is a joint Federal and State/Territory responsibility.

The Australian Parliament legislated in February 2016 (*Narcotic Drugs Amendment Act 2016*) enables the cultivation, production and manufacture of cannabis for medical and research purposes. Under legislation relating to therapeutic goods (*Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*) medical practitioners can request access to unregistered medicines, such as medical cannabis, through the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). Approval can be obtained from the TGA under the Special Access Scheme which provides for the importation and supply of medicinal cannabis for a single patient, on a case by case basis or the Authorised Prescriber Scheme which enables an approved medical practitioner to prescribe cannabis for a specified condition(s) to patients without further approval being required. Approval may also be granted for the use of cannabis for research purposes in an approved clinical trial.

State and Territory governments also regulate in relation to cannabis and legislation is required regarding the arrangements for the dispensing and supply of medicinal cannabis in each State. All State and Territory governments have either passed or are considering legislative changes to enable the use of medicinal cannabis.

Evidence

Parkinson's Australia recognises there has been some anecdotal comment circulated of late suggesting that medicinal cannabis may have some effect in relieving symptoms of Parkinson's disease. However, the current scientific and medical evidence does not support the use of medicinal cannabis in Parkinson's. There is some evidence that medicinal cannabis could cause serious side effects in patients with Parkinson's.

Parkinson's Australia position

Parkinson's Australia considers that there is insufficient evidence to support the use of medical cannabis for the treatment of Parkinson's.

15 November 2017

NB This position statement was last reviewed in May 2021