

Media Release

The Hon Danny Pearson MP

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NEW REPORT FOR MEDICINAL CANNABIS AND DRIVER SAFETY

The Andrews Labor Government has released a report into road safety and medicinal cannabis which considered how a medicinal cannabis patients' fitness to drive could be assessed.

The Government established the Medicinal Cannabis and Safe Driving Working Group to look at a range of evidence and options under which medicinal cannabis patients might be allowed to drive, while ensuring the safety of all Victorian road users.

It is currently an offence in Victoria to drive with detectable levels of THC, and studies show the risk of being involved in a fatal or serious injury crash is significantly increased when impaired by cannabis.

The working group brought together representatives from across government, academia and medical professions to consider research, evidence and policy issues related to medicinal cannabis and driving.

It found that the development of a standardised decision support tool could help doctors determine how medicinal cannabis may impact driving for a patient. This could include making decisions based on a patient's individual circumstances including dosage, underlying conditions and use of other prescription medications.

A standardised decision support tool would be a first for Victorian doctors, as there has not previously been a consistent reference for them to provide advice to patients around medicinal cannabis and driving.

In addition to this report, the Victorian Government is currently funding three research projects on medicinal cannabis and driving:

- A study by Monash University to develop an understanding of the driving behaviours and patterns of drivers consuming medicinal cannabis in Victoria through a self-reporting survey.
- A study by Swinburne University of Technology to determine the effectiveness of the current roadside screening devices in detecting medicinal cannabis products and to improve understanding of whether different medicinal cannabis products and dosages affect roadside drug test results.
- Research by Swinburne University to measure the driving performance and cognitive function of Victorians prescribed medicinal cannabis in a driving simulator.

The working group included representatives from Victoria Police, Department of Transport, Department of Health, TAC, Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, academics, medical practitioners and MPs Fiona Patten and Harriet Shing.

To view the Medicinal Cannabis and Safe Driving Working Group report, go to: justice.vic.gov.au/medicinal-cannabis.

Quote attributable to Acting Police and Emergency Services Minister Danny Pearson

"This report is another important tool that will enable us to make evidence-informed policy decisions about medicinal cannabis use and driving in the future."

Quote attributable to Minister for Road Safety Ben Carroll

"This report offers important insights and perspectives as we continue to look at the prevalence of medicinal cannabis use among Victorian drivers, and the impacts on driving performance."

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