

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP
Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Roads and Road Safety



Tuesday, 17 October 2023

LEGISLATION TO ALLOW MEDICINAL CANNABIS TRIAL

The Labor Government will introduce legislation into Parliament today to support a world-leading trial assessing the effects of medicinal cannabis on driving behaviour.

The *Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2023* will enable government to run a closed-circuit trial to investigate if there are conditions under which individuals who are prescribed medicinal cannabis, which contains delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), can drive safely.

The proposed trial will be developed and implemented by an independent research organisation, with governance provided by the Department of Transport and Planning, road safety partners and experts and health professionals.

Detailed design work will designate a controlled driving environment for the trial that is physically separated from public roads, with safety considerations for all participants and research staff the priority.

In order for a research trial on the effects of medicinal cannabis on driving impairment to be lawfully conducted, trial participants will need to display driving behaviours which potentially may constitute offences under the Road Safety Act 1986.

Medicinal cannabis is playing an increasing role as a therapeutic option for individuals with certain health conditions who feel they can drive safely without impairment – with an increase of more than 700 per cent in the number of patients prescribed with medicinal cannabis in Victoria over the past two years.

Significant gaps remain in understanding THC's potential impairment on driving performance in different driver cohorts, and the relationship between THC concentrations from medicinal cannabis and road safety risk to aid potential regulatory reform.

Work is already underway to develop a Medicinal Cannabis Clinical Decision Support tool to support health professionals in providing appropriate advice and considering the driving requirements of their patients when prescribing medicinal cannabis.

The Labor Government is also reviewing the road safety outcomes in other countries to ensure Victoria has access to the latest information and data on medicinal cannabis and driving.

A steering committee involving road safety partners will be established to monitor the initiatives, with all data and evidence to be carefully considered before any future recommendations.

Quote attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne

"This Bill will allow us to deliver a world-leading research trial into medicinal cannabis and driving, enhancing our understanding of the how medicinal cannabis affects driving behaviour and informing future reform."

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