

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



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GREEN LIGHT FOR WORLD-FIRST MEDICINAL CANNABIS DRIVING TRIAL

The Allan Labor Government is kicking off a world-first trial to determine whether Victorians who use medicinal cannabis can drive safely – partnering with a leading Victorian university to get the trial underway.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne today announced the Labor Government has partnered with Swinburne University of Technology to assess the effects of doctor-prescribed medicinal cannabis on people's driving in a closed-circuit track trial.

Currently, it is illegal in Victoria to drive with any detectable amount of THC, the active compound in medicinal cannabis – which can remain in a person's system for several days after they take their prescribed medication.

Medicinal cannabis use in Victoria has increased by 700 per cent over the past two years, but there is still limited evidence globally about the impact of THC on driving.

As part of the *Victorian Budget 2024/25*, the Labor Government will invest \$4.9 million in the trial, which will be the first of its kind in the world to study prescribed medicinal cannabis users driving on a dedicated track.

Swinburne University will soon begin the 18-month trial, which will take place on a closed-circuit track but mimic real-world driving conditions. Researchers will review participants' ability to manage distractions and assess their driving performance including steering, braking and speed control.

To qualify, participants must have been prescribed medicinal cannabis for a sleep disorder, chronic pain, or a mental health condition for at least six months. The trial will include pre and post-drive drug impairment screenings.

Alongside the trial, the Government is working with medical professionals to create resources that help doctors consider their patients' driving needs when prescribing medicinal cannabis.

In addition, 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.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"Under our Government, Victoria was the first state in Australia to legalise access to medicinal cannabis – now our world-first trial will see if those taking this medication can safely get behind the wheel."

Quote attributable to Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne

"This is an evidence-based approach – we're working with researchers from Swinburne University to see whether people can drive with any level of medicinal cannabis without compromising road safety."

Quote attributable to Lead Researcher of Swinburne University of Technology's Drugs and Driving Research Unit, Professor Luke Downey

"We're excited to be leading this world first on-track evaluation of the impact of medical cannabis on driving performance, and we support the Victorian Government's commitment to evidence-based policy for road safety."

Media contact: Lily King 0499 791 387 | lily.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au