

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC
Minister for Agriculture

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Minister for Health

Wednesday, 17 January, 2018



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

VICTORIAN MEDICINAL CANNABIS INDUSTRY POWERS AHEAD

The Andrews Labor Government is expanding Victoria's medicinal cannabis sector and positioning our state as the leader in exports of medicinal cannabis, while creating jobs and providing life-changing treatment.

Australia's first ever Medical Cannabis Industry Development Strategy has today been unveiled, with its aim being to move the emerging Victorian medicinal cannabis industry into an established sector.

The strategy sets the ambitious goal of having Victoria supplying half of Australia's medicinal cannabis by 2028, along with the creation of as many as 500 jobs.

While visiting Monash Medical Centre today, Minister for Health Jill Hennessy and Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford also announced a significant expansion to Victoria's early compassionate access scheme.

The imported medicinal cannabis product has been offered to 29 children with severe intractable epilepsy – this scheme will now be expanded to 60 of our sickest children.

In addition, the Labor Government will also offer Victoria's locally produced product – when it is ready – to an additional 30 children, to provide further access to this life-changing medicine to a total of 90 Victorian children.

Victoria's scheme has already helped children see a reduction in seizures and has significantly improved their quality of life. Victoria was the first state in Australia to legalise access to medicinal cannabis for those in exceptional circumstances in 2016.

This scheme helped ensure families could afford access to this life-changing medicine, which would have otherwise been financially out of reach.

While the Federal Government has introduced a national scheme to facilitate access for patients – it needs to now accelerate the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listing of medicinal cannabis products – making it affordable for every Australian who needs it.

The Commonwealth has also enabled the licenced cultivation and manufacture of the medicinal cannabis product, meaning Victoria no longer needs to implement a stand-alone regulatory scheme.

Minimising red tape will better support the sector to flourish. That's why we're getting on with harvesting and developing a local medicinal cannabis product for our sickest children, and expanding industry partnerships.

The signing of a landmark MOU between Agriculture Victoria and Canadian company Canopy Growth Corporation will focus on best approaches to strain development, cultivation, manufacturing and education.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford

"This is the birth of a new and emerging industry right here in Victoria and that means more jobs for our state – while we break new ground every day."

"In another Australian first, Victoria will now collaborate with an international industry leader in the cultivation and production of medicinal cannabis."

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Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

“Victoria’s leadership has seen some of our sickest kids get the treatment they so desperately need. That’s why we’re expanding our compassionate early access scheme.”

“We urge the Turnbull Government to move quickly so that this life changing product is affordable and in-reach for every Australian – not just those who can afford it.”

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