

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE REGULATORY
FRAMEWORK FOR CANNABIS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Mr Gilbert Grace

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the cannabis drug laws.

I attended high school in the 1970s and it was a heady mix of world corruption (Agnew + Nixon) and attempts to roll back progressive politics (Whitlam) by an overbearing Anglo-American capitalist ethos. The upwelling of support for previously mainstream "alternative" herbal medicines and the back to the earth philosophies was an attempted push back against the financialisation of the community (bankcard etc) and undermining of economic self sufficiency among the working classes - lower and middle. The stresses and strains of "economic rationalism" and the promotion of the thrill seeker mentality (football, gambling, laddism) and "cheat by all means but don't get caught" (better to ask forgiveness than permission) has cumulatively produced a skewed sense of morality and efficacy.

Reference to epidemiological studies commissioned by the UN and published as "The Spirit Level", K Pickett and R Wilkinson, the work of Sir Michael Marmot at the UN Committee for the Social Determinants of Health, of Richard Taylor and James Gilligan on the effect of Conservative Governments and violence have all produced a politics of violence and coercion. The backdrop to this is the rabid xenophobia used to wedge the American and later world populations against hemp as a feedstock by associating hemp with marijuana. The benefits of hemp as a feedstock are only now being effectively explored and its medical benefits being assessed with still persistent vilification of cannabis users in the conservative media, who may or may not benefit from the "Bootleggers and Baptists" scenario, where prohibition benefits both.

My personal experience with hemp is that it was thrilling as an adolescent and ubiquitous as a young adult and has lost its charm as an older citizen except for its analgesic and soporific qualities. I would prefer to legally obtain relief from back injuries and cancer pangs with a substance consumed as a gummy or baked into a biscuit than some noxious, understudied pharmaceutical. Any anxiousness felt while consuming cannabis extracts is usually a direct result of the legal threat (gaol or loss of travel options) or the threat obtaining cannabis (violence). Violence being an unavoidable structural issue in western culture, politics and governance it permeates the broader community and hence the community seeks diversion and relaxation that "recreational" drugs offer.

The "profit motive" is literally and figuratively killing the planet as it has divorced the community and prosocial behaviours. Quality of life of the many is being sacrificed to the profligacy of wealth of the few. It was hoped progressives within government could and would reverse the trend.

The studies are voluminous the evidence conclusive. Cannabis does more good than harm. Conservative values do more harm than good. A whole industry based on a natural product (hemp) was retarded for generations in the Anglo-American west for the benefit of a few gilded age scions and their lackies. Globally we are now reaping the benefit with petrochemical pollution, hormone disruptors permeating the environment and profligate waste of natural resources in pursuit of a paycheque.

Yours sincerely,

Gilbert Grace