



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

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Michael Balderstone
President of Hemp Party

Dear Mr Balderstone

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 October 2011 to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, regarding your meeting request to discuss medicinal cannabis. The Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf.

As you are aware from previous correspondence, cannabis has not been approved for medicinal use in Australia and no form of cannabis can be approved for medicinal use unless an application is made to the Therapeutic Goods Administration with supporting data to assess its quality, safety and efficacy.

The use of illicit drugs like cannabis, has significant costs to the Australian community and their use is proven to contribute to social, economic and personal harm. Cannabis use is also a risk factor for poor mental health, particularly among those with a predisposition to mental illness.

I note your comments in relation to industrial hemp as a valuable and sustainable resource. Industrial hemp production within Australia is permitted in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania in accord with local licensing arrangements, which are in place to assure appropriately low levels of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol - the active drug substance in cannabis) are maintained during cultivation and in processed finished products (fibre, seed or oil). A useful fact sheet of frequently asked questions regarding licensing and control arrangements for industrial hemp within New South Wales is provided on the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries website at:
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/255225/Growing-low-thc-hemp-in-NSW-faq.pdf

In addition, the import of hemp products (fibre, seed or oil) for industrial use is permissible under Australian Customs legislation in accord with Commonwealth licensing arrangements that ensure legitimate use in accord with state or territory control provisions.

I note that you have requested to meet with the Minister. This request is with the Minister's office for consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darius Everett', written over a circular stamp.

Darius Everett
Director
Illicit Drugs and International Policy Section
Drug Strategy Branch

3/ October 2011