

Mr Tadgh Stopford
The Hemp Foundation

tadgh@thehempfoundation.org.nz

Ref: H201801580

Response to your request for official information

Dear Mr Stopford

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), received by the Ministry of Health on 19 March 2018. You requested:

"information relating to the people and processes of the 2008 MoH commissioned report 'Cannabis therapeutics: a novel approach to pain and other chronic disease state management'.

*Which individuals within MoH commissioned this report, and why?
To whom was it submitted upon completion?
How much did it cost MoH?*

Upon its submission to MoH, exactly who was sent copies of it, who read it in their official capacities, in which meetings was it discussed, what action was taken on it, and why?

Of particular interest is any references to this report/mr Woodbridge's trip/the conference in any email communications of Sue Scott, Sue Wiltshire, Dr Stewart Jessamine', and Ministers Coleman/Dunne.

In response to the first part of your request, copies of two emails are enclosed. These relate to the same subject matter (the Ministry's comments on the draft report) as the email that was provided to you in response to your previous request H201800481. We apologise that these emails were not provided to you earlier.

In response to your specific questions about the report, the enclosed emails indicate that, on completion, the report was submitted to Chris Laurenson of the National Drug Policy Unit. The Ministry has been unable to locate any other information falling within the scope of this part of your request. Therefore, I have

decided to refuse these parts of your request under section 18(e) of the Act because the information does not exist or cannot be found.

The Ministry consulted with various staff in relation to your request and Dr Stewart Jessamine, in relation to the general circumstances surrounding the report, stated:

"My recollection of the provision of this report is that Martin attended a meeting on cannabis control or therapeutic use while employed outside of the Ministry of Health, he contacted several members of staff working on medicines and drugs and informed us that he had attended this international meeting and taken notes of the meeting that he would be happy to share with us. We took up this offer and received a copy of his report...I do not recall this being a commissioned report, or that his trip was financed by the Ministry."

You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse parts of your request.

Yours sincerely



Emma Hindson
Manager, Prevention, Strategy and Policy



Sent by: Mark Heffernan/MOH

04/09/2008 11:34 a.m.

To: Chris Laurenson/MOH@MOH,
cc: Bruce Atmore/MOH@MOH,
bcc:

Subject: Comments on Martin W's cannabis paper

Hi Chris,

As discussed I think this is a useful paper for our own internal reference and provides a useful overview of the safety and efficacy of cannabis derived medicines. I have a some specific comments to make but wish to note that a few of these comments are based on MOHs communication standards and given that Martin was contracted to write this report for the team, and the report is not intended for an audience other than the team, it may be that these comments are irrelevant when the reports audience is considered.

The bulk of the report contains good factual information but the executive summary could in my view be re-written to read easier and better summarise the body of the report. It would be useful to include in the Executive Summary information about the efficacy and safety of cannabis derived medicines

My specific comments would be:

1. page 4, first paragraph, should this read 'the introduction of cannabis as a crude medicine to modern European therapeutics was as early as the 1890s' given that the next sentence talks about a development after this event it seems nonsensical to refer to an event that took place before it as 'late.' Also, what is meant by "crude medicine"? If this means raw leaf cannabis then it would be useful to state that clearly.
2. The report appears uses "cannabis therapeutics" and "cannabinoids" interchangeably, I recommend standardising this language if it is intended that they refer to the same thing.
3. Acronyms such as THC and CBD could be expanded the first time they are used in the report
4. What are the 'less common cannabinoids' eluded to on page 5 para 3? It would be useful for our reference to know what these substances are, and if such information is available it would be useful to know what efficacy they have for treating certain conditions.
5. The last sentence on page 6 discusses Sativex. It might be useful to first introduce Sativex as a pharmaceutical spray containing THC etc....
6. My preference would be to substitute "narcotic type drugs" with 'opiate type drugs' throughout the report as the term narcotic has become loaded and is often erroneously used to describe any illegal drug.
7. Note the typo of "trails" instead of "trials" that has been made numerously throughout the report

Mark Heffernan
Analyst - National Drug Policy
Population Health Directorate
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Sent by: Chris
Laurenson/MOH

04/09/2008 01:40 p.m.

To: Mark Heffernan/MOH@MOH,
cc:
bcc:

Subject: Fw: Cannabis Therapeutics

Chris Laurenson
Team Leader, National Drug Policy
Population Health Directorate
Ministry of Health
DDI: 04 816 4405
Mobile: 0274 512 846

<http://www.ndp.govt.nz>
mailto:Chris_Laurenson@moh.govt.nz

----- Forwarded by Chris Laurenson/MOH on 04/09/2008 01:40 p.m. -----



"Martin Woodbridge"
<martin.r.woodbridge@gmail.com>

04/09/2008 01:20 p.m.

To: Chris_Laurenson@moh.govt.nz

cc

Subject: Re: Cannabis Therapeutics

Hi Chris,

Thanks for those comments.

Things are full on at this point in time : I have to complete the write up of this article for NZPC.

I will get onto this ASAP and have an updated copy to you soon.

Cheers
Martin W.

On Thu, Sep 4, 2008 at 12:33 PM, <Chris_Laurenson@moh.govt.nz> wrote:

Martin

I am responding to your request for feedback on the Cannabis Therapeutics report.

The report provides a good overview and factual information related to the safety and efficacy of cannabis derived medicines and will be useful for our internal reference when developing policy on this issue.

I have a couple of comments about the report however. There is scope for Executive Summary - Information section to provide an easily accessible and concise summary of the information

contained in the body of the report about the efficacy and safety of cannabis derived medicines. Also I would have found it useful to have some information about the symposium itself, the experts who were present and how they contributed to the information you have provided.

It would be useful for us to have an electronic copy of the report if you have one.

A number of other comments have been provided by members of the team as follows:

1. page 4, first paragraph, should this read "the introduction of cannabis as a crude medicine to modern European therapeutics was as early as the 1890s" given that the next sentence talks about a development after this event it seems nonsensical to refer to an event that took place before it as 'late.' Also, what is meant by "crude medicine"? If this means raw leaf cannabis then it would be useful to state that clearly.
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Chris Laurenson
Team Leader, National Drug Policy
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Ministry of Health
DOI: 04 816 4405
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<http://www.ndp.govt.nz>
mailto:Chris_Laurenson@moh.govt.nz

"Martin Woodbridge" <martin.r.woodbridge@gmail.com>

20/08/2008 10:46 a.m.

To chris_laurenson@moh.govt.nz
cc

Subject Cannabis Therapeutics

Dear Chris,

Could you give me some feedback upon the paper I produced on Cannabis Therapeutics. Please be aware that this document was based upon not only the Conference (Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain), but also discussions with GW Phrama's head grower and National Police Liaison at their site in Kent, and a discussion with Proff Pcertwee in Aberdeen University. So quite up-to-date and comprehensive in its view.

I made some core recommendations that surround public health and in essence relate to Illegal drug use - since cannabis is still a Class drug substance.

I look forward to hearing form you.

All the best
Martin W.

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Martin Woodbridge
Senior Analyst
New Zealand Prostitutes Collective

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