



Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Bill

National Party alternative report • July 25, 2018

The National Party supported the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Bill at First Reading because, notwithstanding our concerns that the Bill was not well worded, it supports the goal of creating a framework where terminally and chronically ill New Zealanders could access medicinal cannabis products for therapeutic use. The licencing regime should be clearly defined in the Bill (it isn't) and there should be better Parliamentary oversight of that regime before it is introduced. There is no provision to do so.

We heard from the public and medical community that there may be a place for medicinal cannabis and we support this being added to the tool set that medical practitioners can utilise. We have heard that current pricing and availability are restrictive and we seek to improve the availability and affordability of medicinal cannabis for clinical indications. Underpinning medicinal cannabis there needs to be a robust regulatory framework for the pathway from cultivation to dispensing. These details and associated parliamentary oversight are absent from this bill.

Addressing the three main aims to the bill, we are supportive of improved access to Cannabidiol which we are told has negligible psychoactive properties.

We understand the goal of creating a terminal exemption and statutory defence for terminal patients but we believe there is too much uncertainty around the logistics of supply. We are uncomfortable that exercise of the terminal exemption and the statutory defence requires the illegal act of supplying cannabis to be committed.

This bill seeks blanket regulation making authority for a full medicinal cannabis scheme for which no details have been presented. We believe issues such as medicinal cannabis manufacture, eligibility, dispensing, monitoring and reporting are important and we are unable to support a bill that does not submit details of such a scheme to public and parliamentary scrutiny.