

Adam Searle MLC

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council
Shadow Minister for Industry



Walt Secord MLC

Shadow Health Minister

Friday, 2 March 2018

NSW STILL LAGS BEHIND WITH PROVISION OF MEDICINAL CANNABIS

While the Berejiklian Government is starting to begin to realise that there are significant obstacles to obtaining medicinal cannabis in NSW, there is still more work to be done to alleviate the pain and suffering of the terminally ill and those with serious illnesses.

NSW Labor and medicinal cannabis campaigners have been highlighting the lengthy delays and barriers to securing access to medicinal cannabis.

Doctors and patients have repeatedly complained to the NSW Labor Opposition about repeated applications and long processing times.

As of today, the Berejiklian Government has [confirmed](#) that only 73 NSW patients had been approved for cannabis-based products. (This figure does not include individuals on clinical trials.)

NSW Labor leader in the Upper House Adam Searle and Shadow Health Minister Walt Secord today called on the Berejiklian Government to expedite the process and assist those suffering from terminal illnesses.

Mr Searle said while in Canada, Germany and Israel, there are tens of thousands of patients getting lawful access to medicinal cannabis.

- In Canada, Health Canada reported that there were 235,621 registered users – as of September 2017.
- In Israel, there are 26,000 registered medicinal cannabis users and its total population is almost the same as NSW.
- In Germany, there are 30,000 patients registered with public and private health insurers.

The current approach by the Berejiklian Government is to give the impression that they support access to medicinal cannabis, but then on the other hand to thwart the applications. This is completely against the spirit of the good work of the former Premier Mike Baird.

(As early as July 2014, the then-Premier Mike Baird indicated that he supported medicinal cannabis for terminally ill patients.)

On February 22, Mr Searle introduced the legislation – Medicinal Cannabis (Compassionate Access) Bill 2018 into the NSW Parliament – to legalise medicinal cannabis for the terminally ill and people with serious illness. Debate will resume in early March.

A future Labor government will oversee a more compassionate access scheme for terminal patients and others with serious medical conditions to use medicinal cannabis.

Media Contact: Walt Secord 0418 625 276

Labor's legislation, first introduced in February 2017, provides a safe and lawful way for sufferers to access medicinal cannabis.

It would require patients to receive a photo ID and medical certification from NSW Health in order to possess medicinal cannabis. These amounts can be adjusted by regulation, according to the medical treatment needed.

Quote attributable to Labor Leader in the Legislative Council and Shadow Minister for Industry – Adam Searle:

“The Berejiklian Government is starting to fix the mess it has made of medicinal cannabis. That is a start, but they need to get on board and support more effective measures that deliver real relief to those who are suffering today.

“NSW Labor has put forward a sensible and balanced plan that does this.

“In the spirit of the cross-party inquiry that made unanimous recommendations in 2013, I again invite the Berejiklian Government to support State Labor's legislation.”

Quotes attributable to Shadow Health Minister Walt Secord

“The Berejiklian Government needs a shake-up. I have received dozens of inquiries and requests about medicinal cannabis.

“The community's views are clear and they want to see medicinal cannabis available to the terminally ill.”

“It is heart-breaking for family members to see their loved ones suffering when access to medicinal cannabis can relieve a tiny fraction of their pain.”

Media contact: Walt Secord 0418 625 276

Media Contact: Walt Secord 0418 625 276