



Queensland Health

Enquiries to: Dr Bill Loveday
Director
Monitored Medicines and
Compliance Unit, Office of the
Chief Medical Officer
Telephone: 0447 299 001
File Ref: C-ECTF-25/16579

Mr Herschel Baker
International Liaison Director and Queensland Director
Drug Free Australia

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Dear Mr Baker

Thank you for your email, on behalf of Mr Gary Christian, President, Drug Free Australia, to the Honourable Tim Nicholls MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services dated 10 August 2025, regarding the Penington Institute and the Drug Prevention Taskforce paper, *Cannabis Control or Controlled by Cannabis Policy Proposal*. The Minister has asked that I respond directly to you.

I appreciate you sharing your comprehensive insights and deep commitment to community health regarding medicinal cannabis. I understand and respect your emphasis on prevention. Your focus on demand reduction and diversion programs supporting recovery is well understood and clearly prioritises patient safety and evidence-based treatment. Your efforts to call for an independent, rigorous cost-benefit analysis before expanding access reflects a thoughtful and cautious approach to public health policy. These are valid considerations, especially given the evolving and often limited evidence base for broad cannabis use.

At the same time, I want to acknowledge that other organisations, such as the Penington Institute, have also contributed meaningfully to the policy dialogue. The Penington Institute's Cannabis Control Plan outlines a structured regulatory framework aimed at ensuring transparency, oversight, and public safety in a hypothetical legal adult use market, focused not on promoting recreational use, but on minimising black-market influence and enhancing health outcomes via thoughtful controls like potency limits and plain packaging.

While the priorities may differ, I recognise that both of your organisations share a commitment to the wellbeing of Australians. Each perspective contributes a unique lens to this important discussion.

Please be advised that on 11 August 2025, the Commonwealth Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Therapeutic Goods Administration launched a public consultation, to review the safety and regulation of unapproved medicinal cannabis products in Australia.

Submissions are open until 7 October 2025 via the TGA's consultation hub at <https://consulations.tga.gov.au/medicines-regulation-dvision/test-soms>.

I encourage Drug Free Australia to contribute to this process.

Thank you once again for your ongoing work and I look forward to a continued dialogue as part of a balanced, constructive approach to cannabis policy in Australia.

Should you require any further information in relation to this matter, I have arranged for Dr Bill Loveday, Director, Monitored Medicines and Compliance Unit, Department of Health, on telephone 0447 299 001, to be available to assist you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bennett', written in a cursive style.

Scott Bennett
Deputy Director-General
Health Workforce Division
27 / 08 /2025