

25 June 2018

Mr Tim Watling  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
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Dear Mr Watling,

**Re: *The Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Commonwealth Restrictions on Cannabis) Bill 2018***

Thank you for inviting The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) to provide a submission to the above Inquiry.

The RACGP would first like to clarify and highlight that there are significant differences between the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes and recreational purposes. Any attempts to legalise the use of recreational cannabis should not and must not be confused with the use of medicinal cannabis in certain patients under strictly controlled circumstances.

The RACGP's position statements on the [Medicinal use of cannabis products](#) and [Regulatory framework for medicinal use of cannabis products](#) are available on the RACGP website for your consideration.

It is also important to recognise the negative health aspects of cannabis when used recreationally, including the risk of mental health problems and cannabis use disorder. Legalising the recreational use of cannabis can also have a significant negative impact on public safety issues, especially driver impairment and work safety problems. These risks have to be carefully considered against the potential benefits that regulating the sale of the cannabis might bring. On balance, the RACGP cautions against the legalisation of recreational cannabis as this will most likely encourage use of a drug that will result in increased demands on the Australian healthcare system.

We look forward to hearing about this Inquiry's progress and outcomes.

Yours sincerely



Dr Charlotte Hespe  
Vice President