



Improving Access to Medicines – regulation of medicinal cannabis

The Australian Government will provide ongoing funding for the administration of the medicinal cannabis research, cultivation and manufacture regulation scheme.

The medicinal cannabis sector is rapidly evolving in size and complexity. This funding ensures that essential regulatory functions such as the assessment of licence and permit applications and compliance are undertaken in a streamlined and timely manner.

This measure will support the continued operation and growth of the Australian medicinal cannabis industry in supplying high quality products to patients both locally and internationally.

Why is this important?

In the three years of the scheme's operation, the medicinal cannabis sector has continually grown. The value of the domestic medicinal cannabis industry is approaching \$1.8 billion.

On 30 June 2020, there were 114 licences in force, including in rural and regional areas. It is expected that up to 140 licences will be in force by the end of 2020–21. It is important that the cultivation of medicinal cannabis is properly managed to ensure patients who need it benefit from it and product produced under these licences is used for its intended purpose.

As at 28 September 2020, over 65,000 prescriptions are estimated to have been issued for medicinal cannabis under the Special Access Scheme (SAS) and Authorised Prescriber (AP) scheme.

This scheme will also support jobs in this emerging sector, many of which are based in regional areas.

Who will benefit?

Patients who rely on medicinal cannabis will benefit from this measure. The industry will benefit from an increased capacity to assess applications.

How much will this cost?

The Government will invest an additional \$1.7 million from 2020–21 to 2023–24 in the Office of Drug Control.