



**Hon Ann Bressington MLC**

Parliament House  
North Terrace  
ADELAIDE SA 5000  
Phone: 08 8237 9541  
Fax: 08 8237 9534

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Thursday, 13 December 2006**

**ADELAIDE IS “CANNABIS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD”**

According to the Independent Weekly the marijuana industry is worth \$7 billion per annum and S.A. is contributing significantly to national supply of this drug. There are now enough scientific studies to show that marijuana is linked to mental illness and the long-term health costs are yet to be realised.

Police Commissioner Mr. Mal Hyde has linked the widespread use and availability of marijuana to liberal legislation. Below are some examples of some serious concerns:

- ***In 1993 the National Intelligence Report (AFP)*** stated that the streets had been flooded with a new hybrid of cannabis known as “mad weed”. It was called madweed because in Europe it was responsible for psychotic episodes even after one time use. It originated in the Netherlands and the THC content tested as high as 30%.
- Marijuana is stored in cells and given that the brain is 33% fat cells marijuana is stored in the brain and can hinder learning by causing impaired thinking, reading comprehension, verbal and math skills. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut)***
- Marijuana impairs short term memory and concentration. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut)***
- Marijuana accumulates in your body. THC can remain in the tissues of the body for days or weeks. Frequent users may never be rid of the drug, and the long-term health effects of this accumulation are unknown. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut)***
- Marijuana harms your heart and lungs – Research shows that marijuana releases five times as much carbon monoxide into the bloodstream as tobacco and three times as much tar. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut)***
- Marijuana speeds up heart rate as much as 50%. It causes chest pains in people who have poor blood supply to the heart. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut)***
- Marijuana affects reproduction – In females THC changes the brain signals which affect ovulation and decrease fertility. In males, even one marijuana cigarette can cause a temporary drop in male hormone production. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut)***
- Human and animal studies show that marijuana smoking can cause incomplete genetic information to be transmitted to offspring. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut)***
- The chemicals in marijuana can be toxic to an unborn baby affecting growth and development. ***(The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Connecticut.)***

- Babies born to women who used marijuana display altered responses to visual stimuli, increased tremulousness, high pitched cry, which may indicate problems with neurological development. (*National Institute on Drug Abuse.*)
- During pre school years marijuana exposed children have been observed to perform tasks involving sustained attention and memory more poorly than unexposed children. (*National Institute on Drug Abuse.*)
- School years children exposed to marijuana are likely to exhibit deficits in problem solving skills, memory and the ability to remain attentive. (*National Institute on Drug Abuse.*)

“For years groups have defended their right to use cannabis because of the lack of scientific and medical research,” Ms Bressington said.

“They have been the butt of a cruel hoax just like tobacco smokers and the approach taken to create doubt in their minds is exactly the same as that of the tobacco industry when it was sprung – to create doubt in the minds of the users of the harms and encourage their right to choose to use.

“We know there is no such thing as a safe cigarette so why are governments procrastinating about marijuana, given the facts.”

Responsible governments should look to countries that have reduced the use such as Sweden and implement legislative reforms to support the same outcomes in Australia. No more lip service it is time for action.

**Effective intervention, effective prevention, effective treatment and rehabilitation and appropriate penalties for growing and distribution.**