



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Cannabis legislation welcome but accessibility and dosage still an issue

Media Release

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) has welcomed legislation that will lead to a safe, legal and reliable supply of cannabis for medicinal purposes, however it cautioned that more needs to be done to determine appropriate accessibility and dosage.

While RACP recognises that cannabis for medicinal purposes can be effective for chronic pain and severe neurological diseases, important details are yet to be determined – including, who prescribes the drug and what the appropriate dosages are.

RACP President Professor Nicholas Talley said these details were important to ensure the drug was administered in the safest way possible.

“Today’s announcement is a step in the right direction for some patients, however the medical community faces a number of challenges before cannabis can be successfully used for medicinal purposes,” explained Professor Talley.

“It still needs to be determined which type of medical specialist will be authorised to prescribe the drug,” explained Professor Talley. “And we also have reservations that there is still no standard dose of cannabis, and that dosage can vary according to condition.

“Patient safety will always be paramount and we need to determine who will benefit most from cannabis, as opposed to those who will benefit more from other types of treatment. It is important that clinical trials, research and consultation continue,” added Professor Talley.

Professor Talley said Fellows of RACP were in the process of setting up its own working party on using cannabis for medicinal purposes and would continue to engage with government on the issue.

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 15,000 physicians and 7,500 trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand.

The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients.

The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.