



# **RACHEL DAVID PAYNE ETTERS HANK**

**LEGALISE CANNABIS VICTORIA NEWSLETTER**



**December 2023**



We acknowledge the Bunurong,  
Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi  
Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation  
as the first inhabitants and traditional  
custodians of the lands  
where we live, learn and work.

We pay our respect to all Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islanders and their cultures;  
and to Elders past,  
present and emerging.



# RACHEL IN SOUTH-EASTERN METRO

Well, it's been one year since I found out I would have the great honour of representing South-east Metro in state parliament, and what a learning curve it has been! I've settled into the role now and have found myself enjoying the controlled chaos being an MP seems to entail.

Disappointingly I've spent the first year of this term without an electorate office in the south-east. I'm very excited to say things are moving along well to be moved into our new Chelsea office early next year. I have high hopes that this space will be a safe and vibrant hub for community members to seek help, or just stop by for a chat and a cup of tea.

Like I said, I have spent much of this year getting to grips with the roll and my region. I've met with the south-east councils, who offered me an in-depth insight into the issues faced by our communities and what I can do in state parliament to advocate for residents. I have reached out to meet with the councils again in the new year to discuss a plan of action for 2024.

This year in parliament question time we've covered many topics and had some encouraging responses from Ministers. The quality of the 800 bus service, women's health, LGBTIQ+ community safety, drug

detection dogs in public places and family and intimate partner violence have all been reoccurring themes. I will keep raising these issues in parliament and with the relevant Ministers. So, rest assured I will continue to work hard to incite reform in these areas on behalf of the people of the south-east.

While many parts of this job are challenging, one thing that always brings me joy is getting out to community events. It's always a pleasure chatting to the interesting, vibrant and diverse residents of South-east Metro about why they love living where they do. I have certainly enjoyed my quiet morning swims in the cold salty water of the bay – you can't do that in the city!

With all of that said, it has undoubtedly been a big year for all of us here at LCV, but we are looking forward to continuing to be a passionate voice for the wonderful people of the South-east.

Talk soon!  
Rachel Payne MP



# DAVID IN WESTERN METRO



Well, it's been one year since I was elected, and it's been a whirlwind to say the least. The first few months in the job were a steep learning curve — introducing motions, bills and agitating for change wherever I could. To the outside observer, Parliament seems slow — but honestly, in the chamber things get thrown at you at an alarming rate.

Finally, I have staff, an electorate office in Braybrook and after a chaotic first few months, things have settled down. I'm lucky to have an excellent team in Western Metro who are as committed to cannabis law reform as I am.

As part of settling into Braybrook, it has been terrific to meet with all of the local councils who have a nuanced understanding of the issues facing residents in the West. A consistent theme in discussions with Councils has been the lack of resources they have to support rapidly changing and expanding communities.

After discussions with Councils and residents, I keep coming back to the same question: We all know that “the West is the best” but how come we seem to get so much less? Whether its public transport, health services, roads, schools, public spaces, you name it, the West seems to get a pretty raw deal.

By way of example, I recently attended an event hosted by Friends of the Earth and Sustainable Cities to raise awareness for much-needed better bus services in the West. Studies by Melbourne University show that this can be done quite quickly, easily and at minimal cost.

We know we have a lot more to do in Parliament, and working with local resident groups and Councils on public transport in the West is a big part of this puzzle. I will continue to push for better PT in my electorate where our bus services are in dire need of improvement.

Another issue we have been scouting is the proposed third runway at the Melbourne Airport. We have been asking questions of the relevant Ministers about the likely impacts on residents' homes, schools and childcare centres and the answers we're getting don't offer much hope. For residents in or near the new proposed flight paths, the loss of amenity is going to be huge, particularly as there is no nighttime curfews at the Melbourne Airport!

In August, I had the pleasure of attending the Wyndham Citizenship Ceremony at the Wyndham Civic Centre. It was a privilege to be able to congratulate and welcome so many new Australian citizens who enrich the West every day. It was also a privilege to attend the opening of Cooinda, the first dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre in the City of Brimbank. This new service will provide a culturally welcoming space for Brimbank's First Nations community, offering a range of important programs aimed at reconciliation, health, healing, education and community wellbeing.

These are just a handful of the many issues I've had the pleasure of engaging with so far. While you're reading, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contacted my office to bring local issues to my attention. Please keep them coming, the door is open.

# PARLIAMENT UPDATE

From the moment we hit the Parliament this year we were agitating for cannabis law reform. We have since seen the announcement of a medicinal cannabis driving trial; we have had two of our inquiries pass in the upper house with the hemp inquiry since tabled to recommend a boost to the Victorian hemp industry. After excitedly introducing our Regulation of Cannabis bill in three states on the same day, we have now adjourned debate to the new year with a signal from Government that change could be on our side. We believe this is a meaningful start for cannabis law reform in Victoria, putting us in good stead to continue to push for change in 2024. As you can imagine, there's much to report!

## MEDICINAL CANNABIS DRIVING

In late August the Victorian Government announced the launch of a closed-circuit driving trial in Victoria to investigate road safety risks associated with the use of medicinal cannabis.

We called on the government to finalise the trial no later than the end of 2024. We have been assured by the government that we will be involved in co-designing all elements of this patient-focused process.

[“The bottom line is to see a medicinal cannabis patient treated like any other patient taking prescription medication, and we will continue to advocate for this outcome as quickly as possible”](#) Rachel said, speaking with the Age.

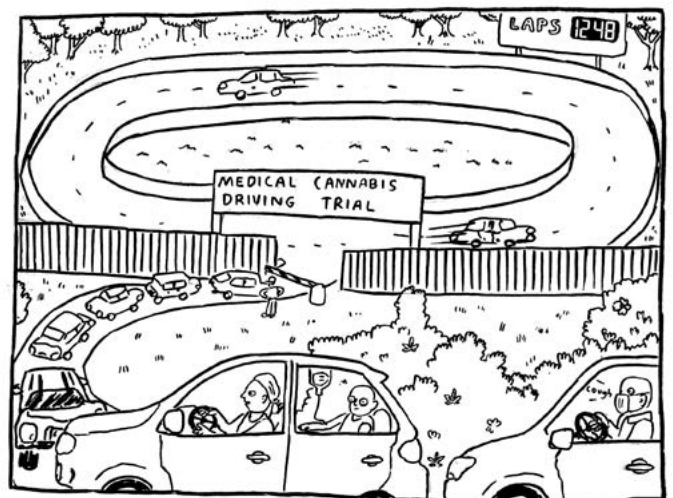
This trial will bring medicinal cannabis patients one step closer to getting on the road in Victoria. However, we recognise that tens of thousands of Victorian medicinal cannabis patients will be bitterly disappointed by yet another hurdle preventing them from living a normal life.

As David lamented when speaking with the Herald Sun, [“This excessively long trial ignores the tens of thousands of Victorian medicinal cannabis patients who are looking to this government for sensible and timely resolution of this issue.”](#)

Victoria was the first state to legalise medicinal cannabis in 2016. Since then, there have been dozens of road safety studies that, time after time, show that medicinal cannabis patients can drive safely when unimpaired.

Once the trial is complete there should be no barriers to medicinal cannabis patients getting safely on the road. You can be assured that we will continue to pressure the Government to make this happen.

As medicinal cannabis patients across the state await the commencement of the trial, David and Rachel are hopeful a parliamentary petition will see the process brought forward with pressure from the medical community and stakeholders alike. <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/petitions/amend-the-Road-Safety-Act-1986-to-exempt-medical-cannabis-patients/>



# REGULATION OF ADULT PERSONAL USE OF CANNABIS BILL

In June for the first time in recorded Australian Parliamentary history, Legalise Cannabis Party MPs in VIC, NSW and WA introduced the Regulation of Personal Adult Use of Cannabis Bill 2023 across their three jurisdictions on the same day. Our concerted efforts for announcing the Regulation of Adult Personal Use of Cannabis Bill received a groundswell of media attention with a total of 303 media mentions the day of the reading.

This legislation will allow adults to responsibly possess, share and grow small quantities of cannabis at home.

While long overdue, this reform will cement the first part of our three-stage process for the legal regulation of cannabis.

Since 2010, there have been over 700,000 arrests in Australia for cannabis-related offences. Yet, the cannabis black market continues to generate an estimated \$8 billion dollars per annum.

These arrests disproportionately criminalise young people, indigenous people and culturally diverse communities – pushing already marginalised groups towards the fringes.

Cannabis prohibition is 95 years old. It's failed and it's time for change.

We have adjourned debate to the new year, but rest assured the work continues to end Victoria's discriminatory and outdated cannabis laws.

<https://www.legaliseit.org.au/>

**I'M A  
MOTHER  
NOT A  
CRIMINAL**



**TAKE ACTION NOW  
LEGALISEIT.ORG.AU**

# HEMP INQUIRY



Back in June after the closure of Victorian native logging, Rachel spoke to the ABC about our first inquiry, highlighting “Hemp could be a real opportunity for the timber industry to pivot into”. The morning of the debate LCV hosted a media conference at Parliament House with hemp industry figures Regenerative Hemp Victoria, One Life Botanicals and Hexcore Hemp Processing each showcasing some of their innovative products.

The industrial hemp inquiry has been investigating the state of Victorian hemp. The inquiry considered the environmental benefits, the costs of an expanded industry and how the government could support the development of Victorian hemp.

With Victoria facing accelerating climate related disasters, hemp offers alternatives to the unsustainable and damaging materials currently in use. Hemp's ecofriendly credentials are well established: from its ability to sequester carbon at twice the rate of trees to its capacity to replace almost any base material across any number of industries.

We heard from the construction, fashion and textile industries as well as the farmers federation that government support is critical if we want to expand Victoria's hemp industry.

The Economy and Infrastructure Committee tabled its final report into industrial hemp last month. Details about the inquiry can be found on the parliament website:

<https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/hempindustry>.

## WORKPLACE DRUG TESTING

If the driving trial wasn't enough that week, we held our debate for an Inquiry into Workplace Drug Testing for Medicinal Cannabis patients in Victoria. An article published in the Guardian featured Zhia Zariko, a mother and academic from Melbourne, who spoke about her medicinal cannabis consumption in her workplace. Zhia and medicinal cannabis telehealth supplier Montu joined David and Rachel at a Parliament House press conference on the morning of our debate to speak about their real world experiences.

Our motion to hold an inquiry was unanimously supported by all members of the Legislative Council. This brings us one step closer to ending the discriminatory and unjust laws affecting medicinal cannabis patients.

The inquiry will investigate the laws and regulations around workplace testing, including the treatment of prescription medicinal cannabis compared to other prescription medications. It will also weigh up how current workplace testing laws could be discriminatory.

We hear countless stories of the life-changing relief medicinal cannabis has brought to patients where other medications have failed. Medicinal cannabis represents a great leap forward in pharmacology.

Unfortunately, current workplace testing practices are costing medicinal cannabis patients their jobs and livelihoods. Simply because the presence of cannabis is detectable sometimes weeks after it has been consumed.

We hope the committee can address this conundrum of presence versus impairment. Submissions to this inquiry close on 9 February. If you have something to contribute please send in a submission before the due date. Details can be found on the parliament website:

<https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/workplacedrugtestinginquiry>.

## HOW DOES THE PARLIAMENT ACTUALLY WORK?

We are both members of the Legislative Council, which is the upper house of Victoria's Parliament. For any piece of legislation to pass – to create new laws – the legislation has to pass both houses of Parliament, by receiving a majority of votes in each house.

Labor has a majority of seats in the lower house (which is why they are in Government) so they can pass legislation in that house easily. But the Legislative Council is different, where the government doesn't have half of the seats.

This isn't a hard and fast rule, but in most cases to pass new laws the government will either need the opposition's support, or the support of the Greens and LCV. That puts us in what is called 'the balance of power' and it's that balance of power position that enables LCV to work with the government to progress our cannabis reform agenda.

Each sitting week the government will introduce several new pieces of legislation that we will debate and vote on. That usually means giving a speech, moving amendments if we want to (changes to the legislation that will be voted on), asking questions about the legislation in Parliament, and voting.

We also get the opportunity to introduce and debate our own pieces of legislation (called private member's bills), or a motion, on four occasions per year (two per MP). That is where the magic happens! And how, for example, we introduced a bill to allow medicinal cannabis patients to drive and a bill to allow adult personal cannabis use.

We get other opportunities to speak in Parliament too. We can ask a question in 'question time' and we also get to ask a question from a constituent specific to an issue in their electorate. The government must reply to these. We also get to raise an Adjournment matter, which is a short speech calling on the government to act on an issue in some way and the government must reply to these within a certain timeframe. We also give a short speech called a Member's Statement each week.

Through much of the year, the Parliament sits every second week, so there can be a lot for us to get our heads around quickly – but it is an absolute privilege that we both embrace, because we want to do the absolute best job we can for our members and for all Victorians.

## MPS IN THE MEDIA

*What a busy twelve months it's been for  
Legalise Cannabis Victoria!  
Across the media landscape from podcasts to  
live radio, TV news and the local papers,  
we have had plenty of time in the limelight.*

-  [Victoria's major parties back overhaul of drug-driving laws for medicinal cannabis users](#)
-  [Cannabis laws Victoria: Labor government open to discussing decriminalising use](#)
-  ['A medical marvel': Calls made to legalise Cannabis in three states](#)
-  [Victoria prepares to launch medicinal cannabis driving trial](#)
-  [Victoria medicinal cannabis trial to test when users able to drive](#)
-  [Legalise Cannabis Party Puts Forward A Bill And You'll Never Guess What For](#)
-  [Industrial hemp vying to take over Victoria's timber industry, but not all politicians agree](#)
-  [Give and Take: Cannabis Conversations A Culture and History of Prohibition in Victoria](#)
-  ['This is a medicine': the Australians prescribed cannabis but left fighting to keep their jobs](#)
-  [Legalise Cannabis makes united push for personal marijuana use in three Australian states](#)
-  [Legalise Cannabis party wants an inquiry into workplace drug testing, arguing current rules are unfair](#)
-  [Jacinta Allan confesses to cannabis use to 'inject a sense of honesty' into debate over whether Victoria should legalise the drug](#)
-  [Legalise Cannabis MPs to push draft NSW, Victoria, WA drug legalisation laws](#)



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