

Legal and Social Issues Committee
Legislative Council,
Parliament of Victoria

4 March 2025

By email

To the Chair and Members of the Legal and Social Issues Committee,

**COMMITTEE'S INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF PERSONAL ADULT USE
OF CANNABIS BILL 2023 (VIC): MATTERS TAKEN ON NOTICE**

I am writing to you **on behalf of the Australian Lawyers Alliance (ALA)**.

The ALA is a national association of lawyers, academics and other professionals dedicated to protecting and promoting access to justice and equality before the law for all individuals.

The ALA is grateful to have been invited to provide evidence to the Legal and Social Issues Committee ('Committee') as part of the Committee's ongoing inquiry into the Regulation of Personal Adult Use of Cannabis Bill 2023 (Vic).

Arising from my appearance before the Committee on Friday, 14 February 2025, my responses are as follows to the matters taken on notice:

1. In your experience, who is introducing young people to cannabis?

Generally, in my experience, their peers at school or in their social circle. I have had a number of clients say to me over many years that they began to use cannabis because it is illegal.

2. Should there be a penalty for supplying cannabis to minors rather than charging the young people in possession?

Yes. Although, I note there already is such a charge – it is a supply charge under misuse of drugs legislation in every jurisdiction. See, for example: *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* (Vic) section 71B.

- 3. Regarding the burden that cannabis-related cases are placing on our courts and our justice system. Could you provide some sense of the proportion of what that case load represents? Even a ballpark percentage would be useful.**

ABS and other data indicate that drug offences make up between 8 and 10 per cent of offences in courts.

Thank you for your attention on this, and please do let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Barns', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Barns SC

Australian Lawyers Alliance