

# Position Statement on Medicinal Cannabis

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## **The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association recognises that:**

- While medicinal use of cannabis remains controversial, it is also well known that cannabis plays an important role for many patients in alleviating symptoms, most notably with regard to pain, nausea, anorexia and seizure control.
- Cannabis for medicinal purposes is legal and regulated in many places, including in Victoria, Canada and parts of the United States and Europe.
- Cannabis use is also known to be associated with harmful consequences for some users, especially frequent or sustained use, particularly in terms of psychosis and mood disorders.
- The NSW Government has committed to clinical trials to further explore the use of cannabis in providing relief for some patients.

## **It is the position of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association that:**

- Access to cannabis for therapeutic purposes should be supported where patients, in consultation with their treating health professionals receive some benefit or symptoms are alleviated.
- Clinical trials should be conducted to develop the evidence base.
- Approved pharmaceutical cannabis products should be accessible and affordable.
- A legal framework must be established so that patients or their carers who are in possession of cannabis for personal, therapeutic purposes should have a complete legal defence from arrest or prosecution.
- A legal framework must be established so that approved cannabis products can be developed and sold for the purposes of therapeutic use.
- Cannabis misuse should be approached primarily as a health issue rather than a criminal issue and we support an appropriate harm-reduction response.