

## Department of Health and Human Services

Level 1, 99 Bathurst Street, Hobart, Tasmania  
GPO Box 125, HOBART TAS 7001, Australia  
Ph: 1300 135 513  
Web: [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au)



Contact: Coordinator Executive Services  
Phone: (03) 6166 3698  
E-mail: [ots.mailbox@dhhs.tas.gov.au](mailto:ots.mailbox@dhhs.tas.gov.au)  
File: RTI201415-0004

Ms Cassy O'Connor  
Shadow Spokesperson for Health  
Tasmanian Greens

Dear Ms O'Connor

### **Application for assessed disclosure under the *Right to Information Act 2009* – RTI201415-0004**

I refer to your application for assessed disclosure made under the *Right to Information Act 2009* (the Act).

A search of Agency records has been carried out. No information relating to your application has been located.

Searches of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Workflow Information Tracking System (WITS) were conducted using the key words of poppy, cannabis, medical cannabis, and Glynn Williams. WITS is the official record and workflow for all information to and from the Secretary DHHS and the Ministers' Offices. Searches of relevant DHHS and Ministerial staff emails and document files were also conducted.

If you require further information, please contact me by phone: 6166 3698 or by email [ots.mailbox@dhhs.tas.gov.au](mailto:ots.mailbox@dhhs.tas.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin Meeker".

Justin Meeker  
Coordinator Executive Services  
RTI Delegated Officer

22 July 2014

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment  
POLICY DIVISION



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Email: [tim.eldridge@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:tim.eldridge@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au)  
Our ref: RTI 004/2014-15  
Your ref: -

Ms Cassy O'Connor MP  
7 Franklin Wharf  
Hobart TAS 7000

Dear Ms O'Connor

**Right to Information decision**

I refer to your application made pursuant to the *Right to Information Act 2009* ('the Act'), which was received and accepted by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) on 8 July 2014. Specifically, you requested:

*Any and all correspondence between Tasmanian poppy industry representatives, bodies or related parties and the Minister for Primary Industries or his Departmental representatives, on the subject of a medical cannabis trial or the establishment of a medical cannabis industry in Tasmania, as well as any associated documentation in either hard copy, note or electronic form.*

A search of DPIPWE's records located two pages of information relevant to your application, which are enclosed with this letter.

Please contact me if you have any questions in relation to this decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Eldridge", written over a horizontal line.

Tim Eldridge  
**Delegated officer under the *Right to Information Act 2009***

5 August 2008

Encl

**Wilson, Deidre (DPIPWE)**

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**From:** Bastock, Ashley (DPaC)  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 July 2014 1:39 PM  
**To:** Wilson, Deidre (DPIPWE)  
**Subject:** FW: Media Release  
**Attachments:** Press Release - Cannabis July 14.pdf

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**From:** Poppy Growers Tasmania [<mailto:poppygrowers@bigpond.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 3 July 2014 6:46 PM  
**To:** Bastock, Ashley (DPaC)  
**Subject:** Media Release

For your information Ashley

Kind Regards,  
*Keith Rice*  
Chief Executive

**Poppy Growers Tasmania Inc.**  
*Office location:* 28 Garfield Street, South Launceston  
PO Box 3014, Launceston Tasmania 7250  
**Phone:** 03 6343 2244  
**Fax:** 03 6343 2822  
**email:** [poppygrowers@bigpond.com](mailto:poppygrowers@bigpond.com)



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## MEDIA RELEASE

### MEDICINAL CANNABIS - STATEMENT BY POPPY GROWERS TASMANIA

Poppy Growers Tasmania (PGT) President Glynn Williams has confirmed that the topic of Medicinal Cannabis is of great interest to our poppy growers and that he has in recent days been in contact with members of the State Government including Deputy Premier Jeremy Rockliff about this matter.

"Our understanding is that there has been no formal proposal put to the Government in respect of growing medicinal cannabis in Tasmania. Whether by way of trial or commercially, the growing of Medicinal Cannabis in Tasmania is a matter of great seriousness. The plant is a narcotic plant. Its production anywhere is subject to scrutiny by the International Narcotics Control Board, just like poppies, which is well known as a crop of great significance to Tasmanian farmers," Mr Williams said.

"The INCB report to the UN handed down in 2014 devotes comment to the issues surrounding medicinal cannabis, matters that we will seek to raise with Government in the future if the need arises. In the meantime, we have made preliminary comments to the Government voicing our concern and congratulating them for their careful consideration of this matter on the grounds of public health and about them considering the potential for impact on the world renowned reputation of the Tasmanian poppy industry."

For further information please contact:-

Keith Rice - Chief Executive  
0418 133 234

Glynn Williams - President  
0419 895 332

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014

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**Department of Premier and Cabinet**

Executive Building, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000 Australia

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Web: [www.dpac.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au)



Ms Cassy O'Connor MP  
Greens Member for Denison  
Parliament House  
HOBART TAS 7000

Email: [cassy.o'connor@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:cassy.o'connor@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Ms O'Connor

I write to acknowledge receipt of your Right to Information request received on 8 July 2014, seeking:

*Any and all correspondence between Tasmanian poppy industry representatives, bodies or related parties and the Premier or his Departmental representatives, on the subject of a medical cannabis trial or the establishment of a medical cannabis industry in Tasmania, as well as any associated documentation in either hard copy, note or electronic form.*

I have performed a search of the records files for both the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Office of the Premier. I advise that no correspondence relating to your request has been located from these searches.

However, please find attached a copy of a letter received by the Deputy Premier from Poppy Growers Tasmania Inc dated 8 July 2014 which I am providing to you as an active disclosure.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on telephone 6233 6538 or email [allison.round@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:allison.round@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

Allison Round  
RTI Officer

☺ August 2014

8<sup>th</sup> July 2014

Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education & Training  
Minister for Primary Industries & Water  
Minister for Racing  
Level 10, 15 Murray Street  
Hobart 7000

Dear Minister

I refer to recent media attention given to medicinal cannabis and in particular their intense pressure on myself and Glynn Williams of Poppy Growers Tasmania (PGT) to distance PGT from the Government in respect of the Government's decision not to support trials in respect of medicinal cannabis. We understand the Government at this stage has not received any formal proposal to conduct such trials.

This issue arose early last week at which time PGT President, Glynn Williams was in contact with you to voice his concerns with such trials and the impact growing of medicinal cannabis could have on public health and the world renowned reputation of the states poppy industry.

Following an ABC television news report on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 where I appeared to equivocate in respect of PGT's support for the government's position PGT issued a media release on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014. Copy attached

PGT's unequivocally stands by that media release.

With continued pressure from ABC television to speak to the media release, I agreed to an interview on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

I must advise, at this point that I felt 'utterly gutted' when I watched the news item where I was reported saying *"PGT needed more time to assess the situation"*.

I did say those words, but they were in the context of being asked what PGT's position was in respect of medicinal cannabis, to which I replied words to the effect *"medicinal cannabis is of great interest to Poppy Growers Tasmania as it is a narcotic crop which is subject to United Nations Convention. PGT will be participating in the Legislative Council Committee of Inquiry"*.

The reporter then asked - what position would PGT be putting to the Inquiry?

I advised, *"PGT needs more time to assess that situation"*.

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I firmly believe that the full intent of PGT's position was not adequately portrayed in that news item.

It is therefore important for PGT to state its clear and unequivocal support for the government's position in respect of medicinal cannabis with the following statement:-

**MEDICINAL CANNABIS - STATEMENT BY POPPY GROWERS TASMANIA**

Poppy Growers Tasmania (PGT) has confirmed that the topic of Medicinal Cannabis is of great interest to our poppy growers and that they have in recent days been in contact with members of the State Government including Deputy Premier Jeremy Rockliff about this matter.

Our understanding is that there has been no formal proposal put to the Government in respect of growing medicinal cannabis in Tasmania. Whether by way of trial or commercially, the growing of Medicinal Cannabis in Tasmania is a matter of great seriousness. The plant is a narcotic plant. Its production anywhere is subject to scrutiny by the International Narcotics Control Board, just like poppies, which is well known as a crop of great significance to Tasmanian farmers.

Poppies are grown in Tasmania under strict security and reporting obligations under Federal and State Law which comply with the UN Treaty on Narcotic Drugs. Tasmania, quite rightly, is under the spotlight. We are proud of the fact that we can grow and produce a licit crop in Tasmania without question. Medicinal Cannabis is a very different plant to poppies, with different risks associated with it about which PGT will seek to be heard in the event that a formal application is ever made to grow it. PGT is well aware of the hard won reputation that we have achieved for the poppy crop, with a crop grown in Tasmania successfully for decades with international praise for its security. Tasmania cannot afford to compromise its reputation. We welcome the Government's very cautious approach to the matter.

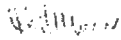
The issue of cannabis use has been highlighted at the level of the UN due to the on-going discussion on the legislation of cannabis in various states of the United States.

The INCB report to the UN handed down in 2014 devotes comment to the issues surrounding medicinal cannabis, matters that we will seek to raise with Government in the future if the need arises. In the meantime, we have made preliminary comments to the Government voicing our concern and congratulating them for their careful consideration of this matter on the grounds of public health and about them considering the potential for impact on the world renowned reputation of the Tasmanian poppy industry.

Yours sincerely



Keith Rice (Chief Executive)



Glynn Williams (President)