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HEMP SUPPORT DPP'S MOVE TO REDUCE DRUG RELATED HARM.

HEMP SA has welcomed the comments by SA's Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Paul Rofe QC - the latest high profile Australian to join the growing number of experts who see the need for a new approach to dealing with the issues surrounding illicit drugs. Mr Rofe understands that were the Government to regulate the Cannabis industry like it does alcohol and tobacco, rather than perpetuate the hypocritical and failed prohibitionist "head in the sand" approach, it could destroy the black market. In addition it could tax cannabis users and growers through licences and excise, similar to that applying to alcohol and cigarettes. In such a manner, a new taxation base could be created, organised crime undercut and quality control, occupational health and safety, age regulations and effective (believable and realistic) education could be provided.

"The War on Drugs' has failed; current laws just perpetuate and protect a billion dollar black market. Only by regulating the availability of Cannabis can the government regain some measure of supervision, quality control, taxation and education of users in harm reduction techniques " said HEMP Spokesperson Mr Jamnes Danenberg.

Illicit drugs are now the world second largest traded commodity worth over \$150 Billion /year. In Australia 83.5% of 20-24 y.o men, and 40% of the total population - some seven million people have tried Cannabis. The illicit trade in Cannabis in SA alone, is conservatively estimated to be in the order of \$500 million dollars ! (based on Police estimates)

Prohibition has clearly failed. That has been acknowledged by criminologists like Profs Paul Wilson and Duncan Chappell, Grant Wardlaw, Phil Dickie and the Australian Institute of Criminology. Judges like Michael Kirby and Russell Fox have joined the chorus of State Law Societies, smaller legal centres and civil liberties groups calling for change. Police and law enforcers like the Secretary General of Interpol, and the Tasmanian Police Commissioner John Johnson have joined with public health experts to condemn our current laws. Prof Peter Baume, ex Liberal Health Minister, Dr Alex Wodak, from the Public Health Association, Dr. Neil Blewett, and international experts Dr John Morgan and Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Uni Lester Grinspoon have all called for a reappraisal of current policy.

"Mr Rofe's has shown the way forward. It is time for the politicians to seize the moment and act in the best interests of the entire community. Australians deserve no less. We are urging all State Parliamentarians to consider Mr Rofe's recommendations and to act accordingly." said HEMP SA spokesperson Mr Jamnes Danenberg

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