



## **Health Digest 2** **September 2017**

### **Medicinal Use of Cannabis**

The late IFP Member of Parliament, Dr Mario Oriani-Ambrosini, and various court cases, have brought the question of the use or legalisation of cannabis up for debate over the past few years. At present Parliament is still dealing with the Medical Innovation Bill, a private member's Bill originally drafted by Dr Ambrosini. However, various changes to policy have already taken place.

On 28<sup>th</sup> July 2017 the Minister of Health moved cannabidiol, a non-psychoactive part of cannabis, when used for therapeutic purposes, from a schedule 7 to a schedule 6 substance. In August 2017, the Medicines Control Council (MCC) "resolved to downgrade cannabidiol from a schedule 6 to a schedule 4 substance for medicinal purposes". This means that cannabis, a Schedule 7 prohibited drug, will be reduced to a schedule 4 drug (if without psychoactive properties) for medicinal use only. However, cannabis will remain a schedule 7 prohibited drug for general usage. When the MCC has completed its regulations around the growing, production and manufacture of medicinal cannabis products, and the Medicines and Related Substances Amendment Act 14 of 2015 has been promulgated to create the legal framework for growing cannabis for medicinal use, only then will various permits be granted.

It must be noted that in Parliament there has been much debate about allowing the private use of cannabis, but this has not found much support as there are fears it would simply open a Pandora's Box at a time when drug abuse is very high and growing.

Discussion to allow for the cultivation of hemp is also going on in Parliament, with input from the Department of Agriculture. There seems to be consensus for the need to allow for the economic development hemp, which is related to cannabis but has no psychoactive properties. Hemp is highly regarded as a textile, and has numerous medical and health applications. It is also well-adapted for cultivation in South Africa's hot, dry climate.

---

### **Matsepane Morare SJ** **Researcher**

<https://pmg.org.za/bill/2/>

[http://www.mccza.com/documents/92c9a3499.85\\_Cannabis\\_medicinal\\_use\\_Feb17\\_v1.pdf](http://www.mccza.com/documents/92c9a3499.85_Cannabis_medicinal_use_Feb17_v1.pdf)

<http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/protex-pharma-announces-south-africas-reclassification-cannabis-as-schedule-4-substance-pinksheets-txtm-2234373.htm>

[http://www.mccza.com/documents/547f30142.44\\_Cannabis\\_growth\\_Feb2017\\_v1.1\\_for\\_comment.pdf](http://www.mccza.com/documents/547f30142.44_Cannabis_growth_Feb2017_v1.1_for_comment.pdf)

<https://medicalcannabis.co.za/category/buy-cannabidiol-cbd-oil-south-africa/>

[http://www.mccza.com/documents/31b1852e9.99\\_Rescheduling\\_cannabidiol\\_Jul17\\_v2.pdf](http://www.mccza.com/documents/31b1852e9.99_Rescheduling_cannabidiol_Jul17_v2.pdf)

[http://www.tnha.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/41009\\_gon748.pdf](http://www.tnha.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/41009_gon748.pdf)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18844286>