MEDICINAL CANNABIS AGENCY

MANATŪ HAUORA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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16 January 2023

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2022017633

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 28 November 2022. Please find a response to each part of your request below:

> *Please could you provide any information to show why cannabidiol (CBD) was originally classified as prescription only medicine and why it is still classified that way.*

As we informed you in an OIA response sent to you on 15 December 2022 (H2022015823), cannabidiol (CBD) is classified in New Zealand as a prescription-only medicine in Schedule One, Part One of the Medicines Regulations 1984. This follows a legislative change made in December 2018 with the passing of the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Act, where CBD was removed from the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975 as a controlled drug.

Information about the scheduling of CBD as a prescription medicine can be found at: www.medsafe.govt.nz/publications/OIA/CannabidiolAndTetrahydrocannabinol/Contents.asp.

> *Please include any requests or communications for CBD to be made more accessible, reports, risk benefits or other analysis, comparisons with accessibility in UK, USA, Australia, Canada etc, and any other information to show any steps that are being taken to make it more accessible and affordable in New Zealand. Please include any information about road blocks that are preventing CBD being more accessible and information about what would help facilitate accessibility.*

The Medicines Classification Committee (MCC) considers and makes recommendations on the classification of medicines as prescription medicines, restricted medicines, or pharmacy-only medicines. The classification of CBD was considered at the 69th meeting of the MCC in 2022. The agenda, comments, and minutes of this meeting are published on Medsafe website: www.medsafe.govt.nz/committees/mcc.asp.

The Medicinal Cannabis Scheme came into force on 1 April 2020. The purpose of the Scheme is to increase access to quality medicinal cannabis products (including CBD products) for patients. To date, the Medicinal Cannabis Agency has verified seven CBD products which are available for prescribing by medical practitioners. The Agency continues to assess and verify

products where appropriate, and it is expected that the number of verified CBD products will continue to grow over time.

> *Please include any information including any advice of the benefits to the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders and or overstressed health system if affordable CBD was readily available to assist with managing chronic medical conditions, compared to current pharmaceutical alternatives.*

The Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs (EACD) provides expert advice to the Minister of Health regarding drug classification issues. When making recommendations to the Minister on drug classification issues under the Misuse of Drugs Act, the EACD reviews information which includes factors such as risk of harm and public health. CBD was considered at the April and October meetings in 2016, and related documents can be found at the following link on the Manatū Hauora website:
www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/ministerial-health-committees/national-drug-policy-committees

> *If any relevant information contains additional information including on use of other cannabinoids or terpenes or alternative plant / herb/ food sourced solutions to enhance health and wellbeing, please include that information.*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Yours sincerely

Chris James
Licensing Authority
Medicinal Cannabis Agency