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## **New medical cannabis industry body to position Australia as world leader in production and research**

A peak industry body that aims to develop best practice and standards for producing, supplying and distributing medical cannabis products launches in Melbourne on Thursday 22 June.

The Medical Cannabis Council's membership includes health experts, researchers, and medical cannabis producers and manufacturers.

The Council will position Australia as a world leader in research and the production of safe, scientifically-backed, medical cannabis products. It will provide a unified voice for the industry to engage with government and the community.

Its launch coincides with a gathering in Melbourne of medical cannabis industry figures and health experts to mark Australia's commitment to a robust and accessible local industry.

The launch comes during Medical Cannabis Awareness Week and coincides with Lucy Haslam's United in Compassion Medical Cannabis Symposium.

Mrs Haslam's son Dan, who sadly died of cancer in 2015, was one of Australia's first prominent medical cannabis campaigners. Lucy continues Dan's fight for patient access to medical cannabis and is a founding member of the Medical Cannabis Council.

The cultivation and production of medical cannabis has been greenlighted in Australia, but the industry is still navigating regulations around cultivation licensing and patient access.

The Council will be the unifying voice for the industry to engage with governments and the community on all matters concerning medical cannabis.

Its board comprises industry leaders and medical experts who have long advocated for the regulated access to and use of medical cannabis products.

Carol Ireland, the CEO of Epilepsy Action Australia and board member of the Medical Cannabis Council says she is delighted to be involved in the council.

"Medical cannabis research continues, but the early indicators of our research is that medical cannabis treats areas of epilepsy that traditional medicine has hitherto been unable to have an effect," she said. "The effect of treatment of severe childhood epilepsy in particular with medical cannabis has given many families hope".

Founder of BuddingTech, a medical cannabis technology start-up, Adam Miller agrees and believes an industry body is essential for providing patients, doctors and the community with the right information and access to safe and proven products.

"The aim of the Medical Cannabis Council is to remove any confusion still surrounding the legal framework and accessibility of medical cannabis so the most at-need patients can understand their rights and the availability of the products," Mr Miller said.

Australian Cardiologist and Medical Cannabis Council board member Dr Ross Walker has been a fierce proponent of medical cannabis use in recent years, after being shown the overwhelming evidence supporting its efficacy.

"It's a wonder drug", Dr Walker said.

“There are recent studies showing the effectiveness of low THC and CBD products in patients with schizophrenia and also anxiety. Access to regulated products for patients, as well as commencement of clinical trials and research is essential for the industry.”

Professor Mark Cook, Head of Neurology at Melbourne’s St Vincent’s Hospital has also joined the board of the Council. Professor Cook has been supporting clinical trials in the efficacy of medical cannabis in the treatment of epilepsy.

Ben Oakley, one of 20 people in Australia to suffer from the incredibly rare disease Stiff Person Syndrome has been using medical cannabis illegally for over two years. It is the only treatment for the disease that works, and relieves body spasms which were making his quality of life negligible. Ben and his father Michael hope for the day when his use of medical cannabis is completely legal and he does not have difficulty of access. “The Council is huge leap forward for the medical cannabis cause, as it demonstrates a legitimate industry commitment to better care and best practice.”

The launch of the Council signifies the regulation and coherence of the industry, with more than 20 known applications for medical cannabis, as well as 12 companies already listed on the ASX. The global industry is predicted to be worth \$50 billion in 2025.

The launch is being held at The Left Bank on Melbourne’s Southbank at 5.30pm on June 22.

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#### **More information**

#### **Contact for further information, images and footage:**

Isabelle Walker  
Account Manager, Wells Haslem Mayhew  
M: 0402 298 931  
E: iwalker@whmspa.com.au

Alexandra Mayhew  
Co-CEO, Wells Haslem Mayhew  
P: 0419 311 377  
E: amayhew@whmspa.com.au

#### **More below**

Interview opportunities\* available with:



**Carol Ireland**

CEO of Epilepsy Action Australia, Carol currently sits on the Advisory Board of the Lambert Initiative for Cannabinoid Therapeutics at the University of Sydney, the Steering Committee for the NSW government's Paediatric Epilepsy Trials (Medicinal Cannabis Research), and the Australian Advisory Council for the Use of Medicinal Cannabis.



**Adam Miller**

Founder of BuddingTech, Adam has published two Australian industry White Papers with MGC Pharmaceuticals & The University of Sydney on medical cannabis. Additionally, Adam is the organiser of Seedlings, Australia first medical cannabis innovation conference.



**Prof Mark Cook**

A neurologist specialising in the treatment of epilepsy, Professor Cook is the Chair of Medicine at Melbourne University and Director of Neurology at St. Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne.



**Dr Ross Walker**

Dr Ross Walker is an eminent practicing cardiologist with over 35 years' experience as a clinician. For the past 20 years, he has been focusing on preventative cardiology and is one of Australia's leading preventative health experts.

\*Dr Walker will not be attending the launch but will be available for interview over the phone.