

AOTEAROA LEGALISE CANNABIS PARTY

Submission to Electoral Commission

For Broadcasting Allocation – 2008 in line with Section 76 of Broadcasting Act 1989

Introduction

As a larger minor Party, we believe our presence in the up coming elections is very important to give the people greater democratic choice.

The philosophy and vision of the Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party is current with overseas trends. The laws around cannabis use have been reformed in a number of jurisdictions including allowing medicinal and recreational use in countries such as Australia, Canada and some states of U.S.A. Many countries of Europe have also relaxed their laws in particular The Netherlands, Spain and Portugal.

It is important for the democratic process to have Parties such as ourselves properly funded to carry our 'educate don't incarcerate' policy forward.

A very important policy, which will bring relief to our overburdened court, jail and social systems. 145,000 people have been arrested for cannabis in the last 10 years since Labour came to power. Prohibition did not work with alcohol and it is not working with cannabis considering 52% of the NZ population, have tried it. The New Zealand Drug Foundation acknowledges one in 8 people in NZ are cannabis consumers and is promoting the need for open debate calling into question the appropriateness of current policy. **Reference:** The Christchurch Press 1/11/07

<http://www.nzdf.org.nz/lets-talk-about-pot-Start>

Under Section 75(2) of the Act including 73 or 74A provides as follows:

(a) The number of persons who voted at the immediately preceding 2005 general election, was a total of 5,748 party votes giving us .25% of the vote.

Out of the 19 parties standing in the last elections, the Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party came 10th. This is the year we missed out on broadcasting funds giving us a bigger handicap, but it was also the year where a most of the minor parties went down in votes due to the close vote between National and Labour.

(b) The Party has not stood in any by – elections since the last election.

(c) We have no members in Parliament

(d) No relationships exist between ourselves and any other political parties.

(e) Any other indicators of public support :

(i) A recent snap poll by the Greymouth Star, put the A.L.C.P. at 7.9%

<http://blog.greens.org.nz/index.php/2008/03/31/greymouth-swings-green/#comment-40244>

(ii) The continuing successful International J Days throughout the country, every first Saturday of May for the last 12 years. Many New Zealand cities and towns have been joining with 200 plus cities world wide to protest harsh prohibition laws. In spite of the fact that a person's life may be destroyed by a criminal conviction, if caught offending by the police, thousands of people are prepared

to light up a cannabis joint in defiance of what many New Zealanders consider to be an unjust and inhumane law.

- (iii) There is increased understanding of the medical benefits and public support for, medicinal cannabis to be made available for some types of illnesses. The Green Party have a Private Members Bill for Medicinal Cannabis in the ballot box of Parliament. Drug companies have developed Sativax, a cannabis compound for medicinal use as soon as the red tape is cleared.

We the ALCP are a necessary political component, to be in the mix to help clear the red tape.

- (f) The need to provide a fair opportunity for the ALCP to be heard has not diminished with time. There have been two Parliamentary enquiries.

(i) The 1998 Health Select Committee Inquiry into the Mental health effects of Cannabis concluded that “based on the evidence received, we recommend that the Government review the appropriateness of existing policy on cannabis use and reconsider the legal status of cannabis.”

(ii) The 2000 – 2003 Health Select Committee Inquiry into the Public Health Strategies Related to Cannabis Use and the Most Appropriate Legal Status concluded that “we recommend to the House that the Justice and Electoral Committee consider an appropriate legal status for cannabis...” HSCR Recommendation 22 “ We recommend to the Government that it pursue the possibility of supporting the prescription of clinically tested cannabis products for medicinal purposes.”

Our concern is for the continuation of due process which needs to be completed with the recommendations put into motion, demonstrating the open and fair democratic process of Parliament.

In 1996 when the Party was formed we were the only party calling for the establishment of the billion dollar crop hemp industry. Now there are some 30 licences. We regard this change in the law as a result of our carrying this policy to success which could benefit N.Z's agricultural sector creating jobs.

Statutory Declaration - Confidential - Number of financial Members contained in attached supplementary document.

3. Opening and Closing Addresses:

(a) On one hand, we know weight must be given to size of political party, however, surely we should all be starting the election on a more even playing field, considering we are all supposed to be making a fresh start in a new election?

(b) How about alphabetical order - no favouritism?

4. Comments on conditions concerning expenditure - Any gentle reminders of what is important or due dates is always appreciated.

5. Letters from TV NZ and Radio NZ - Thank you for what they are giving - Do we deserve more in this day and age?

In conclusion: There is value for the ALCP standing and appearing on public television and radio because there is an appetite for debate.

We would like to remind you that we are a serious mature Party running in our fifth General Election, as well as contesting two by-elections. Most of our candidates have been with the Party since 1996 with the longest current standing Party Leader, Michael Appleby, creating stability for the A.L.C.P. We are the only political party that has a policy that brings new money and ideas to the political table. The millions saved by ending prohibition will buy us health, education and social services. The cannabis industry brings us jobs from a fast growing product, saving our forests, creating a cleaner greener world by bring us bio fuel, material for houses, clothing, along with medicine and food from the wonder health tonic seed.(No other single source provides all essential amino acids and essential fatty acids in such easily digestible form or in such perfect ratio for human health and vitality).

We believe resolving the cannabis issue will have the effect of saving our environment as well as creating prosperity and restoring much needed social justice. This is the most important issue we should be engaging in for New Zealand.

We hope the Electoral Commission will ensure we receive sufficient funds to promote these recognised important issues affecting all New Zealanders.

Party Leader Michael Appleby will be available to present our oral submission and answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for reading our submission

Yours faithfully

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