

CANNABIS

Statement

HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West) [8.45 pm]: I was absolutely delighted this morning to read the comment from Premier Cook in today's *The West Australian* that he thinks the industrial hemp industry shows great promise in Western Australia's primary industries and manufacturing. It was unfortunately followed by the statement that he will not be legalising cannabis for recreational use, as of yet. Yet, today, there was also an article about TAFE offering a medicinal cannabis growing course in Perth that will be subsidised as well. This shows that cannabis, as a medicine, is increasingly accepted by our society and the stigma is disappearing. The use of cannabis is becoming increasingly normalised, so normalised that one in 100 people are now using it, and 80 per cent of Australians believe that the possession of recreational cannabis should not be a criminal offence. It is even so normalised now that we are seeing a cannabis-growing company sponsor a National Rugby League team.

It was a shame that today's cartoon in *The West Australian* is still perpetuating negative stereotypes about people who use cannabis. It is an outdated view and it is disappointing to see that those ignorant views still exist. People across all echelons of society use cannabis for medicinal and recreational purposes. The stoner stereotype is becoming increasingly outdated and certainly is not typical for most consumers. It is time to move on. Just because a member might not want to use it recreationally, does not mean that they should dictate the rules for other people. Just like many people are non-drinkers, a person is absolutely allowed to be a non-user of cannabis. The fact that we are seeing courses being developed, sporting teams being sponsored and cannabis companies listed on the Australian Securities Exchange, means that we are absolutely moving towards legalisation. Waiting to legalise simply means that we will miss out on economic opportunities and people will still be unfairly criminalised. Talk about being out of touch.

House adjourned at 8.47 pm
