



What will we need to do to keep a legal therapeutic cannabis market separate from the illegal market?

The implications of the USA experience for ACT policy, legislation and practice

Drug Policy Forum with Professor Beau Kilmer

The ACT (and the Australian) community is calling out for a legal regime for therapeutic/medicinal cannabis. The Legislative Assembly for the ACT is currently conducting an Inquiry on the matter. Opinion leaders across the nation believe that it is a matter of *when* we will have legal therapeutic cannabis available to some very ill people, rather than a case of *if* it will become available.

An argument against introducing a legal therapeutic cannabis regime in the ACT is that it will increase the availability of the drug for use for non-therapeutic purposes which will, in turn, increase the levels of cannabis-related harm in the ACT community. They point to some parts of the USA where therapeutic cannabis programs operate much like a legalised recreational cannabis market.

ATODA believes that policy work in this area needs to deal concurrently with legal therapeutic and illegal recreational cannabis use and markets. But why has it been so difficult for some of the states of the USA to develop policy, legislation and practice that achieve the benefits of legal therapeutic cannabis but avoid the negative aspects of expanded availability of the drug for non-therapeutic uses? What can we, in the ACT, learn from those experiences, and how can we use that knowledge in policy work here?

Professor Beau Kilmer, a leading USA-based drug policy researcher, will help us explore these and related questions. He is a Senior Policy Researcher at the RAND offices in California and Canberra; Co-Director of the RAND Drug Policy Research Center; and a Professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School, see www.rand.org/about/people/k/kilmer_beau.html. He is a co-author of the best contemporary book on cannabis policy: *Marijuana legalization: what everyone needs to know* (OUP 2012).

ATODA has invited Professor Kilmer to visit Canberra as part of its role in helping to ensure that ACT alcohol and other drug policy reflects contemporary knowledge about what works in what contexts, and what is cost-effective.

Date:	Tuesday 10 March 2015
Time:	9:30am – 11:30am (including morning tea)
Cost:	Free
Venue:	Theatrette, Canberra Museum and Gallery, 176 London Circuit, Canberra City
RSVP:	Essential, by Thursday 5 March, please to carrie@atoda.org.au or (02) 6255 4070. Limited places.
Audience:	Criminal justice, police, drug and health policy; researchers; medical profession; general public.