

**EFFECTS OF THE WESTERN
AUSTRALIAN CANNABIS
INFRINGEMENT NOTICE SCHEME
ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES,
KNOWLEDGE AND USE**

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Declaration of interest

In 2001 the National Drug Research Institute made a submission to the WA Community Drug Summit which, on the basis of the available research evidence, recommended the introduction of a civil penalties scheme for minor cannabis offenders. In 2002 Simon Lenton was appointed to the Ministerial Working Party on Drug Law Reform which drafted the CIN scheme that was put before Government and informed the development of the Cannabis Control Act 2003. At the time of writing Simon Lenton was a member of the Expert Consultative Group set up to as part of the statutory review of the Cannabis Control Act 2003.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the findings of the second (post) phase of a pre-post study into the impact of changing cannabis laws in Western Australia on community knowledge of and attitudes towards cannabis use, health, and the laws. Where appropriate, this report compares pre and post change data.

The first phase was carried out in October 2002 as a randomised telephone survey prior to the introduction of the Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme, a system of *prohibition with civil penalties* which became law in WA when the *Cannabis Control Act 2003* came into effect on 22 March 2004.

The second phase was conducted between 8 February and 14 March 2007, and largely employed the same randomised telephone survey methods as had been used in the first phase. Two differences of note were that: (1) Unlike in the pre-change phase, in 2007 due to changes in the NHMRC ethical guidelines parental permission was required to interview those aged 14 to 17 years of age; (2) In 2007 the response rates were better than those in 2002 with the overall rate being 38.1% compared to 27.6% in the pre-change phase survey. While, it cannot be ruled out that the higher response rate may have to some extent affected some of the pre-post differences observed it is unlikely that these changes had any significant impact on the pre- post comparisons.

In all essential respects, the demographic aspects of the phase two sample matched those of phase one, the phase two sample having been stratified to match the first with regards to gender, age and residency in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. With regards to political affiliation the Phase two sample matched that of voting patterns observed in Western Australia for the Legislative Assembly during the 2005 state election.

Lifetime history of cannabis use had decreased from 54% in phase one to 46% in phase two. Similarly, use of cannabis in the past 12 months had decreased from 19% in phase one to 12% in phase two. As in phase one, the lifetime (ever used) figure for the phase two sample was significantly higher than the most recent population data for WA (39.6% in 2004), but the proportion of the sample reporting cannabis use in the past 12 months was not significantly different from the state wide data (13.7% in 2004) (Draper & Serafino, 2006).

The changes in rates of cannabis use observed from the pre to the post phase samples appear consistent with both state and national trends. As such, they were unlikely due to the CIN scheme itself as the declines appear to have occurred nationally and began before the introduction of the CIN scheme.

Previous research suggested that as long as cannabis use remained illegal, neither the criminal law, nor civil penalties themselves had much impact on rates of cannabis use in the community. Consistent with this, the cannabis use data in this study suggest that, unlike the predictions of those public commentators who were critical of the scheme, cannabis use in WA appears to have continued to decline despite the introduction of the Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme. However, more data will need to be accrued,

before it can be determined whether the rate of decline in WA has been faster or slower than that in other states.

There was a significant fall in the proportion of those under 18 who had used cannabis in the past 12 months and a significant increase in those aged 41-50 who had done so. However the modal age group of recent use remained 18-25. Amongst these recent smokers the modal rate of use remained on at least weekly but not daily. There is no evidence from this data that the legislative change had led to increases in the amount or frequency of cannabis used by recent users.

Hydroponically cultivated cannabis remained the most commonly used form amongst the phase two sample, reported by 54% of recent users. As in phase one, it was apparent that those recent users aged under 26 were more likely to prefer hydroponic cannabis (64%), and mostly smoking with a 'bong' or 'bucket bong' (52%) than the older respondents.

One of the goals of the CIN scheme was to move cannabis supply away from large scale commercial suppliers to that which has been grown by the user. There was a significant increase in the proportion of the recent users who were 'self-supplying' to some extent and thus reducing their reliance on the illicit cannabis market. The proportion of recent cannabis users who said that they had grown at least some of the cannabis which they had smoked over the past year increased from 11% in the pre phase to 25% in the post phase. Although for more than 70% of this group this cannabis only comprised less than half of the cannabis they smoked. This suggests that to a modest extent the legal changes have shifted the cannabis market towards self supply.

Once details of the CIN Scheme had been explained to respondents, support remained high with an absolute majority of 66% of Phase two respondents considering it '*a good idea*' despite the fact that this had declined from 79% in Phase one. It is noteworthy that despite its negative portrayal in the press, two thirds of the phase two sample saw the scheme as a good idea. As in phase one, in phase two, while this result was affected by cannabis use history, age, parenthood, political affiliation and adherence to a religion, nevertheless, support across all of these categories remained at an absolute majority.

After the laws were explained some 56% of the post phase sample, compared to 70% of the pre phase sample, believe the strictness of the laws to be '*about right*', with those believing the laws to be '*too soft*' increasing from 19% in the pre phase to 29% in the post phase.

The pre-post comparisons suggest, consistent with other data on national and state base trends, that the WA public see cannabis use as more harmful to health in 2007, than they did in 2002 before the scheme was introduced. This is in contrast to claims by some public commentators that the introduction of the CIN scheme has conveyed the implicit message that cannabis use is not harmful. Importantly, while to date there has not been a comprehensive public education campaign at a state level about the health effects of cannabis, over the last 4 years there has been considerable reportage in the media of the adverse health effects of cannabis.

Support for the legalisation of cannabis use by adults fell from 42% in the pre phase to 28% in the post phase, consistent with other public attitude data. Despite the claims of some critics, the current survey suggests that the introduction of the CIN scheme has not lead to more positive attitudes toward legalisation of cannabis use.

With regards to public knowledge of the prohibition against cannabis the 2007 survey suggests that more work needs to be done in educating the public about this. Some 45% of the sample believed *it is LEGAL for adults to possess a small amount of cannabis for their personal use*, 15% were unsure and 41% correctly noted that this statement was incorrect.

Asked what they thought the term *Prohibition with civil penalties* meant, 52%, of the 2007 sample compared to 57% of the 2002 sample correctly answered that it meant that *cannabis would be illegal and a fine would apply, but no criminal conviction*.

The majority of respondents who had used cannabis within the last twelve months believed that the new cannabis laws had not caused any changes to the market for cannabis in WA. The predominant view amongst these respondents being that price, numbers of users, availability, numbers of people growing their own cannabis and level of users contact with criminals had all remained about the same. However, 25% of recent users believed that the amount of contact users had with criminals when obtaining cannabis had decreased.

Respondents who had either never used cannabis or not used it in the last twelve months were asked why this was so. In both cases the most common responses, provided by an absolute majority were that they *'had no desire to use'*. Other responses were substantially less common.

As in phase one the majority of phase two respondents seemed to judge themselves to be law abiding, although to an even greater extent than did the pre phase sample. Importantly the view that *police generally treat cannabis users with respect* increased from 51% in the pre phase to 58% in the post phase.

As part of its legislative review of the *Cannabis Control Act 2003* the WA government is considering amending the CIN scheme to make the education session mandatory. Regarding this proposal, 69% of the sample believed that those given a CIN should be required to pay a fine AND attend an education session. This far outstripped support for the current system of offenders being given an option (13%) or that of a fine only (7%).

Virtually all of the sample supported the possibility of the state government educating the community and young people about the harms associated with cannabis and the laws that apply to it, as recommended by the designers of the CIN scheme in 2002.

Items addressing public attitudes towards specific aspects of the CIN scheme indicate continued high levels of support for the use of education rather than criminal sanctions to reduce the use of cannabis in the community (77%) and for police having discretion to charges people exploiting potential loopholes in the CIN scheme (70%).

From the pre- to post phase there was an increase in support (from 49% to 68%) for the exclusion of hydroponic cultivation of cannabis from the CIN scheme, and for juveniles to be dealt with under the juvenile justice system rather than the CIN Scheme (up from 45% to 66%). Support for police acting against sellers of hydroponic equipment who knowingly sold equipment for cannabis growing or engaged in other criminal acts remained high (75%).

There was a clear majority (57%) of the phase two sample who believed that growing cannabis for personal use should be illegal. With regards to application of criminal or non-criminal penalties for cultivation of up to 2 non-hydroponic plants 49% (pre = 40%) of the post sample thought criminal penalties should apply, while 48% (pre = 59%) believed that non-criminal penalties should apply.

Since phase one the internet (52%) emerged as the preferred source of further information about cannabis, followed by *doctor* (12%), *the Drug & Alcohol Office* (8%) and, *the police* (8%).

Some 70% of phase two respondents said that they had heard nothing about the CIN scheme. Among the 30% who had heard something the most frequent types of responses were those displaying an awareness of the central concepts of the CIN Scheme such as ‘decriminalisation’, or ‘prohibition with civil penalties’.

While only 24% of the sample as a whole believed that cannabis users with a problem would be *more likely* to seek help since the changes in the cannabis laws it was of interest that 34% of those who had used the drug in the past 12 months believed that was the case.

Conclusions

It will take some years before the longer impact of the CIN scheme on cannabis use can be conclusively determined, yet these early figures showing that rates of use have continued to decline, despite the scheme only being accompanied by very limited public education, are further support for the existing evidence that introduction of a *prohibition with civil penalties* approach does not result in increased rates of cannabis use in the community.

Nevertheless, it is now very important that the state government undertake on the kinds of public education and development of attractive and accessible cannabis treatment options that were recommended by the designers of the scheme in 2002.

It is encouraging that although support for the scheme had fallen from phase one, it remained high at 66%. That support existed across the political spectrum was also important, particularly given that the issue had been heavily politicised in the public discourse.

The suggestion in the data that that to a modest extent the legal changes have shifted the cannabis market towards self supply and that some recent users are indeed more willing to seek counselling or other help for cannabis related problems provides some early evidence that another two of the scheme’s goals may be being met. Other research

including that with regular cannabis users being conducted as a part of the current evaluation will provide more information on these issues.

It is important that ongoing research is conducted to evaluate the impact of the scheme and any changes to it. This will be relevant to Western Australia, but also to other states and countries where evidence based changes to cannabis laws are being contemplated.

INTRODUCTION

This report represents part of a larger pre-post research project investigating the impact of the introduction in Western Australia of new cannabis legislation which came into effect on 22 March 2004 (see Lenton, 2005). The larger project addresses impacts of the cannabis law changes on regular cannabis users and school students in addition to this study of the general public. Phase one of this randomised community telephone sample of the WA public was carried out in October 2002 with a view to establishing attitudes in the community towards cannabis and its use, towards the proposed legislative changes and what the likely perceived outcomes would be in the second phase (Fetherston & Lenton, 2005, 2005a).

This phase two survey was carried out from 8 February to 14 March 2007. The method employed was the same as that used in phase one, being a randomised telephone survey utilising a CATI format. The sample involved phone interviews with 814 respondents, a sample size essentially the same as the 809 interviewed in the pre-legislative change phase. While random, the phase two sample was stratified to match phase one in terms of age, gender, and metropolitan to regional respondents. Where multiple eligible respondents were available the nearest birthday method was employed. One fundamental difference from the sampling method used in phase one was that, due to a change in NHMRC ethical requirements, potential respondents under the age of 18 were required to get parental or adult consent to participate.

METHOD

As this is the second phase of a pre-post study, the method used in the post phase in 2007 (see appendix I) was based on that used in the pre phase in 2002 (see appendix II). The sample was selected at random from the electronic white pages. Three calls were made to establish contact with each household and five to get a respondent who was a permanent resident at that address, identified as the occupant whose birthday falls closest to the date on which the phone call is made. A gender ratio of 50:50 was set. Respondents had to be between the age of 14 and 70 years of age. A 75:25 metro:country response ratio was also set. All calls were made after hours and on the weekends with a view to maximising the chances of contacting subjects at times when they are most likely to be home. If there were any refusals no replacement subjects were accepted from that household.

The questionnaire (see appendix I) was supplied to the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer Control (CBRCC) at Curtin University) where it was transformed into a Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) format. Each subject was asked questions addressing attitudes regarding the use of cannabis and other drugs; knowledge of and attitudes towards cannabis related laws, including: attitudes to changes introduced as a result of the drug summit recommendations; ratings of the likelihood of being apprehended for cannabis offences, likelihood of using cannabis under the CIN scheme; attitudes regarding role of the cannabis laws in shaping the drug market, the hydroponics industry etc; attitudes to the role of police in enforcing cannabis laws; respondents drug use and opportunities to use, and demographic data were also collected.

Telephone interviews for the post phase were conducted between 8 February and 14 March 2007. Note that the pre phase interviews were all conducted in October 2002. Whilst there may be some seasonal variations, these appear minimal as the cannabis market, being largely dominated by hydroponically cultivated cannabis appears to be less affected by seasonal changes than it once was. More importantly, as a study of the general public, rather than regular cannabis users, both data collections were far enough away from the Christmas to New-Year period to be affected by celebrations happening at that time. While ideally it would have been better to conduct the surveys at the same time of the year in the pre- and post phases, factors outside of the authors control including budgetary constraints and availability of the CBRCC to conduct the survey meant that this could not be overcome.

There was, however, another difference in the procedure employed in the post phase. Due to ethical concerns raised by the Curtin University Ethics Committee as a result of changes to the NHMRC Ethical Guidelines regarding the necessity to get parental permission to interview those respondents aged 14 to 17. As a consequence we consulted with colleagues responsible for market research including the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) conducted every 4 years by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and consulted the guidelines provided by the Australian Market and Social Research Society. In the NDSHS the consent of a responsible adult, not necessarily the parent, was sought for *persons aged under 16 years of age*, but not older. However, given the concerns raised by the HREC the procedure employed in this

study was amended to seek adult consent for *all respondents aged under 18 years of age*. It was anticipated that this would usually, but not always be, parental consent. The procedure employed is detailed in the questionnaire in Appendix I.

The study was approved by the Curtin University Human research Ethic's Committee (HR 135/2006).

RESPONSE RATE

Response rates were calculated using a denominator which was the sum of those contacts with eligible respondents that did not result in a complete interview ('refused to participate', 'soft appointment', 'hard appointment') and those who had a complete interview. In 2007 the response rate for the city sample was 36.4% and for the country was 44.1% and for the sample as a whole was 38.1%. This compares to the 2002 figures which were 26.7% for the metropolitan sample and 30.6% for the country sample with an overall rate of 27.6%. So called 'soft' and 'hard' appointments were not included in calculating a response rate for the following reasons. 'Soft' appointments are tentative appointments only, and as such the outcomes of these contacts are not known (i.e., the individual may or may not participate when called back). 'Hard' appointments are definite interview appointments set for a date after the required sample size was achieved, hence they should not be included with those who refused to participate in the survey. Reasons for non-response are given in Table 1. Note that there were substantially more business numbers called in 2002 than in 2007, but this may be a function of the version of the electronic white pages that was used in 2002.

Table 1: Response statistics

	2002		2007	
	Metro	Country	Metro	Country
Completed	599	210	609	205
Refused	1622	459	920	433
Not Eligible				
Business	438	56	42	20
Language	75	5	102	5
Away	33	14	14	4
No-one in household aged 14-70 years	0	0	168	41
Hearing Problems	0	0	3	2
Fax	0	0	61	40
No contact				
Soft appointment	22	17	12	5
Hard appointment	1	0	3	1

RESULTS

Demographics

Consistent with the stratified sampling procedure employed, the sample in the post-phase was not significantly different from the pre phase with regards to age, gender or residency in the metropolitan or country areas. Within the post phase sample there were 401 male respondents and 413 female respondents ($\chi^2=0.177$, $df=2$, $p=.674$). This was not significantly different from the 401 males and 408 females surveyed in the phase one study ($\chi^2=0.37$, $df=1$, $p=.847$).

As in the phase one survey, the proportion of metropolitan to rural residents was intended to reflect the findings of the 2001 population census (ABS, 2002) with 609 (74.8%) respondents dwelling in the Perth metropolitan area and 205 (25.2%) residing in other regions of the State.

There were no significant differences in age distribution from the sample surveyed in the phase one study ($\chi^2=2.161$, $df=7$, $p=.950$). The distribution across age categories for both phases of the study is shown in Figure 1 below.

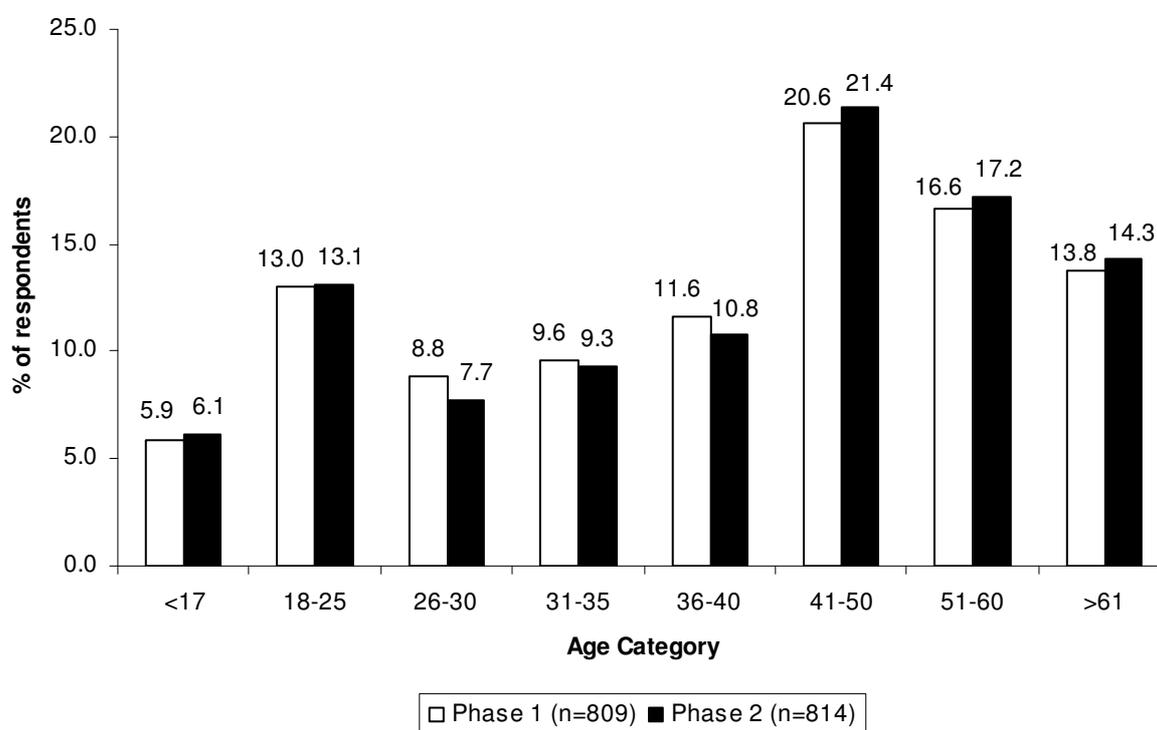


Figure 1: Age categories surveyed in phase one and phase two community attitude studies

Asked if they practiced any religion, 42.5% (n=346) of all respondents indicated that they did representing a substantial decrease on the 57.5% (n=468) found in phase one ($\chi^2=106.516$, $df=1$, $p=.000$). As in phase one, the most commonly reported religion was Roman Catholic (17.8%, n=145) followed by Anglican (8.5%, n=69) A further 11.9% (n=97) adhered to other various Christian Denominations and a further 5.9% (n=48) belonged to various non-Christian faiths primarily Judaism and Buddhism.

Although fewer respondents were practicing a religion, those that were tended to take their beliefs significantly more seriously than respondents in phase one. Of the 341 religious respondents, 38.7% (n=132) stated that their beliefs were '*very important*' compared with 24.3% (n=134) in phase one and 46.9% (n=160) stated that their beliefs were '*somewhat important*' compared with 35.9% (n=198). That their beliefs were '*not very important*' was expressed by 11.4% (n=39) compared with 28.6% (n=158) and that their beliefs were '*not at all important*' by 2.6% (n=9) compared with 10.0% (n=55) in phase one ($\chi^2=64.996$, $df=3$, $p=.000$). There was also one respondent who refused to answer the question.

With regards to political affiliation, 26% (n=201) reported voting for the Australian Labor Party in the Legislative Assembly at the last election, and 24% (184) reported having voted for the Liberal Party. There were also 6% (n=42) who had voted for the Greens, 3% (n=23) who had voted for independent candidates, 3% (n=22) who had voted for the National Party, 1% (n=11) who had voted for the Christian Democratic Party and one individual who reported having voted for the Family First Party. There were also 330 respondents who stated that they didn't know, refused to answer, couldn't remember or didn't vote. After removing these individuals who provided no data on this question and those voting for parties polling less than one percent of the total from the analysis it was determined that 53% (n=243) of respondents had voted for parties affiliated with the political left and 47% (n=218) with parties affiliated with the political right. These results were not found to differ significantly from results of the last WA State Election in 2005 (WA Electoral Commission, 2005).

In the post phase some 96% (n=778) of the phase two sample reported that English was the main language spoken at home compared to 98% in the pre phase ($\chi^2=10.110$, $df=2$, $p=.006$). In phase two the most common other languages mentioned were Italian (n=8) and Vietnamese (n=3) with a number of other languages being mentioned by two or less respondents. Some 71% (n=574) of post phase respondents said that they had been born in Australia. Of the remainder, the most common place of origin was the United Kingdom (n=100), Followed by New Zealand (n=23), Italy (n=19) and South Africa (n=11) with a wide range of other countries being mentioned substantially less frequently. Being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait origin was claimed by 2% (n=17) of the sample.

More than half the phase two sample (59%, n=483) reported being either married or in a defacto relationship at the time of the survey. This was followed by 28% (n=230) who had never been married, 10% (n=77) who were divorced or separated, and 3% (n=22) who described themselves as widowed There was no significant difference between the pre and post phase samples with regards to marital status ($\chi^2 = 2.667$, $df= 4$, $p=.615$). Having children was reported by 60% (n=488) of the 2007 sample which was not significantly different to the 65% of the phase one sample ($\chi^2 = 4.2656$, $df= 2$, $p=.118$).

There were 143 respondents with children six years and under, 97 with children between the ages of seven and nine, 92 with children between 10 and 12, 74 with children between 13 and 15, 71 with children between 16 and 18, 61 with children 19-21 and 212 with children 22 years of age or more.

The most common highest level of education achieved was 'five to six years of secondary school' reported by 25% (n=203) of the sample. This was followed by 'three to four years of secondary school' (n=142), 'tertiary qualifications other than university' (n=142) and a 'university undergraduate degree' (n=140) each reported by 17% of the sample. There were also 11% (n=89) respondents with 'post-graduate qualifications', 8% (n=67) with 'trade qualifications', 3% (n=24) with 'one to two years of secondary school' and less than 1% (n=6) who had 'only attended primary school'. Highest level of education achieved was not significantly different in the pre versus post samples ($\chi^2=9.474$, df= 8, p=.304).

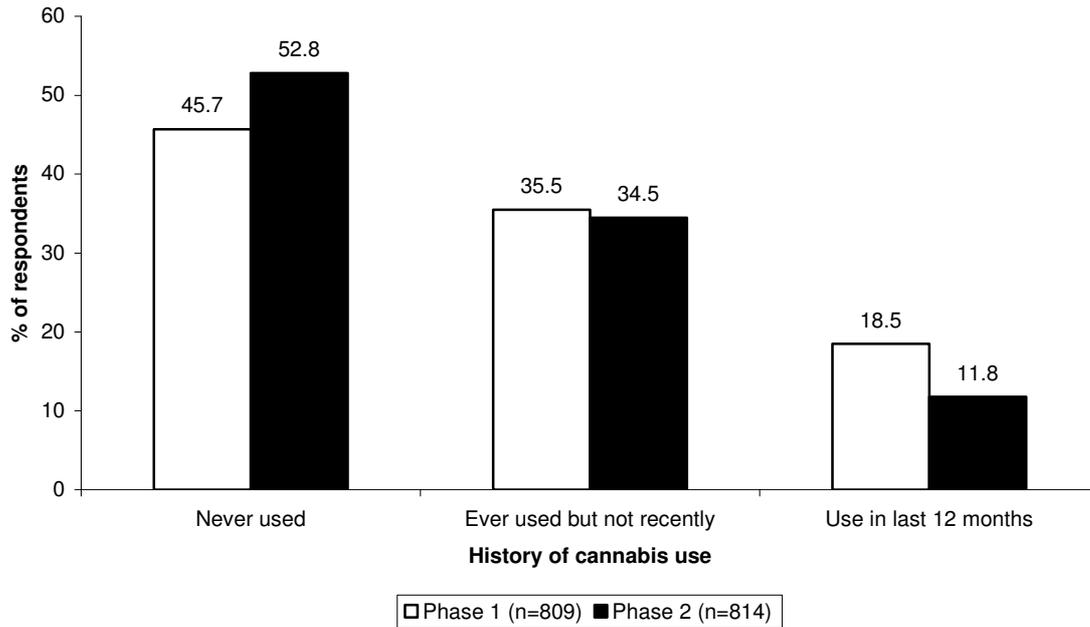
Asked about their employment situation, in phase two 47% (n=385) of respondents reported being engaged in full time work, and 14% (n=116) in part-time work. There were also 14% (n=114) involved in home duties, 11% (n=91) receiving a pension, 11% (n=90) who described themselves as students, 6% (n=47) engaged in casual work and 3% (n=26) who reported being unemployed. An additional 53 respondents described their situation in a variety of miscellaneous descriptions, the most common of which was 33 respondents who indicated they were in various forms of retirement. In phase one, the responses to this question were recorded differently than in phase two, with only one response allowed compared to three responses in the latter sample. In the pre-change sample 44% identified themselves as in full time employment, 14% in part time employment, 15% on a pension or benefits, 6% in casual employment, 6% were unemployed, 8% were involved in home duties, and 7% were students.

History of cannabis use

Slightly over half the sample (53%, n=430) reported that they had never used cannabis. A lifetime history of having ever used cannabis was reported by 46% (n=377) which was a significant decrease on the 54% who reported a history of use in the phase one survey ($\chi^2=17.236$, df=1, p=.000). As in the pre phase, the proportion who ever used cannabis was significantly higher in the post survey than that reported 39.6% of West Australians who reported that they had ever used cannabis in the most recent national Drug Strategy Household Survey ($\chi^2=20.197$, df=1, p=.000) (Draper & Serafino, 2006). It is notable however that most of the pre-post decline involved recent use of the drug. The recent use of cannabis within the 12 months preceding the survey was reported by 12% of the sample (n=96) which was a significant fall from the 19% (n=150) reporting such recent use in the phase one survey ($\chi^2=24.281$, df=1, p=.000). Note that this was not significantly different to the 13.7% reported for WA from the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey ($\chi^2=3.291$, df=1, p=.070) (Draper & Serafino, 2006). The proportion of respondents who reported having used cannabis, albeit not in the last 12 months, remained substantially unchanged at 34% (n=281) compared with 35% in phase one. For ease of interpretation, a complete breakdown of this data is provided in Table 2 and Figure 2 below.

Table 2: History of cannabis use amongst phase one and phase two respondents

Use status	Phase one 2002 (n=809)		Phase two 2007 (n=814)		sig
	n	%	n	%	
Refused to answer	2	0.2	7	0.9	
Never used	370	45.7	430	52.8	$\chi^2=17.236$, df=1, p=.000
Ever used	437	54.0	377	46.3	
Ever used but not in last 12 mths	287	35.5	281	34.5	$\chi^2=24.281$, df=1, p=.000
Recent use within last 12 mths	150	18.5	96	11.8	



NB in phase two there were 7 respondents (0.9%) and phase one there were 2 respondents (0.2%) who refused to answer.

Figure 2: Cannabis use history amongst phase one and phase two respondents

While the most common age group for recent smokers remained 18-25 years, it was observed that significant shifts had occurred in the ages of respondents reporting having smoked cannabis in the last 12 months with respondents 17 years or under falling from 13.3% (n=20) in phase one to 2.1% (n=2) in phase two. It must be considered that this fall may be partly attributable to ethical requirements of the phase two study requiring parental or adult consent for subjects in this age category to participate, however, the extremely small numbers represented in this age category render testing for statistical significance unfeasible. Despite this, 95% (n=53) of persons under the age of 18 contacted, allowed the interviewer to obtain consent from an adult and in 94% (n=50) of these cases, the adult gave permission, thus resulting in a participation rate of 89% of under 18 year olds contacted. Conversely, phase one found 14.0% (n=21) of recent smokers in the 41-50 age range while in phase two this had risen to 22.9% (n=22) ($\chi^2=16.146$, $df=5$, $p=.006$) respondents over 50 years of age were excluded from this significance analysis due to small numbers). Proportions of respondents represented in other age groups remained relatively unchanged and can be found in Figure 3 below.

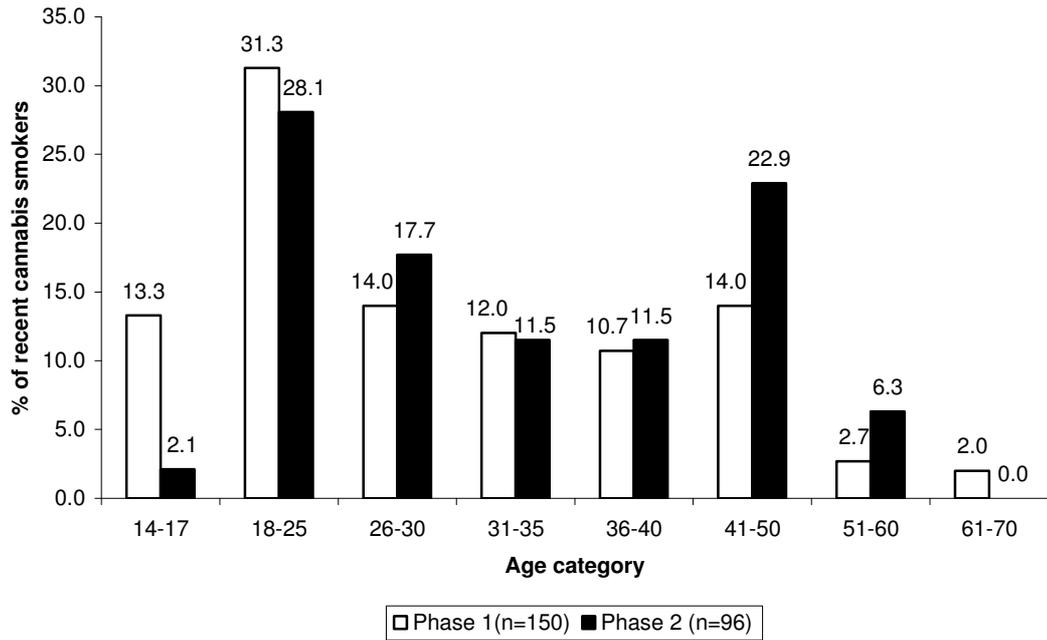


Figure 3: Ages of recent cannabis smokers in phase one and phase two

Cannabis use amongst recent users

Those who had used the drug in the last 12 months, termed ‘recent users’ were asked further questions about their use and the impact of the changes in the laws on this.

The most common rate of cannabis consumption amongst respondents who had used the drug within the last twelve months in both phase one and phase two remained use on an at least weekly but not daily basis. In phase two however, the number of respondents falling into this category rose from 17% (n=26) to 28% (n=27) reflecting a statistically significant increase in this category ($\chi^2=4.033$, $df=1$, $p=.045$). By collapsing these results into a dichotomous variable of respondents who had smoked on at least a weekly basis and those who had done so less frequently revealed that 32% (n=48) of the 150 recent smokers had smoked cannabis on at least a weekly basis in phase one and 43% (n=41) of the 96 recent smokers in phase two had smoked on at least a weekly basis, was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=2.907$, $df=1$, $p=.088$). A complete breakdown of rates of use categories between phase one and phase two can be found in Figure 4 below.

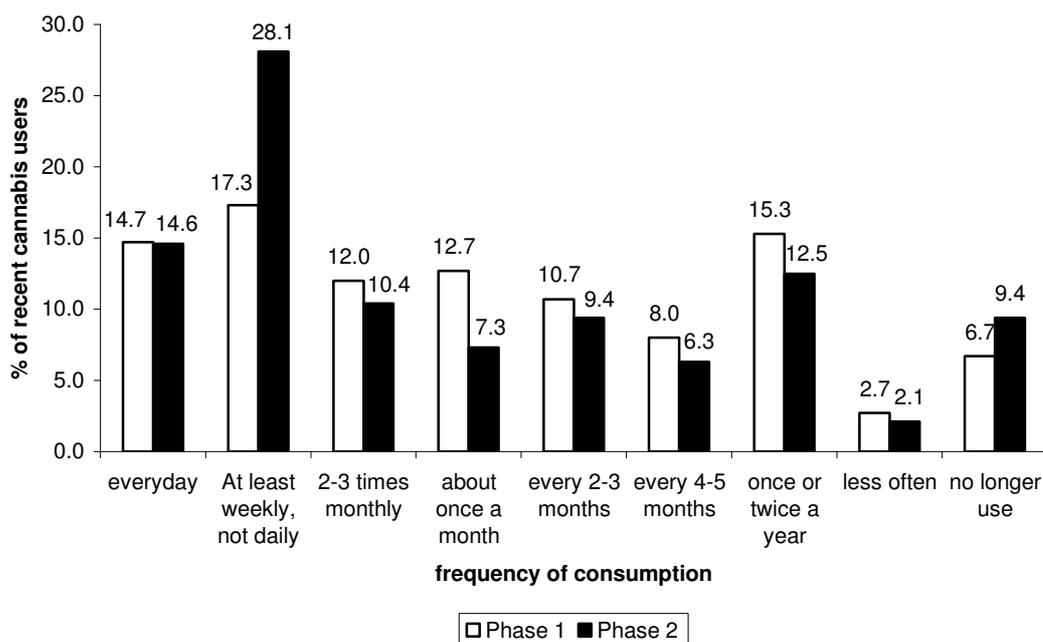


Figure 4: Rates of cannabis consumption amongst respondents who had consumed the drug within the last twelve months in Phase one (n=150) and Phase two (n=96)

The number of recent users reporting that the cannabis they usually smoked was grown hydroponically was 54% (n=47) which was not significantly different compared to 42% (n=59) in phase one ($\chi^2=4.522$, $df=2$, $p=.104$). There were also 32% (n=28) who said their cannabis was not typically hydroponically cultivated and 14% (n=12) who didn't know.

Asked if they would prefer to use cannabis that had been cultivated hydroponically, in the post phase the most common response given by 32% (n=28) recent users was that they *'didn't care'*. This was followed by 21% (n=18) who said *'always'*, 16% (n=14) who said *'not usually/never'* and 15% (n=13) who said *'mostly'*. There were also 16% (n=14) who didn't know. This represents a significant difference from findings of the pre phase where the most common response was *'not usually / never'* (33%, n=46), *'don't care'* (22%, n=31), *'mostly'* (23%, n=32) and *'always'* (18%, n=25) with another 4% (n=6) who didn't know ($\chi^2=18.199$, df=4, p=.001). Looking at the post change data collapsing this into a dichotomous variable of respondents who generally preferred hydroponic cannabis to those who did not and excluding *'don't know'* responses, it was apparent that age of the respondents played a significant role with 64% of those under 26 preferring hydroponic compared with just 33% of older respondents ($\chi^2=5.777$, df=1, p=0.16). However, the proportion of those under 26 with a preference for hydroponic cannabis among was no different in the post from the pre phase ($\chi^2=0.000$, df=1, p=1.000).

As in phase one, the most commonly used type of cannabis overwhelmingly remained heads (81%, n=70) followed by leaf (14%, n=12). Other forms remained extremely uncommon. The proportion preferring leaf versus heads was not significantly different in the post versus the pre phase ($\chi^2=0.683$, df=1, p=0.409).

Smoking in joints remained the most common means of consumption by a substantial margin, reported by 48% (n=42) of recent cannabis smokers in the post phase, compared to 42% (n=58) in the pre phase. This was followed by bongs (post 25%, n=22, pre 34%, n=46), pipes (post 16%, n=14, pre 14%, n=19) and bucket bongs (post 8%, n=7 pre 9%, n=12). These pre-post differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2= 3.448$, df=5, p=.631). In the pre phase there was a significant difference between recent smokers of 25 years or under, and those over 25 years of age, by smoking method. For example bongs were the most common method of use for 47% (n=28) of those 25 and under compared to 23% (n=18) of the older respondents. However, in the post phase, possibly because of the small number of regular users under the age of 26 in the post (n=27) compared to the pre (n = 60) sample, the comparison only reached significance when smoking method was dichotomised. Thus regular users under age 26 were more likely to report their most common smoking method as *'bong'* or *'bucket bong'* (52%, n=14) compared to older recent smokers (27%, n=15) ($\chi^2= 3.959$, df=1, p=.047).

Pre-post differences in proportions of recent users growing cannabis

The number of recent users reporting growing a proportion of their own cannabis had risen significantly from 11% (n=16) in phase one to 25% (n=22) in phase two ($\chi^2=7.357$, df=1, p=.007). This increase in the proportion of respondents growing their own cannabis remained significant ($\chi^2=5.449$, df=1, p=.020) even after excluding recent users under the age of 18 to allow for the possibility that this change may arise from the lower proportion of these respondents in phase two (2.1%, n=2) compared to phase one (13.3%, n=20). This was largely because none of the recent smokers who were under age 18 in either the pre or post phase said that they grew any of the cannabis they smoked themselves. This confirmed that the significant difference in recent smokers

growing was not due to the sample differences in numbers under the age of 18 who recently used the drug. The proportions of cannabis smoked which was self grown by recent users is shown in Figure 5 below.

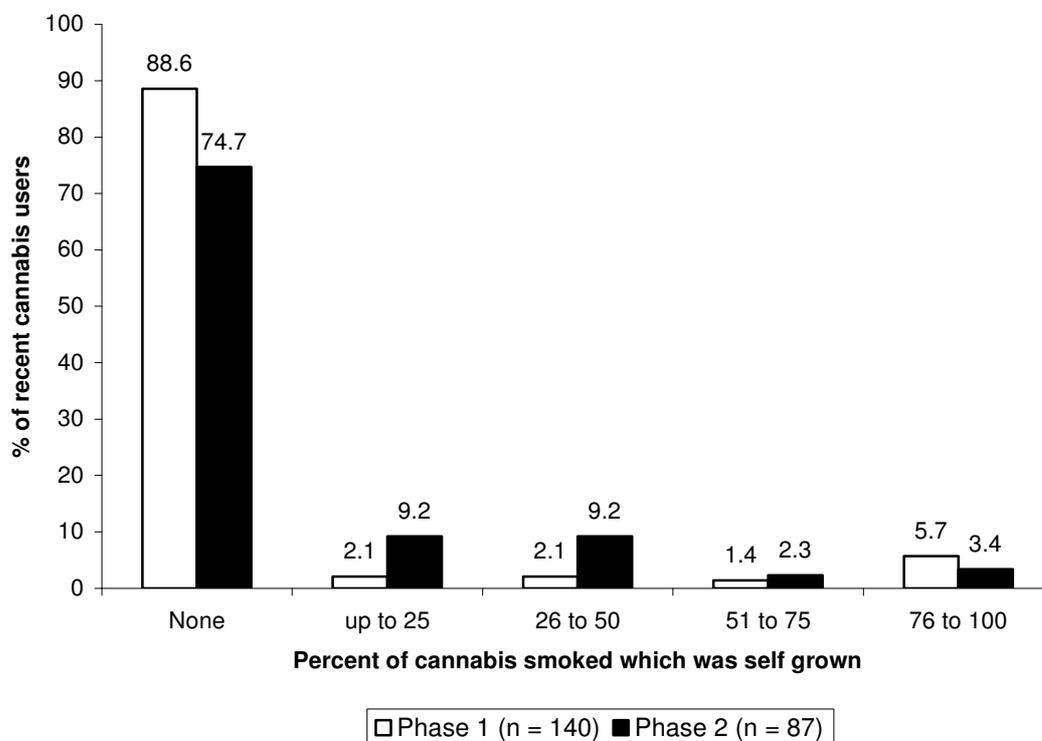


Figure 5: Percentage of cannabis smoked which was self grown by recent cannabis users in Phase one and Phase two

The proportions of recent users in each age group who grew their own cannabis are shown in Figure 5. This shows increases from the pre to the post phase in the proportions of regular users in the 18 to 40 year old age groups who grew at least some of the cannabis they smoked, while Figure 6 shows that, for most, the contribution that they grew was a minority of that which they smoked.

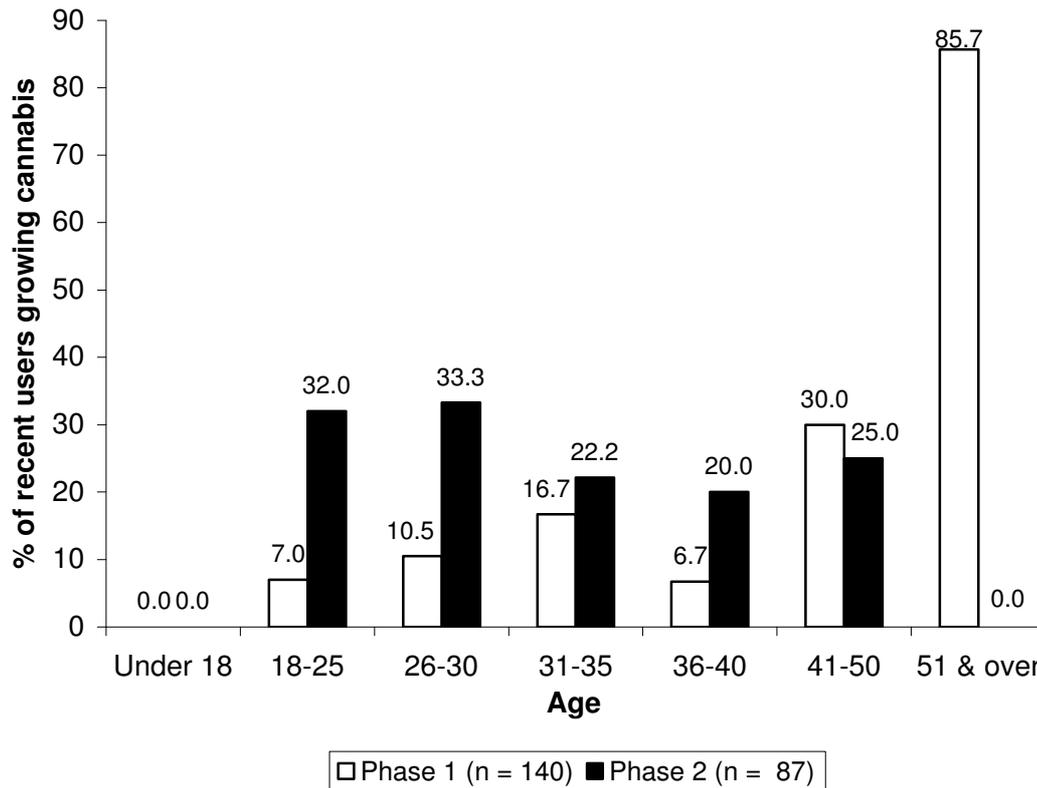


Figure 6: Pre-post differences in amount and frequency of use by recent users

When recent users were asked how the amount and frequency with which they consumed cannabis had changed over the period since the legislative changes had been introduced, the vast majority of recent cannabis users indicated that no real change had occurred. Furthermore for the minority who said changes had occurred, very little of these were attributed to the legislative change. Asked if how often they used cannabis had been affected, 82% (n=79) indicated that this had '*remained the same*', 16% (n=15) that it had '*decreased*' and 1% (n=1) that it had '*increased*'. The individual who said that their use had *increased* said that this was '*not at all*' due to the legislative change, while 4 of the 15 who said that their use had *decreased* said that this was '*somewhat*' (n=2) or '*a great deal*' (n=2) due to the legislative change. There was one respondent who didn't know. As to the amount of cannabis consumed, 74% (n=71) indicated that this had '*remained the same*', 20% (n=19) said it had '*decreased*' and 3% (n=3) that it had '*increased*'. There were another three respondents who didn't know. One of the 3 people who said that the amount of cannabis used had *increased* said that it was '*somewhat*' due to the legislative change and the other 2 said it was '*not at all*' due to the legislative changes.

Overall, when recent users in the phase two sample were asked to what extent the legislative changes have effected their use an overwhelming majority (92%, n=88) replied '*not at all*'. That their use was affected '*somewhat*' was reported by 6% (n=6) and affected '*a great deal*' by 2% (n=2).

In response to the question of if they had been issued with a cannabis Infringement notice in WA, 17% (n=16) of recent cannabis users reported that they had.

Overall levels of support for the new laws

Despite a significant decline in support since phase one ($\chi^2=46.176$, $df=2$, $p=.000$) once the current cannabis legislation modelled on prohibition with civil penalties was explained to them (see questionnaire in Appendix I), it was still considered 'a good idea' by an absolute majority (66%, $n=535$) or all respondents compared with 79% ($n=639$) in 2002. There were also 26% ($n=210$) who considered them 'a bad idea' (19% in phase one) and 9% ($n=69$) who were 'unsure' (3% in phase one). After weighting for life history of cannabis use and recent cannabis use, no significant change was observed in these results, suggesting that these changes in levels of support were not due to declines in lifetime or recent cannabis use in the post phase sample. These levels of support in phase one and phase two are displayed in Figure 7 below.

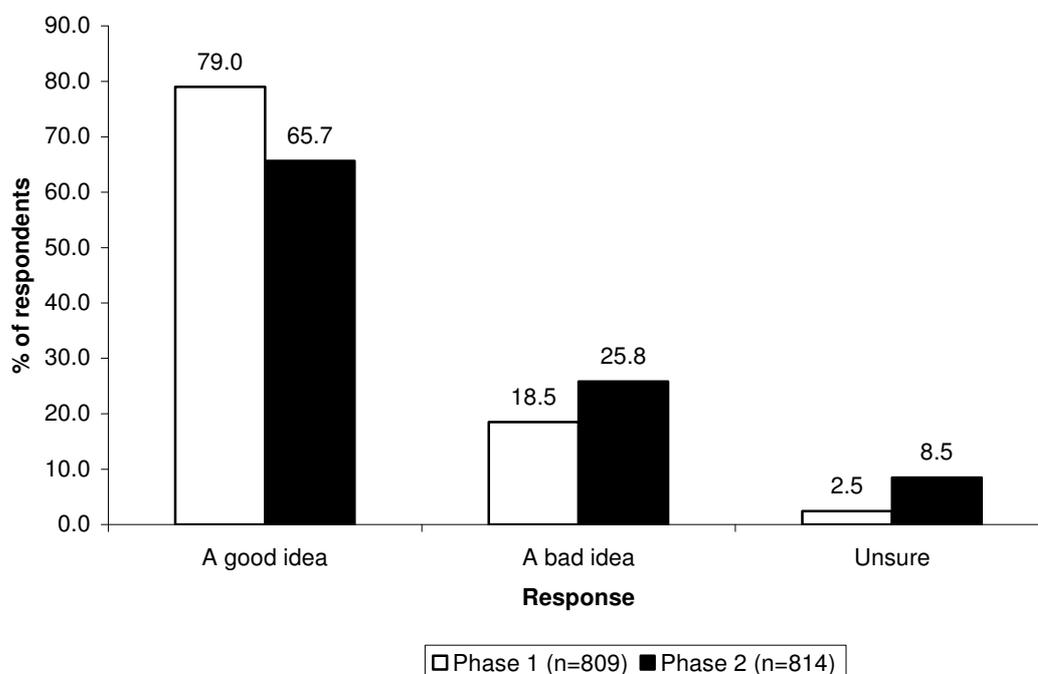


Figure 7: Overall levels of support for the model once explained

As in the pre phase it was evident in the post phase that experience with using cannabis was highly significant in shaping respondents' opinions on the new laws. In phase two the laws were considered 'a good idea' by 60% ($n=257$) of respondents who had never used cannabis, a figure that rose to 73% ($n=274$) amongst those who had done so at some point in their lives ($\chi^2=20.165$, $df=2$, $p=.000$). Of those who had smoked cannabis but not recently, 71% ($n=198$) considered the laws to be 'a good idea' compared with 79% ($n=76$) of those who had smoked cannabis within the last 12 months however, this difference was not significant ($\chi^2=2.767$, $df=2$, $p=.251$). Again, as in phase one it was notable that all three categories of cannabis use history (never used, ever used but not

recently, and used within the last 12 months) had an absolute majority believing the new laws to be a 'good idea'. This phase two data is presented in Figure 8 below.

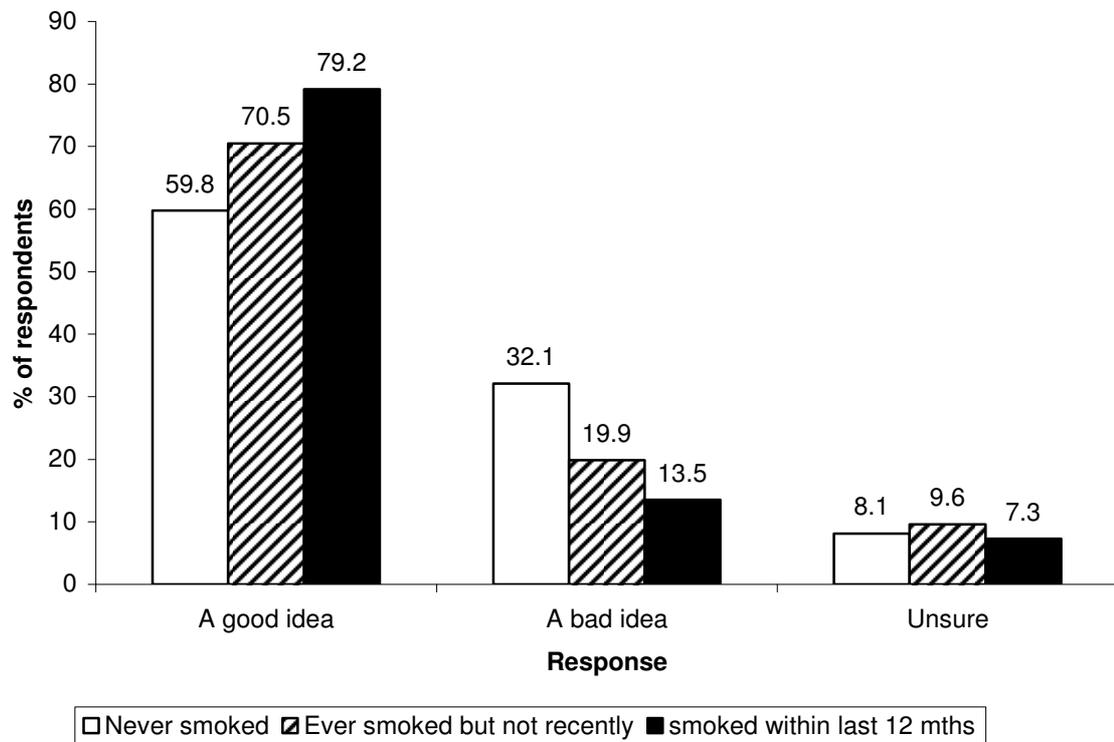


Figure 8: Phase two respondents' opinions on the new cannabis laws by history of cannabis use

There were several other variables found to significantly affect these findings. Age of respondents proved to be important with the highest levels of support in phase two being in the 26-30 year old category with 83% (n=49) believing the new laws were 'a good idea', a figure which declined with age to 59% (n=61) amongst respondents over 60 ($\chi^2=16.907$, $df=7$, $p=.018$). As in phase one, having children was also important with 80% (n=237) support amongst respondent with no children, falling to 67% (n=297) amongst respondents who were parents ($\chi^2=16.015$, $df=1$, $p=.000$). Age of children also appeared to influence opinions with support tending to decline as children became older, however this is likely an effect of respondents with older children tending to be older themselves. This data is displayed in Figure 9 below.

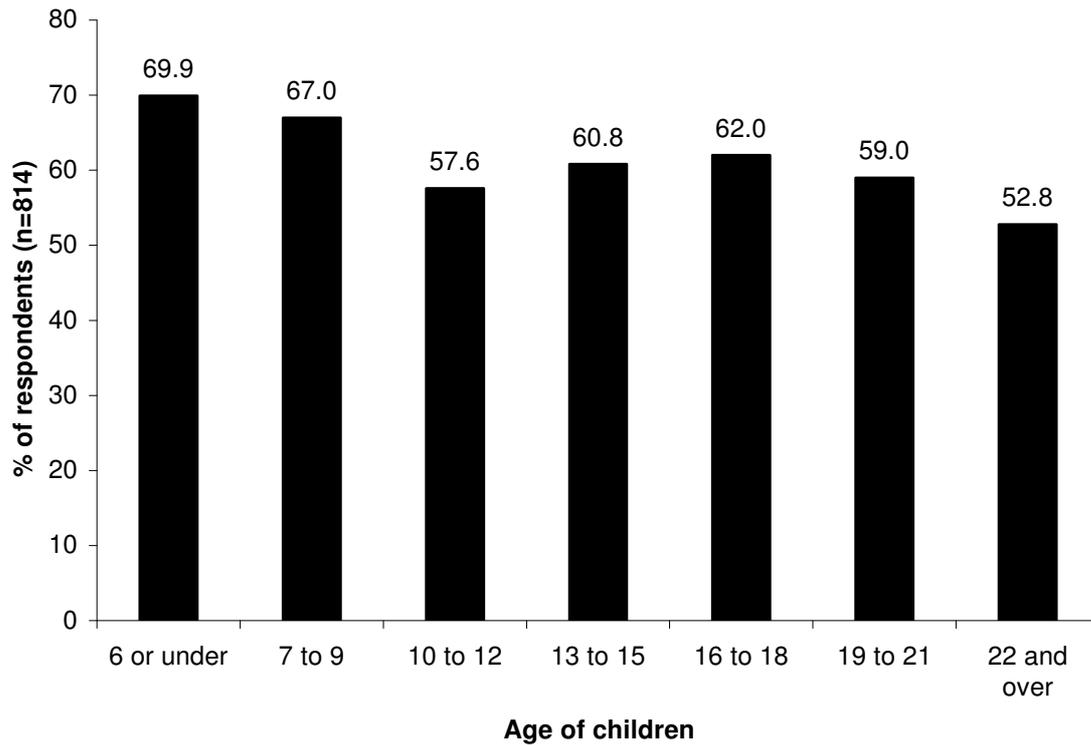
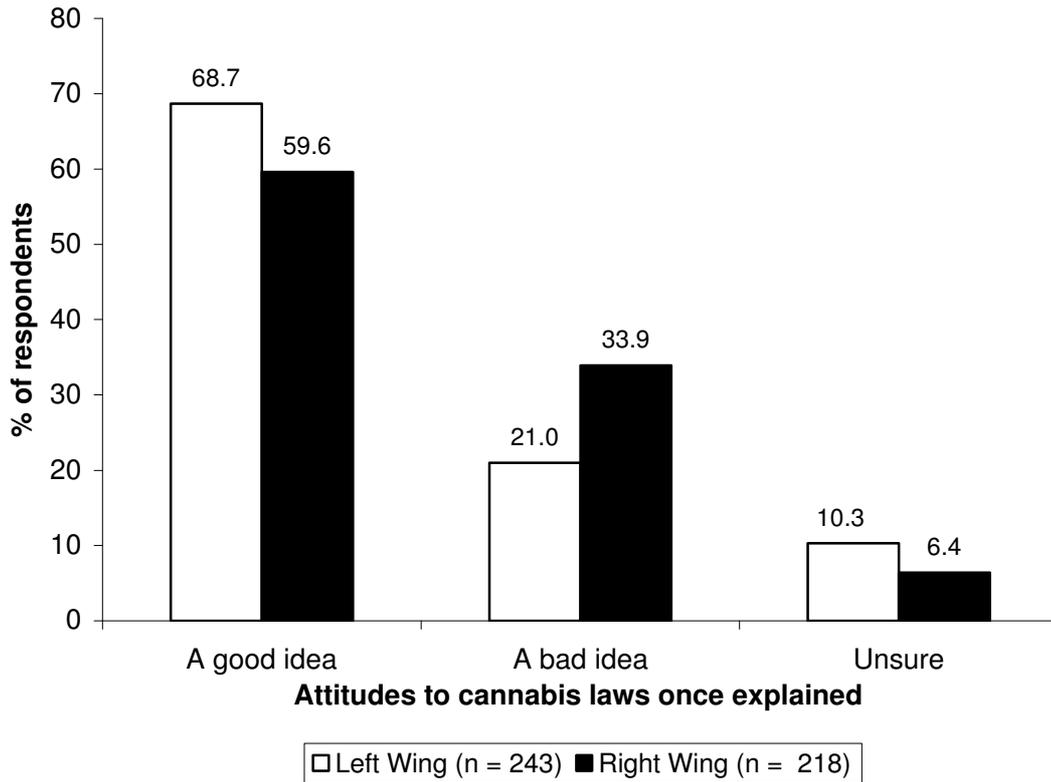


Figure 9: Post change respondents viewing the CIN model as 'a good idea' by age of children

Political alignment was also found to be significant with 69% (n=167) of respondents who had voted for left wing political candidates in the Legislative Assembly at the last WA state election seeing the new laws as '*a good idea*' compared with 59% (n=130) of respondents who had voted for right wing parties ($\chi^2=10.619$, $df=2$, $p=.005$). This data is presented in Figure 10 below.



N.B excludes 'independents', 'can't remember', 'didn't vote' and 'refused to say'

Figure 10: Attitudes to cannabis laws once explained by voting patterns at last State election

Respondents who did not adhere to any religion were more likely (77% (n=330)) to view the new laws as '*a good idea*' as opposed to those who did have religious beliefs (65%, n=205) ($\chi^2=13.052$, df=1, p=.000).

It is interesting to note that in all these categories, an absolute majority of respondents still considered the new laws to be '*a good idea*'. Factors not shown to have any effect on respondents' views on this issue included importance of religious beliefs, and dwelling in metropolitan or rural areas

Before having the current legislation concerning cannabis explained to them, the prevailing opinion was that these laws regarding possession and growing of cannabis were '*too lenient*' (37%, n=300), followed by 28% (n=231) who thought they were '*about right*', 12% (n=99) who thought they were '*too harsh*' and 23% (n=183) who didn't know.

Before having the current legislation explained to them, respondents were asked how they felt about the severity of the current law as it applied to dealing or selling of cannabis. The view that it was '*too lenient*' was held by 40% (n=322), that it was '*about right*' by 27% (n=223) and that it was '*too harsh*' by nine percent (n=72). There were also 24% (n=197) who either didn't know or declined to answer.

Once the details of the new legislation had been explained, respondents were again asked their opinions of the laws' severity. An absolute majority of 56% (n=458) then believed they were 'about right'. The views that the laws were 'too soft' was held by 29% (n=238) and that they were too harsh was held by 14% (n=110). This does however indicate some movement away from the former numbers of respondents who felt the strictness of the current laws to be appropriate with 70% (n=566) in phase one describing the laws as '*about right*' ($\chi^2=72.150$, $df=2$, $p=.000$). There were also eight respondents who declined to answer. After weighting to control for cannabis use, this finding was unchanged. A comparison of phase one and phase two data on the appropriateness of the law's strictness can be found in Figure 11 below.

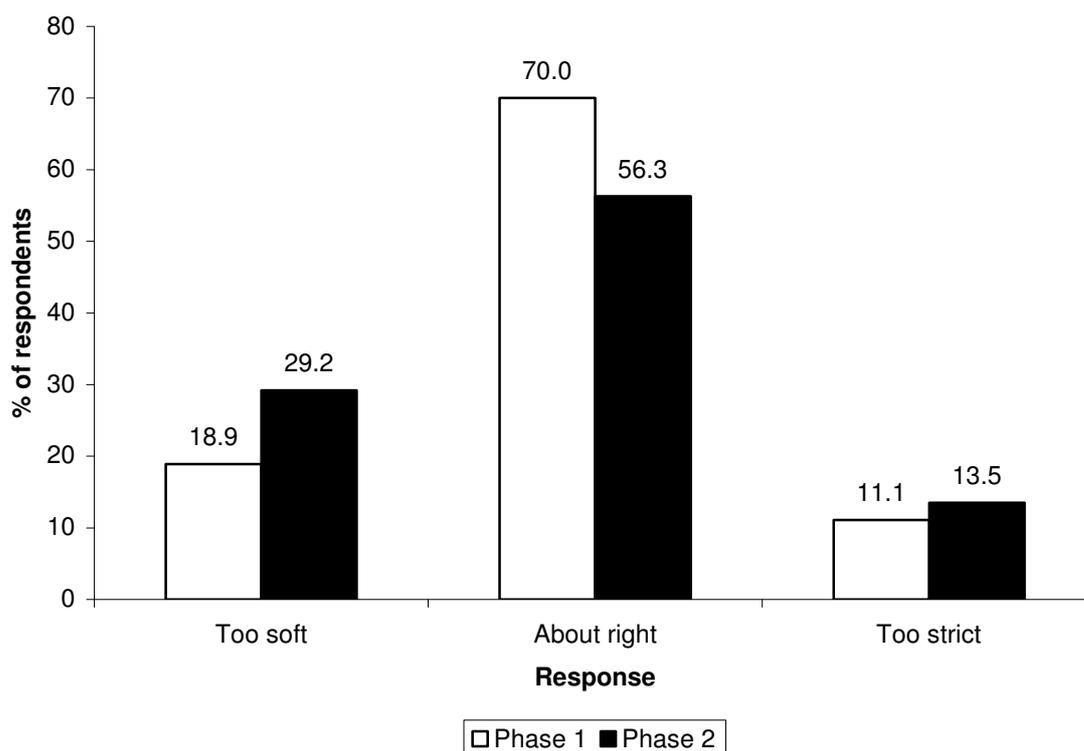


Figure 11: Overall ratings of severity of the model once explained – Percent of respondents Pre and Post phase samples

As in the pre phase sample, post phase perceptions of the severity of the new laws were also significantly affected by respondent's history of cannabis use. Amongst respondents who had never smoked cannabis 40% (n=170) thought the new laws were '*too soft*' compared with just 18% (n=67) of respondents who had ever smoked it. Conversely, only 6% (n=26) of those who had never used cannabis thought the new laws '*too harsh*' compared with 22% (n=81) of respondents who had ever tried cannabis. Interestingly, both groups had an absolute majority who thought the new laws to be '*about right*' with 54% (n=230) of respondents who had never smoked and 60% (n=225) of those who had smoked cannabis at some point adhering to this view ($\chi^2=69.882$, $df=2$, $p=.000$). Similar differences were apparent between respondents who had ever but not recently smoked cannabis with 7% (n=7) of the latter group saying the new laws were '*too soft*' compared with 22% (n=60) of respondents who had not

smoked cannabis within the last year. While 40% (n=38) of recent smokers believed the new laws were *'too harsh'*, only 16% (n=43) of the respondents who had not smoked within the last twelve months thought this. Regardless of how recently they had smoked cannabis however, both groups had an absolute majority (53% (n=50) of recent smokers and 63% (n=175) of people who had smoked cannabis but not recently) who believed that the new laws were *'about right'* ($\chi^2=28.837$, $df=2$, $p=.000$). This data is presented in Figure 12 below.

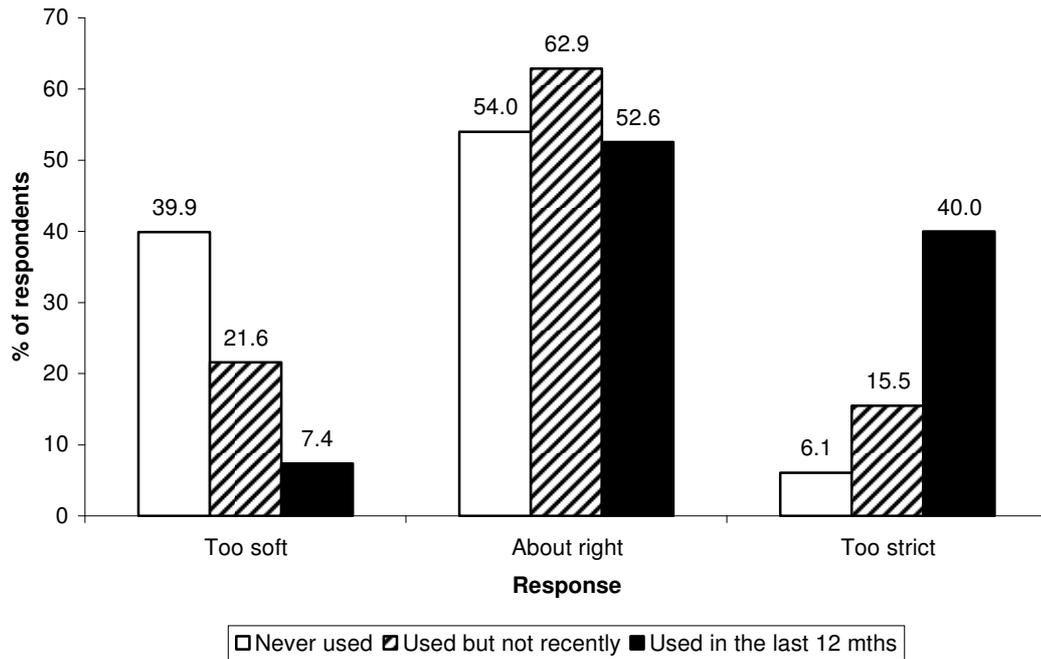


Figure 12: Perceived severity of the new laws by history of cannabis use

Other factors affecting respondents' views on the harshness of the new laws included having children, with those respondents who were parents being more likely to view the new laws as being *'too soft'* (34%, n=163) than respondents without children (23%, n=73) ($\chi^2=10.763$, $df=2$, $p=.005$). As with overall levels of support for the CIN model, age of children appeared to be a factor in influencing these views with percent of respondents viewing severity as *'about right'* tending to decline amongst respondents with older children. Again however this is likely an effect of respondents having older children tending to be older themselves. This data is shown in Figure 13 below.

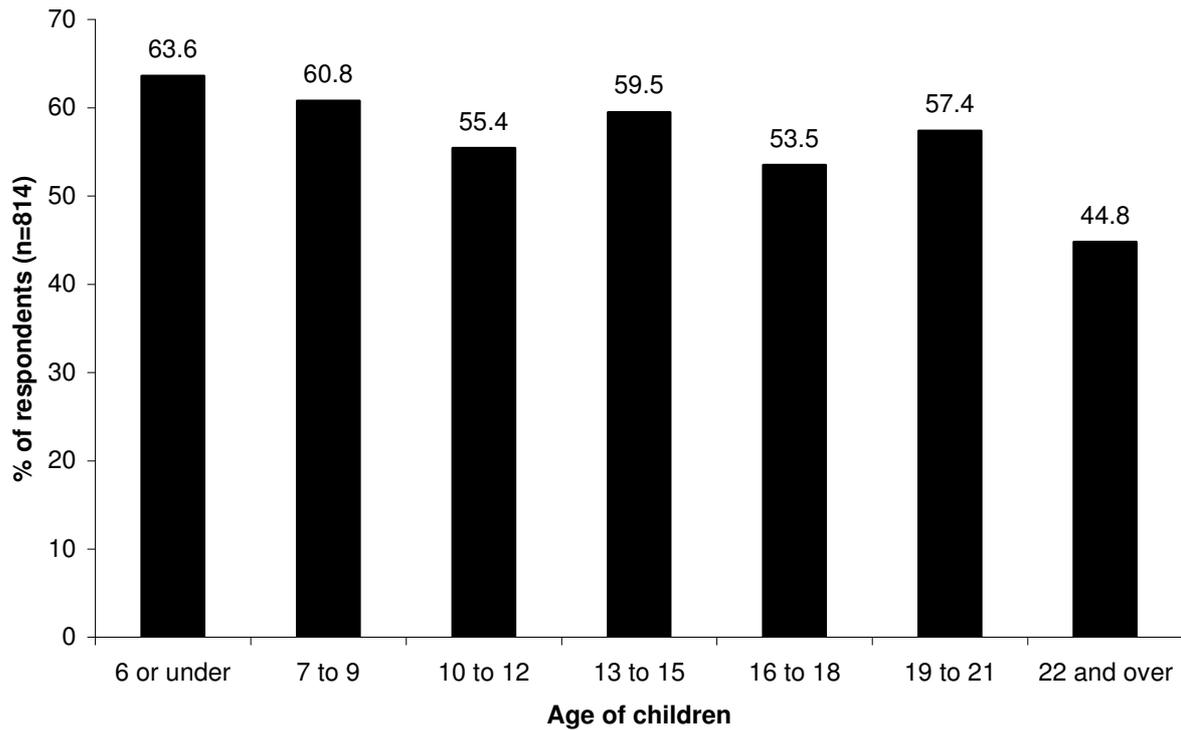


Figure 13: Perceived severity of CIN scheme by ages of children

Age was also found to be a factor with the highest proportion of respondents viewing the new laws as *'about right'* being found amongst the 26-30 year olds (77%, n=48), but tending to decline over age to 52% (n=72) amongst 51-60 year olds and to 40% (n=45) amongst respondents over 60 ($\chi^2=57.230$, df=14, p=.000). Adherence to any religion was found to increase the view that the cannabis laws were *'too soft'* from 24% (n=110) for those with no religion to 38% (n=128) for those who identified themselves as having a religion ($\chi^2=24.062$, df=2, p=.000). Interestingly, respondents living in country areas were more likely (65%, n=130) to view the new laws as *'being about right'* than respondents from the Perth metropolitan region (54%, n=328) ($\chi^2=7.572$, df=2, p=.023). It is also interesting to note that with the exception of respondents over 60 years old, all these categories still had an absolute majority viewing the strictness of the new laws as being *'about right'*. Voting patterns and religiosity were not found to have a significant effect on these results.

General attitudes towards cannabis

Asked what percent of Western Australian adults respondents thought had ever tried cannabis resulted in considerable diversity of answers ranging from ‘*maybe five or less*’ up to 100% with a modal figure of 50% compared to the modal figure of 60% in phase one. Amongst recent smokers of cannabis the modal response in phase two was 60%.

Opinions on the number of Western Australian adults who had used cannabis in the last twelve months were similarly varied ranging from one percent to 98%. Although many respondents indicated that they ‘*didn’t know*’, the most common estimates were 50% or ‘*about 50%*’ as was the case in phase one. As was also the case in phase one, this figure was very much higher than the 13.7% reported for WA respondents in the most recent (2004) National Drug Strategy Household survey (Draper & Serafino, 2006).

Respondents in phase two consistently displayed more negative general attitudes towards cannabis than those found amongst the phase one sample and all these differences were significant. Thus, the proportion agreeing that ‘*people usually have a good time when they use cannabis*’ fell from 57% (n=459) in phase one to 39% (n=314) in phase two, those agreeing that ‘*cannabis is a dangerous drug*’ rose from 63% (n=507) to 76% (n=616) and those agreeing that ‘*cannabis use is a problem in our community*’ rose from 69% (n=558) to 74% (n=646). Proportions agreeing that ‘*they would be concerned if friends of family were using cannabis*’ rose from 67% (n=544) to 79% (n=646), respondents agreeing that ‘*they would use cannabis if a friend offered it to them*’ fell from 19% (n=150) to 12% (n=94) and numbers agreeing that ‘*they would use cannabis if someone they didn’t know offered it to them at a party*’ fell from 8% (n=69) to 6% (n=51). A complete breakdown of this data is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: General attitudes towards cannabis held by respondents in phase one and phase two

Attitude	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Don't know / refused to answer	Sig#
People usually have a good time when they use cannabis	5.8 (17.8)	32.8 (38.9)	14.4 (10.0)	14.9 (16.7)	12.8 (7.8)	19.4 (8.8)	$\chi^2=121.408$, df=4, p=.000
Cannabis is a dangerous drug	55.9 (31.6)	19.8 (31.0)	5.9 (7.4)	10.6 (19.5)	5.8 (9.3)	2.1 (1.1)	$\chi^2=234.241$, df=4, p=.000
Cannabis use is a problem in our community	49.5 (39.1)	23.8 (29.9)	5.2 (4.2)	10.8 (16.4)	6.6 (9.0)	4.1 (1.4)	$\chi^2=56.098$, df=4, p=.000
You would be concerned if friends or family were using cannabis	62.4 (45.1)	17.0 (22.1)	4.5 (6.7)	10.7 (15.9)	5.3 (9.9)	0.1 (0.2)	$\chi^2=101.068$, df=4, p=.000
You would use cannabis if a friend offered it to you	3.8 (7.9)	7.7 (10.6)	2.3 (1.9)	6.9 (12.7)	77.9 (66.5)	1.3 (0.4)	$\chi^2=62.991$, df=4, p=.000
You would use cannabis is someone you didn't know offered it to you at a party	2.0 (3.3)	4.3 (5.2)	1.1 (1.5)	5.5 (8.0)	85.9 (81.8)	1.2 (0.1)	$\chi^2=14.348$, df=4, p=.006

N.B. phase one percentages are shown in brackets

Don't know / refused to answer responses excluded from analysis of significance

Attitudes towards cannabis and health

As with general attitudes, it was evident that there had consistently been an increase in negative attitudes towards cannabis and health issues in phase two than had been seen in the phase one sample. People agreeing that *'using cannabis once a month is not dangerous'* fell from 40% (n=326) to 28% (n=231), proportions agreeing that *'people under 18 years old should not use cannabis'* rose from 84% (n=677) to 93% (n=754) and proportions agreeing that *'cannabis use may result in dependence'* rose from 77% (n=619) to 85% (n=225). That there was *'a clear link between cannabis and mental health problems'* was agreed to by 69% (n=556) of phase one respondents rising to 79% (n=640) in phase two. The proportion of respondents agreeing that *'cannabis could be beneficial for people with certain health problems'* declined from 84% (n=682) to 72% (n=586), while respondents agreeing that *'most people who use cannabis will go on to use more dangerous drugs'* rose from 45% (n=368) to 61% (n=495). Proportions agreeing that *'the benefits of using cannabis outweigh the harms and risks associated with its use'* fell from 20% (n= 162) to 13% (n=104) and proportions agreeing that *'use of cannabis can lead to people becoming socially isolated'* rose from 70% (n=561) to 75% (n=609). A complete breakdown of this data is located in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Attitudes towards cannabis and health held by respondents in phase one and phase two

Attitude	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Don't know / refused to answer	Sig#
Using cannabis once a month is not dangerous	10.3 (17.4)	18.1 (22.9)	5.7 (5.9)	18.8 (17.7)	40.2 (32.4)	7.0 (3.7)	$\chi^2=48.487$, df=4, p=.000
People under 18 years old should not use cannabis	82.1 (70.2)	10.6 (13.5)	2.8 (4.1)	2.2 (6.9)	1.8 (4.9)	0.5 (0.4)	$\chi^2=66.327$, df=4, p=.000
Cannabis use may result in dependence	57.2 (48.8)	27.6 (27.7)	2.9 (4.3)	4.5 (8.5)	3.8 (7.8)	3.8 (2.8)	$\chi^2= 47.616$, df=4, p=.000
There is a clear link between cannabis and mental health problems	56.0 (43.8)	22.6 (25.0)	4.9 (6.9)	6.8 (11.7)	3.3 (5.8)	6.4 (6.8)	$\chi^2=60.112$, df=4, p=.000
Cannabis can be beneficial for people with certain medical conditions	32.6 (53.3)	39.4 (31.0)	6.3 (4.1)	4.8 (3.6)	5.5 (3.5)	11.4 (4.6)	$\chi^2=110.713$, df=4, p=.000
Most people who use cannabis will go on to use more dangerous drugs	30.5 (22.4)	30.3 (23.1)	6.1 (7.0)	14.0 (25.1)	14.5 (19.4)	4.5 (3.0)	$\chi^2=94.702$, df=4, p=.000
The benefits of using cannabis outweigh the harms and risks associated with its use	3.7 (7.2)	9.1 (12.9)	10.7 (10.3)	18.1 (27.7)	50.1 (37.0)	8.3 (5.1)	$\chi^2=91.024$, df=4, p=.000
Use of cannabis can lead to people becoming socially isolated	42.9 (34.9)	31.9 (34.5)	5.2 (4.6)	8.4 (14.2)	4.8 (8.9)	6.9 (3.0)	$\chi^2=53.110$, df=4, p=.000

Percentages from phase one are shown in brackets

Attitudes towards cannabis and the law

A considerable shift in opinion was evident in sample's attitudes towards cannabis and the law with the phase two sample having a substantially more negative view of cannabis than respondents in phase one. While in phase one 42% (n=339) of respondents agreed that *'it should be legal for people over 18 to use cannabis'* by phase two this rate had fallen to 28% (n=224). A fall in numbers agreeing was also observed to the statement *'many people who might use cannabis are deterred by the possibility of getting a criminal conviction'* from 40% (n=319) to 34% (n=280). There was a substantial increase in the proportion agreeing with the statement *'The sale of a small amount of cannabis from one adult to another should be a criminal offence'* from 51% (n=410) to 63% (n=512). The proportion agreeing with the statement *'It should not be illegal for a person to give another a small quantity of cannabis'* declined from 49% (n=394) to 32% (n=256). In phase one, a very substantial majority (89%, n=720) already agreed with the statement *'driving a car while affected by cannabis should be a criminal offence'* yet this rose still further with 93% (n=759) agreement in phase two. Interestingly, the proportion believing that *'there had been a lot in the media recently about cannabis law'* actually fell from 37% (n=303) to 34% (n=278). Weighting to control for recent cannabis use did not produce any meaningful change to these results suggesting that these changes were not a result of the decreased proportion of users in the post phase sample who had ever, or recently, used cannabis. The full break down of this information is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Attitudes towards cannabis and the law held by respondents in phase one and phase two

Attitude	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Don't know / refused to answer	Sig#
It should be legal for people over 18 to use cannabis	10.8 (20.8)	16.7 (21.1)	5.7 (4.8)	12.2 (16.8)	53.3 (35.2)	1.4 (1.2)	$\chi^2=133.178$, df=4, p=.000
Many people who might use cannabis are deterred by the possibility of getting a criminal conviction	11.1 (17.7)	23.3 (21.8)	4.2 (3.7)	25.2 (27.1)	32.8 (28.4)	3.4 (1.4)	$\chi^2=28.158$, df=1, p=.000
The sale of a small amount of cannabis from one adult to another should be a criminal offence	43.5 (31.5)	19.4 (19.2)	5.0 (4.7)	15.4 (22.9)	14.6 (20.4)	2.1 (1.4)	$\chi^2=70.961$, df=4, p=.000
It should not be illegal for a person to give another a small quantity of cannabis	12.8 (25.5)	18.7 (23.2)	3.6 (4.2)	15.2 (17.6)	45.5 (28.6)	4.3 (1.0)	$\chi^2=147.725$, df=4, p=.000
Driving a car while affected by cannabis should be a criminal offence	83.7 (75.6)	9.6 (13.3)	1.2 (2.6)	2.9 (4.4)	2.1 (3.1)	0.5 (0.9)	$\chi^2=28.084$, df=4, p=.000
There has been a lot in the media recently about cannabis law	10.0 (12.2)	24.2 (25.2)	5.5 (7.3)	23.6 (26.9)	20.8 (19.8)	16.3 (8.5)	$\chi^2=8.109$, df=4, p=.008

- phase one percentages are shown in brackets
- #Don't know / refused to answer responses excluded from analysis of significance

Community perceptions of appropriate penalties for persons caught under the CIN scheme.

Respondents at phase two were asked what they thought was the appropriate response for adults caught by police under the CIN scheme. An absolute majority (69%, n=562) believed that the appropriate response was that those apprehended be required to pay a fine AND attend an education session. Other responses were much less common. That there should be a choice between payment of a fine or an education session was approved by 13% (n=111), an education session with no fine by 7% (n=60), and the option of a fine with no educational requirement by 3%. There was also 5% (n=42) who thought no penalty should apply and just 1% (n=11) who thought more severe penalties were required than the above options.

Community perceptions of role of State Government in public education campaigns regarding cannabis.

Respondents were asked three questions concerning whether they were in favour of the State Government running public education campaigns about cannabis. In each case an overwhelming majority of respondents were in favour of state government adopting this role. Thus 93% (n=756) of the sample were in favour of the State Government educating the community about cannabis law; 95% (n= 765) were in favour of the government educating the community about harms associated with cannabis; and 96% (n=786) with educating young people about the harms associated with cannabis. A complete breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Phase two respondents' opinions on whether the State Government should run public education campaigns on cannabis with different target audiences and content

	Strongly in favour	Slightly in favour	No opinion	Slightly against	Strongly against	Don't know / refused to answer
Educate the community about cannabis law	76.8% (n=625)	16.1% (n=131)	1.6% (n=13)	2.6% (n=21)	2.6% (n=21)	0.3% (n=3)
Educate the community about the harms associated with cannabis	79.5% (n=647)	14.5% (n=118)	1.1% (n=9)	2.8% (n=23)	2.0% (n=16)	0.1% (n=1)
Educate young people about the harms associated with cannabis	87.3% (n=711)	9.2% (n=75)	0.4% (n=3)	1.5% (n=12)	1.6% (n=13)	0.0% (n=0)

Attitudes regarding specific aspects of the CIN scheme

All respondents were asked three items regarding their attitudes toward specific aspects of the CIN scheme. While 50% (n=410) of respondents agreed that the new laws had probably not affected the number of people receiving a criminal record for cannabis related offences, there was a substantial number (26%, n=213) who didn't know. However, this is a significant change from phase one when substantially more people disagreed with this statement and fewer people did not know.

There was an absolute majority (77%, n=625) who agreed that it was more appropriate to use education than criminal sanctions to reduce the rate of cannabis use in the community which was not dissimilar from the 78% (n=631) saying this in phase one. However statistically significant shifts had occurred with 56% (n=454) '*strongly agreeing*' in phase one falling to 51% (n=417) and 22% (n=177) '*agreeing somewhat*' rising to 26% (n=208).

Further, an absolute majority (70%, n=571) also agreed that it was appropriate that police should have discretionary powers to issue CINs or charges to persons believed to be exploiting loopholes in the CIN system, a number which was not significantly different from the findings of phase one. The full breakdown of these findings is located in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Phase one and two respondent attitudes regarding specific aspects of the CIN Scheme

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Neither	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ref used to answer	Sig*
The new cannabis laws probably haven't affected the number of people receiving a criminal record for a cannabis related offence	20.0% (18.9%)	30.3% (23.0%)	4.8% (3.7%)	13.6% (25.0%)	5.0% (24.8%)	26.2% (4.6%)	$\chi^2=122.936$, df=4, p=.000
It is more appropriate to use education to reduce the rate of cannabis use in the community than giving people a criminal record for using the drug	51.2% (56.1%)	25.6% (21.9%)	6.6% (3.6%)	7.0% (7.4%)	8.2% (10.3%)	1.4% (0.7%)	$\chi^2=13.382$, df=4, p=.010
It is appropriate that police can exercise their discretion in whether to issue a Cannabis Infringement Notice or charge the person to prevent people exploiting the new rules	41.4% (37.9%)	28.7% (31.8%)	4.5% (6.6%)	9.1% (7.5%)	12.8% (11.9%)	3.4% (4.3%)	$\chi^2=6.799$, df=4, p=.147)

Phase one results are shown in brackets

*don't know and refused to answer responses excluded from analysis of significance.

Knowledge of current cannabis legislation

All respondents in phase two (n=814) were asked a series of true or false items concerning what they believed was covered by the CIN system. Although most possessed a correct understanding of the general aspects of the scheme, when it came to specifics, there were frequently misunderstandings of the finer points of the scheme. Such misunderstandings included the legal status of possession for personal use with 45% (n=362) believing this to be 'legal'. Some 16% (n=129) wrongly believed that police required a search warrant to search premises where they believed cannabis may be present. Only 18% (n=144) correctly believed that it was not the case that hydroponic cannabis was included under the CIN scheme. Similarly only 14% (n=113) correctly believed that police could not issue an infringement notice for hashish resin or oil under the CIN scheme. The question concerning whether police required warrants to search a premises where they suspected cannabis to be present was also asked at phase one with regards to the previous legal system then in place. It is interesting to note that a similar level of misunderstanding was also present then with 80% (n=648) of phase one respondents mistakenly believing this to be the case. A complete breakdown of these findings is displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Beliefs of phase two respondents as to what was covered by the CIN scheme

	% respondents believing to be true	% respondents believing to be False	Don't know / refused to answer
People caught with 100 grams or more of cannabis are considered a dealer	64.4% (n=524)	10.7% (n=87)	24.9% (n=203)
It is LEGAL for adults to possess a small amount of cannabis for their personal use	44.5% (n=362)	40.8% (n=332)	14.7% (n=120)
Police can issue an infringement notice to adults in possession of a small amount of cannabis	72.2% (n=588)	11.1% (n=90)	16.7% (n=136)
Police require a search warrant to search a house where they have reason to believe cannabis may be present	74.3% (n=605)	15.8% (n=129)	9.8% (n=80)
People who fail to pay their fines can have their driving/vehicle licences suspended	61.4% (n=500)	15.6% (n=127)	23.0% (n=187)
People caught cultivating 10 or more cannabis plants are considered by law to be a dealer	88.2% (n=718)	2.7% (n=22)	9.1% (n=74)
Police can issue an infringement notice to adults for cultivation of up to two hydroponic plants	59.2% (n=482)	17.7% (n=144)	23.1% (n=188)
Adults given a cannabis infringement notice can choose to attend a cannabis education session rather than pay the fine	48.3% (n=393)	17.0% (n=138)	34.8% (n=283)
It is legal for an adult to possess a pipe or other implement which has been used for smoking cannabis	36.2% (n=295)	45.7% (n=372)	18.1% (n=147)
If police have the evidence, a person found in possession of a small amount of cannabis can be charged with the more serious offence of possession with intent to sell or supply	51.0% (n=415)	25.7% (n=209)	23.3% (n=190)
Police can issue an infringement notice to adults in possession of a small amount of 'hashish' or cannabis resin	63.1% (n=514)	13.9% (n=113)	23.0% (n=187)

Correct responses are bold text

General attitudes to the law and police

As in phase one, respondents in phase two were asked a series of questions to determine the extent to which they generally regarded themselves as law abiding citizens and some general questions regarding attitudes to the role of police in enforcing cannabis law.

As in phase one the majority of phase two respondents seemed to judge themselves to be law abiding, although to an even greater extent than did the phase one sample. For example, viewed as dichotomous variables, those agreeing that '*they were law abiding citizens*' rose from 98% (n=786) in the pre phase to 100% (n=805) in the post phase. Those agreeing that '*police deserve respect for their role in law and order*' rose from 95% (n=746) to 99% (n=793).

With regards to attitudes to police and cannabis law rates of agreement that '*Police generally treat cannabis users with respect*' increased from 51% (n=283) to 58% (n=259). Respondents agreeing that '*Police should have more power to address cannabis in the community*' similarly rose from 61% (n=450) to 72% (n=540). Conversely, there was a significant decline in the number of respondents who agreed that '*Police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offenders*' from 80% (n=619) down to 72% (n=545). Full results are displayed in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Attitudinal responses to items dealing with the law and the police

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Neither	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ref used to answer	Sig compared with phase 1*
You are a law abiding citizen	91.2% (85.7%)	7.7% (11.5%)	0.5% (0.5%)	0.5% (1.4%)	0.0% (1.0%)	0.1% (0.0%)	$\chi^2=(10.000, df=1, p=.002)$
Most laws are worth obeying	79.4% (79.7%)	17.0% (17.6%)	0.6% (0.5%)	1.7% (1.6%)	1.0% (0.2%)	0.4% (0.4%)	$\chi^2=1.320, df=1, p=.251$
People should break laws they disagree with	1.7% (1.4%)	4.5% (3.7%)	2.8% (2.7%)	10.9% (15.3%)	78.6% (76.3%)	1.1% (0.6%)	$\chi^2=1.182, df=1, p=.277$
Strict laws deter illicit drug use	27.8% (23.1%)	20.1% (26.2%)	2.8% (2.2%)	18.8% (19.0%)	28.7% (28.2%)	1.7% (1.2%)	$\chi^2=.125, df=1, p=.724$
Police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order	85.6% (68.7%)	11.8% (23.5%)	1.1% (3.0%)	0.6% (2.2%)	0.7% (2.3%)	0.1% (0.2%)	$\chi^2=15.243, df=1, p=.000$
Police generally treat cannabis users with respect	8.6% (10.5%)	23.2% (24.5%)	9.1% (7.2%)	14.9% (16.9%)	7.9% (17.3%)	36.4% (23.6%)	$\chi^2=6.062, df=1, p=.014$
Police should be given more power to address cannabis in the community	40.9% (29.0%)	25.4% (26.6%)	5.2% (6.4%)	12.7% (17.8%)	12.9% (17.8%)	2.9% (2.3%)	$\chi^2=21.019, df=1, p=.000$
Police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offenders.	38.7% (56.1%)	28.3% (20.4%)	6.0% (3.3%)	13.4% (12.2%)	12.2% (7.3%)	1.5% (0.6%)	$\chi^2=11.161, df=1, p=.001$

phase one percentages are shown in brackets

* Results were dichotomised into 'Agree' versus 'Disagree' with other responses excluded from χ^2 analysis

Many of these attitudes were found to be significantly affected by respondents' history of cannabis use. Thus, while 100% of respondents who had never smoked cannabis agreed that they were *law abiding citizens*, this figure fell to 96% amongst recent cannabis smokers. That *most laws were worth obeying* was agreed to by 99% of respondents who had never used cannabis, but fell to 94% amongst recent users. While only four percent of respondents who had never used cannabis agreed that *people should break laws they disagreed with*, this figure rose to 21% amongst recent cannabis users. That *strict laws deter drug use* was agreed to by 60% of respondents who had never smoked, but only by 25% of recent cannabis smokers. While 100% of respondents who had never smoked agreed that *police deserved respect for their role in maintaining law and order*, amongst recent smokers this figure was a somewhat lower 96%. Regardless of cannabis use status, figures agreeing that *police generally treat cannabis users with respect* were relatively low with only 62% of respondents who had never used cannabis agreeing, but falling to just 45% amongst respondents who had recently used the drug. That *police should be given more power to address cannabis in the community* was supported by 87% of respondents who had never used cannabis, but only by 25% of recent users. While 65% of respondents who had never used cannabis agreed that *police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offences*, this figure rose to 91% of recent cannabis users. This data is presented in table 10 below.

Table 10: Attitudinal agreement to items dealing with the law and police by respondents' history of cannabis use

Overall Attitudes	% respondents in agreement			% respondents in agreement		
	Never used	Ever used	Sig*	Used but not recently	Recently used	Sig*
You are a law abiding citizen	100.0	98.9	.032	100.0	95.7	.000
Most laws are worth obeying	98.6	95.7	NS	97.8	93.6	.034
People should break laws they disagree with	4.1	9.6	.002	4.9	21.0	.000
Strict laws deter illicit drug use	59.8	39.6	.000	53.5	25.3	.000
Police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order	99.5	97.6	.018	99.0	95.7	.028
Police generally treat cannabis users with respect	61.8	54.1	NS	60.5	45.2	.017
Police should be given more power to address cannabis in the community	87.0	55.8	.000	78.5	25.0	.000
Police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offenders	64.6	80.4	.000	69.7	91.4	.000

*Chi square analysis conducted on dichotomous variables with *neutral*, *Don't know* and *refused to answer* responses excluded

Levels of agreement for a number of these items when viewed by cannabis use history of respondents were found to have changed significantly since phase one. Specifically, amongst respondents who had ever smoked cannabis, the proportion agreeing that they *were a law abiding citizen* rose from 96% (n=417) to 99% (n=371). The proportion agreeing that *police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order* rose from 93% (n=386) to 98% (n=361). The proportion agreeing that *police generally treat cannabis users with respect* rose from 44% (n=141) to 54% (n=113). The proportion agreeing that *police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offenders* fell from 88% (n=375) to 80% (n=292). Amongst respondents who had ever smoked cannabis numbers agreeing that *strict laws deter drug use* fell from 48% (n=204) to 40% (n=143) and was the only finding to significantly change since phase one amongst respondents who had recently smoked cannabis where numbers in agreement fell from 43% (n=62) to 25% (n=23). This data is shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Levels of attitudinal agreement across phase one and phase two by cannabis use history

	% respondents who had ever smoked in agreement			% of recent smokers in agreement		
	Phase One	Phase Two	Sig	Phase One	Phase Two	Sig
Overall attitudes						
You are a law abiding citizen	96.3	98.9	.030	91.2	95.7	NS
Most laws are worth obeying	97.9	95.7	NS	97.3	93.6	NS
People should break laws they disagree with	7.0	9.6	NS	12.1	21.0	NS
Strict laws deter illicit drug use	48.1	39.6	.020	43.1	25.3	.009
Police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order	93.0	97.6	.005	88.8	95.7	NS
Police generally treat cannabis users with respect	44.2	54.1	.033	36.9	45.2	NS
Police should be given more power to address cannabis in the community	49.6	55.8	NS	34.1	25.0	NS
Police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offenders	88.4	80.4	.002	90.3	91.4	NS

Attitudes to the current laws and proposed changes

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their attitudes to the cannabis laws prior to any explanation of those laws. In Phase one these were preceded by a statement 'The next few questions are about what you think about the current cannabis laws *and their proposed changes* (emphasis added)' in Phase two they were preceded by a statement 'The next few questions are about what you think about the current cannabis laws.' In each case the terms 'legal' and 'illegal' were defined.

When asked 'should it be legal or illegal for an adult to grow cannabis for personal use?' a clear majority of 57% (pre=45%) believed it should be illegal as opposed to 39% (pre = 53%) who thought it should be legal and 4% (pre = 2%) who 'did not know'. The pre-post changes were significant ($\chi^2=39.909$, $df=2$, $p=.000$). In regards to the question 'should it be legal or illegal for an adult to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use?' opinion was much more evenly split with 50% (pre = 38%) saying it should be illegal and 46% (pre = 61%) believing it should be legal. These pre-post changes were significant ($\chi^2=39.165$, $df=2$, $p=.000$).

Similarly, when asked 'Do you think growing 2 cannabis plants should or should not be a criminal offence?' there was little consensus. Some 49% (pre = 40%) of the post phase sample thought criminal penalties should apply, while 48% (pre = 59%) believed that non-criminal penalties should apply with 49% (n=398) believing it should be criminal and 48% (n=388) saying that it should not be a criminal offence. Again, the pre-post differences were significant. ($\chi^2=27.878$, $df=2$, $p=.000$).

Asked how likely it was that someone in possession of cannabis would be caught, it was generally agreed that this was unlikely with 33% (n=265) believing it to be 'very unlikely', 36% (n=289) believing it to be 'quite unlikely' and 20% (n=161) believing it to be 'possible' with other responses being much less common. By collapsing these findings in to respondents who thought it 'likely', 'possible' or 'unlikely', reveals that in both the pre and post phases an absolute majority 'thought it 'unlikely'. That said, however, there had been a significant shift in these opinions with those 'stating 'unlikely' falling from 73% (n=579) to 70% (n=554), those stating 'possibly' rising from 15% (n=120) in phase one to 20% (n=161) and those viewing it as 'likely' falling from 12% (n=94) to 10% (n=76) ($\chi^2=8.437$, $df=2$, $p=.015$).

Opinion was more divided on the question of the likelihood of someone being caught dealing or selling cannabis with 12% (n=94) who thought it 'very unlikely', 24% (n=197) who thought it 'quite unlikely', 29% (n=234) stating 'possibly' followed by 25% (n=200) who thought it 'quite likely', and nine percent (n=75) who thought it 'very likely'. Collapsing these findings into respondents who thought it 'likely', 'possible' or 'unlikely' demonstrated that little change had occurred since phase one, where 'likely' was stated by 36% (n=285) compared with 34% (n=275) in phase two, 'possibly' from 28% (n=220) in phase one to 29% (n=234) in phase two and 'unlikely' being 37% (n=293) in phase one and 36% (n=291) None of these pre-post differences being of statistical significance ($\chi^2=.615$, $df=2$, $p=.735$).

Asked if they thought people were more likely to reuse cannabis if given an education rather than a criminal record found opinion to be quite divided with 44% (n=343)

agreeing that reuse was less likely and 47% (n=363) disagreeing with the statement. There was also nine percent (n=72) who didn't know. This item was asked as a likert scale at phase one and saw 47% of those who responded saying that it was '*very likely*' or '*likely*' that people would be less likely to reuse cannabis if given an education session, 14% (n=111) saying '*possibly*' and 36% saying it was '*quite unlikely*' or '*very unlikely*'. However, the wording of the phase one question makes interpretation of these findings ambiguous.

Asked what they thought the term 'Prohibition with civil penalties' meant, over half of respondents (52%, n=426) correctly answered that it meant that '*cannabis would be illegal and a fine would apply, but no criminal conviction*'. There were however 29% (n=237) who mistakenly thought it would mean '*cannabis would be illegal and a criminal conviction would be recorded*' and 2% (n=12) who thought it meant '*cannabis would be legal and no penalties would apply*'. There were also 17% (n=139) who didn't know. Interestingly, this finding would suggest that understanding of the prohibition with civil penalties model has actually worsened from phase one where 8% (n=63) thought it mean 'it would be legal and no penalties would apply', 57% (n=459) correctly said 'it would be illegal and a fine would apply but no criminal charges', 30% though 'it would be illegal and a criminal conviction would be recorded, but only 6% (n=45) didn't know ($\chi^2=83.970$, $df=3$, $p=.000$).

Changes to the cannabis market

These questions were asked to all respondents in the phase two sample, however, the number of 'unsure' responses for all questions was very high. The number of 'unsure' responses fell dramatically amongst those respondents who had smoked cannabis within the twelve months preceding the survey, presumably due to their greater familiarity with the cannabis market. For this reason, data is presented in this section for both the entire sample and for those who had recently smoked cannabis. For all items the prevailing view amongst recent cannabis smokers was that the new cannabis laws had not caused any changes to the market for cannabis in Western Australia.

Respondents were asked about changes that may have occurred in the cannabis market since legislative changes came into effect. With regards to the number of people using cannabis 45% (n=368) believed that this had '*remained about the same*' while 28% (n=228) thought it had '*increased*', 10% (n=77) thought it had '*decreased*' and 17% (n=141) were unsure or refused to answer. Amongst recent cannabis smokers, 71% (n=68) thought it had '*remained the same*', 14% (n=13) believed there had been an '*increase*', 12% (n=11) thought there had been a '*decrease*' and 4% (n=4) were unsure.

Most respondents (51%, n=417) were unsure about the effects of legislative change on the cost of purchasing cannabis. Some 23% (n=187) of the sample as a whole believed that it had '*remained about the same*', 19% (n=158), believed it had '*increased*' while 6% (n=52) thought it had '*decreased*'. Among recent cannabis smokers 62% (n=59) thought the cost of purchasing cannabis had '*remained about the same*', 16% (n=15) thought it had '*increased*', 5% (n=5) thought it had '*decreased*' and 18% (n=17) were unsure.

Across the sample as a whole 38% (n=311) believed the availability of cannabis was that it had '*remained about the same*', 26% (n=212) believed that it had become '*easier*' and 9% (n=219) thought it had become '*harder*'. The number of respondents who were unsure was again high accounting for 27% (n=219). Among recent cannabis smokers 58% (n=56) thought availability '*remained about the same*', 13% (n=12) thought availability had '*become easier*', 20% (n=19) thought it had '*become harder*' and 9% (n=9) were unsure.

Across the sample as a whole there was little consensus of opinion with regards to the effect of the legislation on the number people growing their own cannabis with 33% (n=267) believing it had '*increased*' and 32% (n=263) believing it had '*remained about the same*'. While just 8% (n=65) thought it had '*decreased*', 27% (n=219) were unsure. Responses from recent smokers of cannabis suggested that 46% (n=44) thought the number of people growing had '*remained about the same*', 32% (n=31) thought this had '*increased*', nine percent (n=9) thought it had '*decreased*' and 13% (n=12) were unsure.

With regards to how much contact users had with criminals when obtaining cannabis, 35% (n=287) thought that this had '*remained about the same*'. That it had '*increased*' was thought by 22% (n=177) and 12% thought it had '*decreased*'. Once again there were substantial numbers (31%, n=254) who were unsure. Amongst recent smokers of cannabis, 49% (n=47) thought it had '*remained about the same*' 8% (n=8) thought this had '*increased*', 25% (n=24) thought it had '*decreased*' and 18% (n=17) were unsure.

Exclusion of hydroponic cannabis and juveniles from the CIN scheme

There was substantial support for the exclusion of hydroponic cultivation of cannabis from the CIN scheme and this had increased from the phase one sample. In phase two with 42% (n=344) 'strongly agreeing' and a further 16% (n=130) 'agreeing somewhat'. Disagreement was less common with 21% (n=173) 'strongly disagreeing' and 12% (n=99) 'disagreeing somewhat'. There were also 3% (n=21) who neither agreed or disagreed and 6% (n=47) who were unsure. In phase one respondents also tended to support the exclusion of hydroponic cultivation of cannabis from the scheme, but not to the same degree as phase two respondents with 31% (n=253) 'strongly agreeing', 16% (n=133) 'agreeing somewhat', 4% (n=29) neither agreeing or disagreeing, 19% (n=152) 'disagreeing somewhat', and 25% 'strongly disagreeing' ($\chi^2=30.052$, $df=5$, $p=.000$).

Despite this, in phase two there was a clear majority (68%) of respondents who agreed that the act of excluding hydroponic cannabis from the scheme would result in many people continuing to obtain it from suppliers with criminal associations, although this view was not held as strongly as it was in phase one. In phase two this was 'strongly agreed' by 36% (n=292) and 'somewhat agreed' by 32%, (n=261). Dissent was far less common with nine percent (n=75) 'disagreeing somewhat' and 5% (n=37) 'strongly disagreeing'. There was also 14% (n=116) who didn't know.

In phase one (75%, n=607) of respondents in agreement, they were more likely to 'agree strongly' (46%, n=368) than to 'agree somewhat' (29%, n=239) ($\chi^2= 49.928$, $df=5$, $p=.000$).

In phase two there was overwhelming support for the legislation allowing police the power to act against sellers of hydroponic equipment who knowingly sell equipment for the cultivation of cannabis or otherwise engage in criminal activity, and this was even greater than the high levels of support for this measure found in phase one. Thus in phase two 56% (n=453) of the sample 'strongly agreed' with the measure and 19% (n=151) 'agreed somewhat'. Of those who disagreed, 11% (n=93) 'strongly disagreed' and 8% (n=64) 'somewhat disagreed'. There were also 3% (n=28) who were unsure. In phase one 53% (n=425) 'strongly agreed', 24% (n=196) 'agreed somewhat', 4% (n=32) 'neither agreed or disagreed', 6% (n=51) 'disagreed somewhat' and nine percent (n=70) 'strongly disagreed' ($\chi^2= 13.626$, $df=5$, $p=.018$).

In phase two there was also substantial support for the idea that juveniles should be excluded from the CIN system and dealt with under the juvenile justice system and again support for this measure was even stronger than it was in phase one. In phase two 47% (n=384) of the sample 'strongly agreed', and 19% (n=154) 'somewhat agreed' with the measure, while, 2% (n=19) 'neither agreed nor disagreed'. There were 9% (n=73) who 'disagreed somewhat' and 21% (n=172) who 'strongly disagreed' 2% (n=12) who didn't know. In the phase one sample support for the exclusion of juveniles from the scheme, though high, was not as strong with 34% (n=275) 'strongly agreeing', 11% (n=89) 'somewhat agreeing', 2% (n=16) neither agreeing or disagreeing, 16% (n=133) 'disagreeing somewhat', 34% (n=275) 'strongly disagreeing' and 3% (n=21) who didn't know ($\chi^2=79.322$, $df=5$, $p=.000$).

Personal use of other drugs and history of cannabis related charges or seeking help

There were questions that were asked of the entire phase two sample.

Asked if their use of other drugs and alcohol had changed since the new cannabis laws came into force, 82% (n=670) of the phase two sample believed they had '*remained the same*'. That their use had '*decreased*' was stated by nine percent (n=70) and 5% (n=37) thought their use had '*increased*'. There was also 4% (n=30) who didn't know. This finding was unaffected by respondents' history of cannabis use.

A history of having either personally or having a family member charged with a cannabis related offence was reported by 10% (n=84) of the phase two sample, a figure not significantly different from the 12% (n=93) in phase one ($\chi^2=3.743$, df=2, p=.154). Unsurprisingly, having ever been charged with a cannabis related offence was significantly affected by the respondents' cannabis use history with 16% (n=60) of respondents who had ever used cannabis having a cannabis related charge compared to 6% (n=24) of those who had never tried cannabis indicating they had relatives with a cannabis related charge ($\chi^2=22.248$, df=1, p=.000). Similarly, 28% (n=27) of respondents who had used cannabis within the last 12 months reported a cannabis related charge compared with eight percent (n=57) of respondents who had not smoked cannabis recently ($\chi^2=36.323$, df=1, p=.000).

Having ever sought help for a problem related to cannabis use was reported by 1% (n=11) of the phase two sample compared with 2% (n=13) of the phase one sample and having a family member who had sought help was reported by 5% (n=42) not significantly different to the 8% in phase one. ($\chi^2=4.163$, df=2, p=.125). Unsurprisingly, there were no reports of respondents who had never used cannabis having sought help for a cannabis related problem compared with 3% (n=11) of those who had ever used the drug ($\chi^2=12.340$, df=1, p=.000). Help had been sought by 9% (n=8) of recent cannabis smokers compared with 0.4% (n=3) of respondents who had not smoked cannabis within the last 12 months ($\chi^2=37.579$, df=1, p=.000). No such effect of cannabis use history was observed with regards to family members who had sought help for a cannabis related problem.

Sources of further information on cannabis

All respondents in phase two were asked where they would seek more information on cannabis if they required it. The most common source mentioned by a very substantial margin was the internet, mentioned by 52% of respondents compared with 27% in phase one. Other leading responses were substantially less common, but included doctors (12%), the Drug & Alcohol Office (8%), the police (8%), a library (7%) and the Health Department (7%). A full listing of responses is shown in Table 12 below. Interestingly the three most commonly mentioned sources for information remained unchanged from phase one although their order had shifted considerably. Thus in phase one was an alcohol or drug organisation or clinic nominated by 27% of respondents, followed by the internet mentioned by 25% and a doctor or GP mentioned by 16% of respondents.

Table 12: Sources of further information on cannabis nominated by respondents*

Information source	n	% of responses	% of respondents (n=814)
The Internet	419	39.7	51.5
Doctor	96	9.1	11.7
Alcohol & Drug Authority / Drug & Alcohol Office	68	6.4	8.4
Police	64	6.1	7.9
Library	55	5.2	6.8
Health Department	53	5.0	6.5
Drug and alcohol service / counselling/dependency group	32	3.0	3.9
Phone line / ADIS/ telephone counselling etc.	30	2.8	3.7
School / teachers	27	2.6	3.3
Hospital	19	1.8	2.3
Phone book	18	1.7	2.2
Local council	13	1.2	1.6
Community Health Service	12	1.1	1.5
Friends	11	1.0	1.4
Family	8	0.8	1.0
Books / pamphlets	8	0.8	1.0
Other	39	3.7	4.8
Don't know	83	7.9	10.2
Total	1055	100.0	129.6

*Multiple responses possible, so total percentages may exceed 100.

What respondents had heard about the Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme

All respondents in phase two were asked what they had heard about the CIN scheme. Although a majority (70%, n=568) did not indicate that they had heard anything about it, the remaining 30% (n=246) had heard something and made 339 comments concerning what they believed they had heard. These responses were coded by three independent raters with the possible codes presented in Appendix III.

While many of the most common types of responses displayed an awareness of the central concepts of the CIN Scheme such as ‘decriminalisation’, or *prohibition with civil penalties*, it was also very common for respondents to use phrases such as ‘*You’re allowed*’ or ‘*It’s OK*’ or occasionally ‘*legal*’ in the context of growing or possessing cannabis, suggesting that there remains a sizable portion of the community who are either unaware of, or do not understand the difference between ‘*decriminalised*’ and ‘*legal*’. A breakdown of the most common types of answer can be found in Table 13 below.

For 312 of these responses, the respondent was asked the extent to which they believed what they had heard to be true. Scepticism was very uncommon with only 5% (n=17) of instances where respondents indicated that they did not believe what they had heard to be accurate. In 45% (n=139) cases respondents thought what they had heard was ‘*somewhat true*’ and in 42% (n=132) cases, respondents believed ‘*a great deal that what they had heard was true*’.

Table 13: Types of responses to what phase two participants had heard about the new laws

Type of response	n	% of responses	% of respondents (n=246)
General answer re: possession or use 'decriminalised' or 'not criminal' for small quantities	58	17.1	23.5
Answer re: 'being allowed', 'It's OK' to grow up to two plants	48	14.2	19.5
Answer mentioning 'decriminalisation' or 'civil penalties' but with no details	27	8.0	11.0
Miscellaneous answers concerning possession or use of cannabis without reference to legal status	16	4.7	6.5
Answer re: growing up to two plants being decriminalised or civil penalties applying	16	4.7	6.5
General answer re: 'you're allowed', 'you can have' or 'it's OK' to grow cannabis with no quantity specified	14	4.1	5.7
General answer about growing cannabis being 'decriminalised' or 'civil penalties' being applied.	14	4.1	5.7
Miscellaneous answers about the legal status of growing cannabis	13	3.8	5.3
Answers regarding fines and payments under the CIN scheme	13	3.8	5.3
Answers re 'you're allowed', 'it's OK' to grow more than two plants	8	2.4	3.3
General answer re: 'you're allowed' or 'it's OK' to possess or use a small quantity	8	2.4	3.3
Answers concerning mandatory and public education under the CIN scheme	8	2.4	3.3
Have heard something but can't remember or unclear on details	15	4.4	6.1
Other answers	81	23.9	32.9
TOTAL	339	100.0	137.9*

*totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being allowed.

Effects of the CIN scheme on cannabis users' willingness to seek help

All respondents were asked 'Since the change in cannabis law, if someone had a problem with cannabis use do you think they would be more or less likely to seek help and why?'

Overall, some 28% (n=229) of the sample as a whole believed that the CIN scheme would have no effect on the likelihood of cannabis users seeking help while 24% (n=197) believed it was 'more likely' that cannabis users would seek help and 20% (n=160) thought it was 'less likely'. There was also a large body (28%, n=228) who didn't know. As can be seen in Figure 14 below, these findings were affected by respondents' history of cannabis use. For example, while those who had ever smoked cannabis (37%) were much more inclined than those who had never tried the drug (21%) to indicate that there would be no change ($\chi^2=27.266$, $df=3$, $p=.000$). Yet, those who had used cannabis in the past 12 months, were more likely (34%) than those who had used the drug, albeit not in the past 12 months (21%), to say that cannabis users would be more likely to seek help since the change in the law ($\chi^2=9.919$, $df=3$, $p=.019$). This data is presented in Figure 14 below.

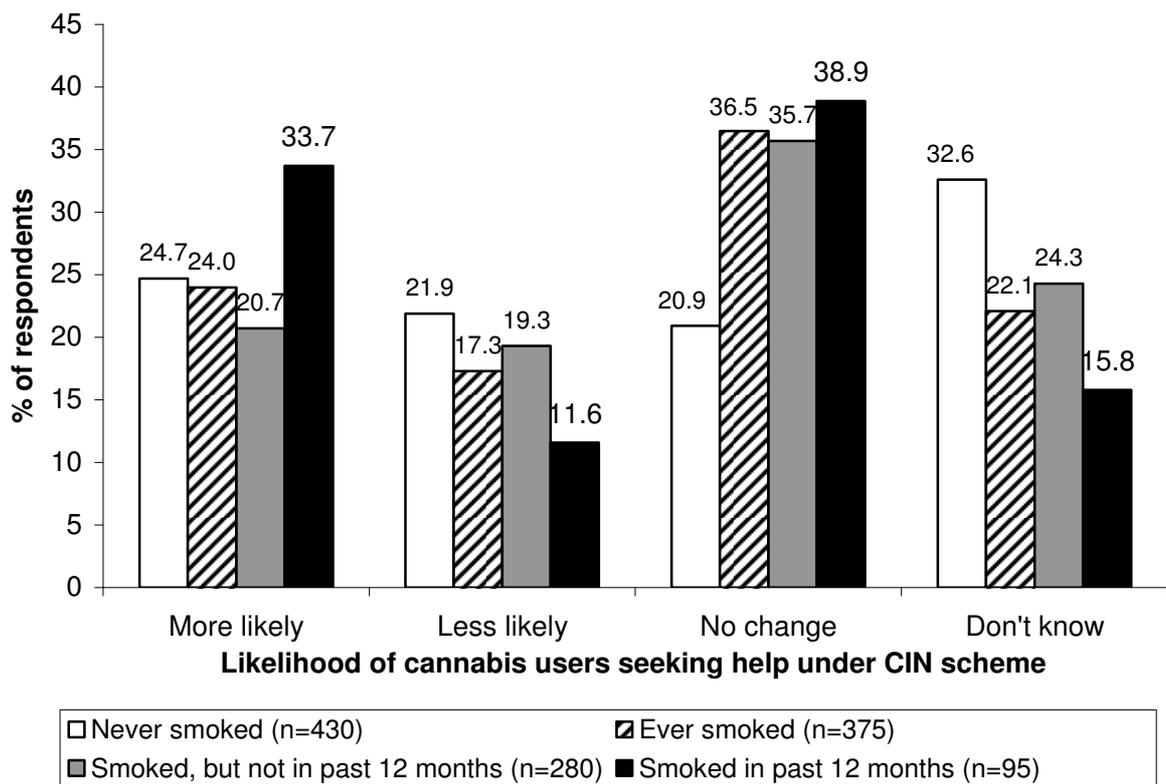


Figure 14: Beliefs about likelihood of cannabis users seeking treatment since the changes in laws by history of cannabis use

With regards to those respondents who thought the new laws would not result in changes to users' willingness to seek help, two types of responses predominated. Firstly, answers dealing with users not wanting or seeking help, or not seeing their use as a 'problem' which was mentioned by 36% of respondents in this category. Secondly, answers to the effect that changes in the law do not affect the behaviour of users, mentioned by 33% of these respondents. A more detailed breakdown of the types of responses given by these respondents is shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Types of responses provided for why the likelihood of cannabis users seeking help would not be affected by the new laws

Type of response	n	% of responses	% of respondents (n=229)
users not wanting / seeking help, not seeing use as a problem, unwilling to change, happy using etc.	83	33.4	36.2
how changes to the law will not affect behaviour	76	30.6	33.1
users just don't care	14	5.6	6.1
people are not aware of legal changes or what the law actually is	12	4.8	5.2
users being unaware of harms and the dangers of use	11	4.4	4.8
users more likely to help themselves than seek treatment	9	3.6	3.9
Other answers	43	17.3	18.7
TOTAL	248	99.7	108.0*

*totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being allowed.

Responses here were result of ratings by 3 independent raters of the qualitative text recorded by the telephone interviewers

Effects of the CIN Scheme on cannabis users willingness to seek help

In the case of respondents who thought cannabis users were more likely to seek help under the new laws, answers mentioning the lowered threat of legal sanctions predominated with 30% of these respondents mentioning them. Other types of answers were much less common, but major ones included answers attributing the greater willingness to seek help to education or media campaigns (18% of respondents), answers about awareness of what services were available (17% of respondents) and answers concerning awareness of health issues (11% of respondents). A more detailed breakdown of the types of responses given by these respondents is shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Reasons given why cannabis users would be more likely to seek help under the new cannabis laws

Type of response	n	% of responses	% of respondents (n=197)
Less threat of legal sanctions	60	25.8	30.5
Education or media campaigns	36	15.5	18.3
Awareness of availability of services	33	14.2	16.8
Awareness of health issues	22	9.5	11.2
Harsher laws or threats of sanctions	14	6.0	7.1
Less stigma or more relaxed attitudes about cannabis	13	5.6	6.6
Decriminalisation	11	4.7	5.6
Other /miscellaneous answers	43	18.5	21.8
TOTAL	232	99.8	117.9*

*totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being allowed.

Responses here were result of ratings by 3 independent raters of the qualitative text recorded by the telephone interviewers

With regards to respondents who thought the new laws were less likely to see cannabis users seeking help, it was often unclear from their responses why these would lead to users being less likely to seek help than to produce no change. The predominant class of answers was that users did not want or seek help or perceive they have a 'problem' which was given by 34% of respondents in this category. Other common responses included fear of consequences given by 17% and that softer laws did not motivate treatment seeking behaviour given by 10%. A more detailed breakdown of the types of responses given by these respondents is shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16: Reasons given why cannabis users would be less likely to seek help under the new cannabis laws

Type of response	n	% of responses	% of respondents (n=160)
Answers re: users not wanting / seeking help or not perceiving they have a problem	55	31.6	34.4
Answers re: fear of consequences	27	15.5	16.9
Answers re: softer laws not motivating treatment seeking	16	9.2	10.0
Answers re: users not being able to make the decision to seek help	15	8.6	9.4
Answers re: users being unaware of harms and dangers of use	10	5.7	6.3
Answers re: shame and stigma	10	5.7	6.3
Other answers	41	23.6	25.6
TOTAL	174	99.9	108.9*

*totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being allowed.

Reasons why respondents had never used cannabis or ceased use of cannabis

Respondents who had not used cannabis in the last 12 months were asked why they had never tried cannabis or why they had not used recently. Responses were coded by three independent raters with the possible codes presented in Appendix III.

In both cases the most common response by a very considerable margin was 'that they had no desire to use'. The next two most common reasons given for never having used were concerns about health effects mentioned by 19% of respondents and concern about psychological effects mentioned by 16%. For respondents who had not used cannabis recently the next two most common responses were that they had become too old or 'grown out of it' mentioned by 25% of respondents and that they had had bad previous experiences or didn't like the effects mentioned by 21%. It was noticeable that some answers were more salient for one group than the other. The illegal nature of cannabis use was relatively important for respondents who had never used cannabis with 13% of them mentioning it, but only 6% of respondents citing it as a reason for not having smoked cannabis recently. This data can be found in Tables 17 and 18 below. It is noticeable that in phase one, 'no desire to use' was also the most commonly given response by a very considerable margin, mentioned by 54% of respondents both as the leading reason for having never used and for not having used in the previous 12 months.

Table 17: Why respondents had never used cannabis?

Reason	n	% of responses	% of respondents (n=427)
No desire to use	240	28.5	56.2
Concern about health effects	81	9.6	19.0
Concern about psychological/mental effects	68	8.1	15.9
It's illegal	54	6.4	12.6
Witness to bad effects on others	54	6.4	12.6
Never been offered it	44	5.2	10.3
Concern about becoming addicted to it	29	3.4	6.8
My friends don't use it	26	3.1	6.1
Opposed to drug use/don't take drugs	25	3.0	5.9
Don't need it/doesn't do anything for me	23	2.7	5.4
Influence of family/friends	23	2.7	5.4
Lack of opportunity/not exposed to it	21	2.5	4.9
Religious /moral reasons	15	1.8	3.5
Against smoking	15	1.8	3.5
Career (inc. sports) reasons	14	1.7	3.3
Education	14	1.7	3.3
Concerned about moving on to more dangerous drugs	13	1.5	3.0
Concern about losing control/intoxication	12	1.4	2.8
Other	72	8.5	16.9
TOTAL	843	100.0	197.4*

*totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being allowed.

Responses here were result of ratings by 3 independent raters of the qualitative text recorded by the telephone interviewers

Table 18: Why respondents had not used Cannabis in the last twelve months

Reason	n	% of responses	% of respondents (n=280)
No desire to use	164	31.5	58.6
Grew out of it / too old	69	13.2	24.6
Bad previous experiences/don't like the effects	58	11.1	20.7
Don't need it/doesn't do anything for me	34	6.5	12.1
Concerned about health effects	28	5.4	10.0
Concerned about psychological effects	22	4.2	7.9
It's illegal	18	3.5	6.4
Answers about being a parent	14	2.7	5.0
Only ever used experimentally	12	2.3	4.3
Opposed to drug use/don't take drugs	11	2.1	3.9
Witness to bad effects of cannabis/drugs on others	10	1.9	3.6
My friends don't use it	10	1.9	3.6
Other	71	13.6	25.4
TOTAL	521	99.9	186.1*

*totals may exceed 100% due to multiple responses being allowed.

Responses here were result of ratings by 3 independent raters of the qualitative text recorded by the telephone interviewers

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Sampling issues

This report provides the findings of the second (post) phase of a pre-post study into the impact of changing cannabis laws in Western Australia on community knowledge of and attitudes towards cannabis use, health, and the laws. The first phase was carried out in October 2002 as a randomised telephone survey prior to the introduction of the Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme, a system of *prohibition with civil penalties* which became law in WA when the *Cannabis Control Act 2003* came into effect on 22 March 2004.

The second phase, conducted between 8 February and 14 March 2007, largely employed the same randomised telephone survey methods as had been used in the first phase. Two differences of note were that: (1) Unlike in the pre-change phase, in 2007 due to changes in the NHMRC ethical guidelines parental or adult permission was required to interview those aged 14 to 17 years of age; (2) In 2007 the response rates were better than those in 2002 with the overall rate being 38.1% compared to 27.6% in the pre-change phase survey.

While it is unlikely that the first of these changes had any significant impact on the pre-post comparisons, it cannot be ruled out that the higher response rate may have to some extent affected some of the pre-post differences observed. Nevertheless many of the findings of this report are consistent with other national and state-based statistics suggesting over time that rates of cannabis use have declined and negative attitudes to cannabis have increased. Given that history of cannabis use has been consistently related to attitudes towards cannabis and the law (e.g. Bowman & Sanson-Fisher, 1994; Fetherston & Lenton, 2005a, 2005b; Makkai & McAllister, 1993) and because the sample was stratified on other key demographic variables of interest (see below) it is likely that the differing response rate had negligible, if any, impact on the results of the pre-post comparisons.

Demographic characteristics of the sample

In all essential respects, the demographic aspects of the phase two sample matched those of phase one, the phase two sample having been stratified to match the first with regards to gender, age and residency in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. With regards to political affiliation the Phase two sample matched that of voting patterns observed in Western Australia for the Legislative Assembly during the 2005 state election. There were no significant differences between the two samples with respect to marital status, being a parent or highest level of education achieved. Changes in wording of the employment question precluded pre-post comparisons being made.

There were two differences of note between the demographic characteristics of the phase one and phase two samples. Although fewer phase two respondents were practicing a religion (43% vs 58%), those that were tended to take their beliefs

significantly more seriously than respondents in phase one. Slightly fewer post phase respondents (96%) said that English was the main language spoken at home than in the pre phase (98%)

Patterns of cannabis use

Lifetime history of cannabis use had decreased from 54% in phase one to 46% in phase two. Similarly, use of cannabis in the past 12 months decreased from 19% in phase one to 12% in phase two. As in phase one, the lifetime (ever used) figure for the phase two sample was significantly higher than the most recent population data for WA (39.6% in 2004), but the proportion of the sample reporting cannabis use in the past 12 months was not significantly different from the state wide data (13.7% in 2004) (Draper & Serafino, 2006).

WA data from National surveys indicate that since about 1998-1999 there has been a decline in cannabis use among both the general population (Draper & Serafino, 2006) and secondary school students (Miller & Lang, 2007). These reductions parallel changes that have occurred at a national level for all those over the age of 14 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005a, 2005b), and among secondary school students (White & Hayman, 2006). Thus the changes in rates of cannabis use observed from the pre to the post phase samples appear consistent with both state and national trends. As such, they were unlikely due to the CIN scheme itself as the declines appear to have occurred nationally and began before the introduction of the CIN scheme.

The Ministerial Working Party on Drug Law Reform, which recommended the CIN scheme to government that, believed that the legislative changes could only create a *context* for a reduction of rates of cannabis use in the community but on their own were unlikely to reduce rates of cannabis use themselves. This was because research suggested that as long as cannabis use remained illegal, neither the criminal law, nor civil penalties themselves had much impact on rates of cannabis use in the community (Lenton & Heale, 2000; Lenton, Humeniuk, Heale, & Christie, 2000). Thus the first goal of the CIN scheme was '*not increasing* prevalence' (emphasis added) of cannabis use (Prior et al., 2002, p. 3), rather than *decreasing* prevalence of cannabis use. Evidence from criminology suggested that a range of other factors such as public attitudes to cannabis use, the perceived fairness of the law and its enforcement, peer influences, and the utility of cannabis use are likely to far outweigh the deterrent value of the law itself on cannabis use (Lenton, 2005). As long as cannabis use remained illegal it was much more likely to be reduced by non-legal factors such as public education and changes in community attitudes and this is why it was strongly recommended that the legal changes were accompanied by a comprehensive ongoing public education campaign, costed at some \$292,440 which, among other things, was to include information about: the adverse health consequences of cannabis use; the laws that apply to cannabis; and treatment and other resources and how to access these (Prior et al., 2002). However, due to budgetary constraints and a lack of will by government, the public education which was conducted was far more modest, and was time limited.

Thus, consistent with the earlier research, the cannabis use data in this study suggest that unlike the predictions of those public commentators who were critical of the scheme, cannabis use in WA appears to have continued to decline despite the

introduction of the Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme. It may be the case that the rate of decline in WA may have been faster or slower than that nationally, however, more data will need to be accrued, before this can be tested.

There were some changes in the ages of respondents who had used cannabis in the last 12 months (recently used cannabis) between the phase one and phase two samples. Thus there was a significant fall in recent users under 18 and a significant increase in those aged 41-50. However the modal age remained respondents in the 18-25 age bracket. Amongst these recent smokers the modal rate of use remained on at least weekly but not daily.

When recent users were asked how the amount and frequency with which they consumed cannabis had changed over the period since the legislative changes had been introduced, the vast majority of recent cannabis users said that no real change had occurred. Furthermore, for the minority who said changes had occurred, very little of these were attributed by them to the legislative change. While the numbers here are small, there is no evidence from this data that the legislative change had led to increases in the amount or frequency of cannabis used by recent users.

Hydroponically cultivated cannabis remained the most commonly used form amongst the phase two sample, reported by 54% of recent users. As in phase one, it was apparent that those recent users aged under 26 were more likely to prefer hydroponic cannabis (64%) than the older respondents. However, the proportion of those under 26 with a preference for hydroponic cannabis was no different in the post from the pre phase. Heads remained the preferred type of cannabis as reported by 81% of the phase two sample. As in the phase one sample, in phase two regular users under age 26 were more likely to report their most common smoking method as 'bong' or 'bucket bong' (52%) compared to older (27%) recent smokers.

The impact of the Cannabis Infringement Notice Scheme on changes in patterns of cannabis use, in particular among regular users is investigated in more detail in the Substudy 2 being conducted as part of this evaluation which involves in depth face-to-face interviews of 100 regular (at least weekly) users pre to post (Chanteloup, Lenton, Barratt, & Fetherston, 2005; Chanteloup, Lenton, Fetherston, & Barratt, 2005). The data presented in the public attitude study presented in this report suggests, however, that patterns of cannabis use by those who have used in the past year has not been greatly affected by the introduction of the CIN scheme, or the limited public education which has been done to date.

Cultivation

The proportion of recent cannabis users who said that they had grown at least some of the cannabis which they had smoked over the past year, increased from 11% in the pre phase to 25% in the post phase. Although for more than 70% of this group this cannabis only comprised less than half of the cannabis they smoked, this represented a significant increase in the proportion of the recent users who were 'self-supplying' to some extent and thus reducing their reliance on the illicit cannabis market. As in the pre phase it was noted that younger respondents (i.e. those under 26) were significantly less likely to attempt to grow cannabis. It is probable that this is in part a function of younger

respondents being unable or unwilling to cultivate cannabis at home because they reside with older relatives or guardians.

One of the goals of the CIN scheme was to “move cannabis supply away from large scale commercial suppliers with criminal affiliations” by reducing “the proportion of the total amount of cannabis consumed which is supplied by higher level commercial sources compared to that which has been grown by the user” (Prior et al., 2002, p. 5)

Recognising that “It is clearly desirable that any option seeks, as far as is possible, to separate the supply of cannabis from the supply of other more harmful illicit drugs”. The designers of the scheme recognised that “the majority of cannabis users do not grow their own cannabis” and consequently recognised that “demand cannot be met entirely by users growing their own cannabis” (Prior et al., 2002, p. 3).

Again, while the regular users study (Chanteloup, Lenton, Barratt, & Fetherston, 2005; Chanteloup, Lenton, Fetherston, & Barratt, 2005) will provide further data on the impact of the CIN scheme on cannabis growing behaviour, the significant increase in the number of cannabis users self-supplying cannabis in this telephone survey of the general public suggests that, to a modest extent, the legal changes have shifted the cannabis market towards self supply. Indeed, the magnitude of this shift is in keeping with the realistic expectations of the schemes designers that most cannabis users will not self supply. Furthermore it is feasible that the exclusion of hydroponic cultivation from eligibility for an infringement notice under the CIN scheme may have mitigated against self supply for some users (Fetherston & Lenton, 2005b).

Overall levels of support for the new laws

While overall levels of support for the scheme dropped from 79% believing it a ‘good idea’ in the pre phase to 66% believing so in the post phase, this is unsurprising given the way the CIN scheme had been characterised in the media since its inception. In particular, *The West Australian* (e.g. Batcheler, 2007; Editorial - *The West Australian*, 2005, 2006; Gibson, 2006; Rule, 2005a, 2005b), but also *The Sunday Times* (e.g. Spagnolo, 2007) had consistently portrayed the scheme as ‘a failure’. It is noteworthy that despite this negative portrayal in the press, two thirds of the phase two sample saw the scheme as a good idea.

As in phase one, in phase two, while this result was affected by cannabis use history, age, parenthood, political affiliation and adherence to a religion, nevertheless, support across all of these categories remained at an absolute majority viewing the new CIN Scheme as ‘*a good idea*’. For example, 69% of those who voted at the last election for ‘left wing’ parties in the lower house, compared to 60% of those who voted for ‘right wing’ parties, believed the CIN scheme to be ‘*a good idea*’.

After the laws were explained some 56% of the post phase sample, compared to 70% of the pre phase sample, believe the strictness of the laws to be ‘*about right*’, with those believing the laws to be ‘*too soft*’ increasing from 19% in the pre phase to 29% in the post phase. Again, this significant increase in the minority of people who believed the law to be too soft is perhaps unsurprising given the way the media portrayal of the laws has unfolded.

As in the pre phase sample perceptions of the severity of the new laws were also significantly affected by respondent's history of cannabis use, having children, adherence to religion and age of respondent. Interestingly, respondents living in country areas were more likely (65%) to view the severity of the cannabis laws as '*being about right*' than respondents from the Perth metropolitan region (54%). Voting patterns and degree of religious involvement (for those who had a religion) were not found to have a significant effect on these results.

General attitudes towards cannabis

Health effects

The pre-post comparisons suggest that the WA public see cannabis use as more problematic from a health perspective in 2007, than they did in 2002 before the scheme was introduced. Even though the opinions of the pre phase sample towards cannabis were overwhelmingly negative, the post phase attitudes were even more so. For example, the proportion agreeing that *people usually have a good time when they use cannabis* fell from 57% in phase one to 39% in phase two. The belief that *using cannabis once a month is not dangerous* fell from 40% of the 2002 sample to 28% in 2007. In 2002 84% of the sample believed that *people under 18 years old should not use cannabis* compared to 93% in 2007. In 2002 77% of respondents believed that *cannabis use may result in dependence* which increased to 85% in 2007. That there was *a clear link between cannabis and mental health problems* was agreed to by 69% of respondents in 2002 and 79% in 2007. While these responses suggest an increased level of knowledge about the health effects of cannabis, the belief that *most people who use cannabis will go on to use more dangerous drugs*, an incorrect statement, rose from 45% in 2002 to 61% in 2007 suggesting that while attitudes to cannabis have become more negative, they are not necessarily more accurate.

Similar trends are evident in other data such as that from the Australian Secondary Schools Alcohol and Drug Survey (ASSAD) which showed that WA students' attitudes towards cannabis surveyed in 2005 were generally more negative towards cannabis than in previous years. Across all age groups WA students were less likely to view taking cannabis as a positive experience in 2005 than in 2002, 1999 and 1996 (Miller & Lang, 2007). Among Australians aged 14 years and over surveyed as part of the NDSHS, 24% saw cannabis associated with 'the drug problem' in 2001, but this had increased to 29% in 2004. Acceptability of regular use of cannabis remained fairly constant with 24% of the 2001 and 23% of the 2004 sample seeing it as acceptable (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005b).

It has been claimed by some that the introduction of the CIN scheme has conveyed the implicit message that cannabis use is not harmful (Editorial - The West Australian, 2006). However, data in this report suggests that a higher proportion of the WA public believe that cannabis is harmful than they did before the scheme came into place. This is not to say that the CIN scheme has been *responsible* for the increasingly negative perception of cannabis from a health perspective. Indeed, these trends appear to have begun before the schemes introduction and been occurring across the country (Miller & Lang, 2007; White & Hayman, 2006). Rather, there is no evidence in these data that cannabis is seen as less of a health issue in WA since the inception of the scheme.

Importantly, while to date there has not been a comprehensive public education campaign at a state level about the health effects of cannabis, over the last 4 years there has been considerable reportage in the media of the health effects of cannabis (e.g. Anonymous, 2006; Creswell, 2006; Dayton, 2006; Hickie, 2005; Roberts, 2006). Again, this has occurred nationally, not simply in WA, yet it points to the importance of addressing cannabis as a health and social issue in the public discourse. One of the goals of the CIN Scheme was to treat cannabis primarily as a health, rather than a criminal law issue. Largely co-incident with the period of the scheme's operation, there has been an increasing focus on the health risks associated with cannabis use in the media, and over the same period we have seen, lower rates of cannabis use and more negative views towards cannabis from a health perspective evident in the data presented in this and other reports. This strongly suggests that the focus on cannabis as a health and social issue, rather than primarily a law enforcement issue, is the correct one.

Attitudes towards cannabis and the law

The phase two sample also had a substantially more negative view of cannabis and the law than respondents in phase one. Support for the *legalisation* of cannabis use by adults fell from 42% in the pre phase to 28% in the post phase. Support for applying criminal penalties to the *sale of a small amount of cannabis from one adult to another* increased from 51% to 63%. The proportion agreeing that *it should not be illegal for a person to give another a small quantity of cannabis* declined from 49% in the pre phase to 32% in the post phase. In phase one, while 89% already agreed with the statement *driving a car while affected by cannabis should be a criminal offence* in phase two this rose still further with 93% of the phase two sample in agreement.

Increasingly negative views towards the legalisation of cannabis have also been evident in other surveys. For example WA data from the NDSHS shows that in 2004 24% of West Australians supported legalisation of cannabis, down from 35% in 2001.

Some critics of the CIN scheme portrayed it as a stalking horse for full legalisation of cannabis while the Ministerial Working Party that designed the scheme (Prior et al., 2002) and the government expressly denied this (Parliament of Western Australia, 2003). These data suggest that although an absolute majority of the public (66%) believe the CIN scheme to be *a good idea*, its introduction has not lead to a further 'softening' of attitudes toward legalisation of cannabis use.

Knowledge of cannabis law

Although most respondents surveyed possessed a correct understanding of the general aspects of the scheme, when it came to specifics, there were frequently misunderstandings of the finer points of the scheme.

With regards to public knowledge of the prohibition against cannabis, the 2007 survey suggests that more work needs to be done in educating the public about this. For example while 72% of the sample understood that *police can issue an infringement notice to adults in possession of a small amount of cannabis*, 45% of the sample believed *it is LEGAL for adults to possess a small amount of cannabis for their personal use*, 15% were unsure and 41% correctly noted that this statement was incorrect.

Asked what they thought the term *Prohibition with civil penalties* meant, 52%, of the 2007 sample compared to 57% of the 2002 sample correctly answered that it meant that *cannabis would be illegal and a fine would apply, but no criminal conviction*. There were however 29% in 2007 (30% in 2002) who mistakenly thought it would mean *cannabis would be illegal and a criminal conviction would be recorded* and 2% (down from 8% in 2002) who thought it meant *cannabis would be legal and no penalties would apply*. There were also 17% (compared to 6% in 2002) who said they *didn't know* what the term meant.

Previous work has shown that one of the problems with introducing a civil penalties scheme such as the CIN scheme was that in states where civil penalty schemes had been introduced for cannabis use a larger proportion of the public believe that cannabis use is legal (Fitzsimmons & Cooper-Stanbury, 2000; Heale, Hawks, & Lenton, 2000). Furthermore a number of studies have found that routinely Australians incorrectly believe 'decriminalised' means that no penalties would apply (Fitzsimmons & Cooper-Stanbury, 2000; Heale, Hawks, & Lenton, 2000; Lenton, 1994). For this reason "the Working Party believe(d) that it (was) critical that the introduction of the proposed scheme be accompanied by a comprehensive public education campaign which clearly articulates that the scheme does not involve the legalisation of cannabis" (Prior et al., 2002, p. 22).

Given that the Liberal Opposition has continued describing the scheme in the media as 'decriminalisation' and 'allowing' possession and cultivation of cannabis (e.g. Sopagnolo, 2006; The Subiaco Post, 2003) it is probably not surprising that, without a comprehensive public education scheme from government, a large minority of the public still do not understand that cannabis use remains prohibited under the scheme.

Attitudes regarding detail of the CIN scheme

As part of its review of its legislative review of the *Cannabis Control Act 2003* the WA government is considering amending the CIN scheme to make the education session mandatory. While the details of this proposal were not evident at the time of designing the questionnaire it was regarded as opportune to gauge public support for the options. The finding that 69% of the sample believed that those given a CIN should be required to pay a fine AND attend an education session far outstripped support for the current system of offenders being given an option (13%) or fine only (7%). While these responses do not consider the practical difficulties in attempting to implement such a proposal, they nevertheless provide an indication of public support for the ideas embodied in such possible changes to the scheme.

The overwhelming levels of support for the state government educating the community and young people about the harms associated with cannabis and the laws that apply to it also provide support for government taking on this role as recommended by the designers of the CIN scheme in 2002 (Prior et al., 2002).

Items addressing public attitudes towards specific aspects of the CIN scheme indicate continued support (77%) for the use of education rather than criminal sanctions to

reduce the use of cannabis in the community and 70% supported police having discretion to charge people exploiting potential loopholes in the CIN scheme.

Among the phase two sample there was substantial support (68%) for the exclusion of hydroponic cultivation of cannabis from the CIN scheme and this had increased from the phase one sample (49%). Despite this, 68% of respondents agreed that this *would result in many people continuing to obtain it from suppliers with criminal associations*, although this view was not held by as many respondents as it was in phase one (75%). Support for the *legislation allowing police the power to act against sellers of hydroponic equipment who knowingly sell equipment for the cultivation of cannabis or otherwise engage in criminal activity* remained high (75%) in phase two. In phase two there was also substantial support (66%) for the idea that *juveniles should be excluded from the CIN system and dealt with under the juvenile justice system* and again support for this measure was even stronger than it was in phase one (45%).

General attitudes to the law and police

As in phase one, respondents in phase two were asked a series of questions to determine the extent to which they generally regarded themselves as law abiding citizens and some general questions regarding attitudes to the role of police in enforcing cannabis law. As in phase one the majority of respondents seemed to judge themselves to be law abiding, although to an even greater extent than did the phase one sample. Importantly the view that *police generally treat cannabis users with respect* increased from 51% in the pre phase to 58% in the post phase and among those who had ever used cannabis agreement with this statement increased from 44% in the pre-phase to 54% in the post phase.

It has previously been found that cannabis users have a more positive attitude to the role of police in enforcing the cannabis laws where civil rather than criminal penalties apply (see Lenton, 2005). According to Sherman (1993), people obey the law more when they believe that it is administered fairly than when they believe it is not. While the impact of the CIN scheme on user's attitudes to police will be examined in more detail in the regular users study, the findings here on attitudes to the law and police suggest that, in keeping with other research police are seen as treating cannabis users more respectfully under a civil prohibition than a criminal penalty approach.

Attitudes to the current laws and proposed changes

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their attitudes to the cannabis laws prior to any explanation of those laws. In each case the terms 'legal' and illegal were defined'. As in the earlier likert scale items on general attitudes to cannabis laws, these items revealed that in the post phase, respondents held generally more negative views towards legalisation of cannabis possession, cultivation and supply. Some 46% of the post phase sample believed it should be legal for adults to possess a small amount of cannabis for their personal use, compared to 61% in the pre phase. In the post phase 39% believed it should be legal for an adult to grow cannabis for their personal use, down from 53% in the pre phase.

As noted above these data also suggest that while an absolute majority of the public (66%) believe the CIN scheme to be *a good idea*, its introduction has not lead to a further 'softening' of attitudes toward legalisation of cannabis use.

With regards to application of criminal or non-criminal penalties for cultivation of up to 2 non-hydroponic plants 49% (pre = 40%) of the post sample thought criminal penalties should apply, while 48% (pre = 59%) believed that non-criminal penalties should apply.

In both the pre and the post phase some 7 out of 10 respondents believed it was unlikely or very unlikely that someone in possession of cannabis would be caught, although in the post phase slightly fewer respondents (70 vs 73%) said it was unlikely such people would be caught.

Changes to the cannabis market

While all respondents were asked about what impact that the law changes had on the availability, supply and cost of cannabis in Western Australia, it was clear that for the majority of the sample, who were not recent cannabis users, they were often *unsure* about market impacts.

Among recent users, who presumably were more familiar with the cannabis market due to their involvement in it, the prevailing view was that the new cannabis laws had not caused any changes to the market for cannabis in WA. For example, 71% believed that the number of people using had remained the same and 14% believed it had increased and 12% said it had decreased. Some 62% believed that the cost of purchasing cannabis had remained the same, 16% said it had increased and 5% thought it had decreased. Some 58% of those who had used cannabis in the past 12 months thought the availability of cannabis had remained about the same, 13% said it had become easier to get and 20% said it had become harder to obtain.

According to 46% of recent users the number of people growing cannabis had remained the same, 32% thought it had increased and 9% thought it had decreased. Some 48% of recent users believed that the amount of contact users had with criminals when obtaining cannabis had remained the same, 8% thought it had increased and 25% believed it had decreased.

Broadly speaking these results are consistent with those on individual behaviour change in that there is little evidence of increased cannabis use under the CIN scheme, but some suggestive evidence of some users being more involved in cultivation and separating themselves from the illicit cannabis market. Once again these trends will be studied in more detail in the study of regular users.

Personal use of other drugs and history of cannabis related charges or seeking help

Some 82% of the sample as a whole said that their use of other drugs and alcohol had remained the same since the new cannabis laws came into force, 9% said their use had decreased and 5% said it had increased. This suggests the cannabis law changes did not appear to have resulted in displacement impacts on other drug use. Some 10% of the sample said that they or a family member had ever been charged with a cannabis offence, not significantly different to the 12% so reporting in the pre phase. A small minority of post phase sample said that they (1%), or a family member (5%), had ever sought help for a problem related to cannabis use not significantly different to the phase one sample.

Sources of further information on cannabis

In phase two there were some interesting changes in the place that respondents said that they would go to find more information about cannabis compared phase one. The three most commonly mentioned sources for information remained unchanged from phase one although their order had shifted considerably with the impact of the internet far more relevant in phase two. Thus in phase one an *alcohol or drug organisation or clinic* was nominated by 27% of respondents, followed by *the internet* mentioned by 25% and *a doctor or GP* mentioned by 16% of respondents. In phase two the most common source mentioned by a very substantial margin was *the internet* (52%) *doctor* (12%), *the Drug & Alcohol Office* (8%), *the police* (8%), *a library* (7%), and *the Health Department* (7%). The *Alcohol and Drug Information Service / phone line* was mentioned by just 4% of respondents. While this question did not address the veracity of evidence obtained by each of these sources, the growing importance of the internet as a source of information about this drug, as it probably is for information of many kinds, should be taken into account by those with a remit to provide community based information on cannabis.

What respondents had heard about the CIN Scheme

Some 70% of phase two respondents said that they had heard nothing about the CIN scheme. While among the 30% who had heard something the most frequent types of responses were those displaying an awareness of the central concepts of the CIN Scheme such as ‘decriminalisation’, or *prohibition with civil penalties*. However, it was also very common for respondents to use phrases such as ‘*You’re allowed*’ or ‘*It’s OK*’ or occasionally ‘*legal*’ in the context of growing or possessing cannabis. As found above, this suggests that there remains a sizable portion of the community who believe that cannabis cultivation and use is ‘legal’ under the CIN scheme.

Given media accounts of the laws described above, one of the other purposes of this question was an attempt to determine what proportion of respondents had heard that the scheme ‘*had failed*’. All responses were recorded verbatim by the telephone interviewers and then these were coded by an independent group of three raters. Not one of the 339 responses given could be coded as ‘*the scheme had failed*’. In reflecting on this question, we believe that this result was probably in large part determined by the way that the question was asked. It is likely that most people when asked ‘what have you heard about these new cannabis laws in Western Australia’ would answer this by

recounting some *aspect* of the laws that they had heard about rather than an *opinion* about the laws or their effectiveness. Should future research be similarly interested in this issue, it should ask this question directly.

Effects of the CIN scheme on cannabis users' willingness to seek help

All respondents were asked '*Since the change in cannabis law, if someone had a problem with cannabis use do you think they would be more or less likely to seek help and why?*' While only 24% of the sample as a whole believed that cannabis users with a problem would be *more likely* to seek help since the changes in the cannabis laws it was of interest that 34% of those who had used the drug in the past 12 months believed that was the case.

Those in the sample as a whole who did not believe help seeking was to be more likely under the CIN scheme identified *users did not want or seek help or perceive they have a 'problem'* (34%), *fear of consequences* (17%), and *softer laws not motivating treatment seeking* (10%) as explanations for this effect. Those who did believe help seeking would be more likely identified the *lowered threat of legal sanctions* (30%), the *impact of education or media campaigns* (18%), *awareness of services available* (17%) and *awareness of health issues* (11%) as explanations.

One of the goals of the CIN scheme was to reduce cannabis related harm by among other things, "removing legal and administrative barriers that would deter those with cannabis-related problems from seeking help" and "being consistent with the provisions of public education about the harmful aspects of cannabis use and the laws that apply to the drug" (Prior et al., 2002, p. 3). The scheme was seen as allowing "those who experience social and health problems from excessive use of cannabis to seek assistance without fear of being charged with a criminal offence" (Prior et al., 2002, p. 1).

The study of regular cannabis users (Chanteloup, Lenton, Barratt, & Fetherston, 2005) conducted in 2002-3 prior to the legislative changes it was found that 81% of 100 regular, mostly daily, cannabis users believed that they, or people that they knew, would be more willing to voluntarily seek help for cannabis problems under the CIN scheme, than they would under the scheme of criminal penalties with cautions for first offenders that was in place at the time.

Even though in the current general public survey only a minority of both the sample as a whole and recent cannabis users indicated that cannabis users would be more willing to seek help under the CIN scheme, it was noteworthy that recent users were significantly more likely to say that this was the case. This suggests that, at least for some recent users, the scheme may mean that they are indeed more willing to seek counselling or other help for cannabis related problems. It will be of interest whether data collected in the post phase in-depth interview study with regular cannabis users supports this finding.

Reasons given for never using or ceasing use of cannabis

As in phase one, in phase two a *lack of desire to use* was the major reason given by respondents for never having used cannabis (56%) or not using in the past 12 months (59%). The next most common reasons given for never having used were *concern about*

health effects (19%), concern about psychological effects (16%), its illegality (13%) and having witnessed bad effects on others (13%). Next most common reasons given for those who had stopped using cannabis were *grew out of it* (25%), having had bad experiences or not liking the effects (21%) and *not needing it or it doing nothing for them* (12%). The *illegality* of cannabis use was only mentioned a reason for ceasing by 6% of respondents who had stopped using the drug.

Conclusions

The finding that both lifetime and past 12 months use of cannabis had decreased from the pre to the post phase was consistent with other data showing downward trends in prevalence of cannabis nationally and among West Australians. It is also consistent with earlier research which suggested that as long as cannabis use remained illegal, as it does under the CIN scheme, whether criminal or civil penalties apply has little further impact on rates of cannabis use in the community. The Ministerial Working Party on Drug Law Reform which recommended the CIN scheme to government recognised that legislative changes could only create a *context* for a reduction of rates of cannabis use in the community but on their own were unlikely to reduce rates of cannabis use.

It will take some years before the longer impact of the CIN scheme on cannabis use can be conclusively determined, yet these early figures showing low rates of use, despite the scheme only being accompanied by very limited public education is further support for the existing evidence that introduction of a *prohibition with civil penalties* approach does not result in increased rates of cannabis use in the community.

However, it is now very important that the legislative changes are accompanied by the state government embarking on the kinds of public education and development of attractive and accessible cannabis treatment options that were recommended by the designers of the scheme in 2002.

It is encouraging that despite the negative coverage in the media, support for the scheme remained high with an absolute majority of 66% of Phase two respondents considering it '*a good idea*' although this had declined from 79% in Phase one. That support existed across the political spectrum was also important, particularly how the issue had been heavily politicised in the public discourse.

Similarly, the finding that, consistent with national trends, the WA public see cannabis use as more harmful to health in 2007, than they did in 2002, is welcome and probably reflects changes in attitudes to smoking and increased coverage of the adverse health effects of cannabis in the popular press. However, the confusion in public understanding of the cannabis laws indicates that public education on the laws is still needed.

The study of regular cannabis users being conducted as part of the larger evaluation of the CIN scheme will address in more detail how the changes in the cannabis laws have affected this sentinel group. However, the findings from the current public attitude survey regarding involvement in self supply of cannabis and willingness to seek treatment suggest that to some extent the scheme may be meeting its goals in these regards. If some recent users are indeed more willing to seek counselling or other help for cannabis related problems that would be a good thing and consistent with treating

the drug primarily as a health and social issue rather than one of the criminal law. If some regular users are more likely to cultivate their own cannabis and have less reliance on the illicit drug market then this would suggest that, in regard to another of the CIN scheme's goals, things are moving in the right direction. It will be of interest whether data collected in the post phase in-depth interview study with regular cannabis users supports these findings.

It was considered important by the Ministerial Working Party that designed the CIN scheme that it be subject to evaluation and review, and this view was also reflected in the *Cannabis Control Act 2003*. This research project was conducted as part of the larger pre-post evaluation both to contribute to that review and because internationally, there had never been a comprehensive apriori pre-post evaluation of such a scheme. It is important that ongoing research is conducted to evaluate the impact of the scheme and any changes to it. This will be relevant to Western Australia, but also to other states and countries where evidence based changes to cannabis laws are being contemplated.

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Appendix I:
The phase two cannabis community attitudes survey

CANNABIS COMMUNITY OPINION PHONE SURVEY PHASE 2

‘Good evening. My name is (...) from (...) Health Sciences at Curtin University. We are conducting a survey for the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University about certain health and legal issues.

I would like to talk to a resident in the household who is aged 14 between 14 and 70 years who is usually a resident of WA and whose birthday is closest to today.’

If not home / unavailable **Appointment Day/Date: ___/___/2007**
Time: _____ **Phone No. _____**

‘In this survey we are wanting to ask your opinion on a number of cannabis and drug issues. You don’t need to have a special knowledge of these issues as it is very important for us to know what a range of Western Australians like yourself think. The National Drug Research Institute is a nationally funded body and is not a part of the government. This household has been randomly selected for inclusion in this study. All the information provided by you will be confidential and no information that could identify you like your name or phone number will be passed on to anyone. If you wish, you can refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the survey at any point. Could you please spare around twenty minutes to participate in this survey?’

If ‘no’ then discontinue interview.

If ‘yes’ then proceed.

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) Hang up
- (4) Language barrier
- (5) Non-resident of WA
- (6) Other (**WRITE IN**): _____

Gender: (RECORD AUTOMATICALLY)

- (1) Male
- (2) Female

Could you begin by telling me into which of these age groups are you in? (READ OUT)

- (1) 14-17 years
- (2) 18-25 years
- (3) 26-30 years
- (4) 31-35 years
- (5) 36-40 years
- (6) 41-50 years
- (7) 51-60 years
- (8) 61-70 years
- (9) Refused to answer (**DO NOT READ OUT**)

[IF PERSON IS AGED UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE (14 TO 17 YEARS, then see over)]

I would like to inform you that this interview may be monitored for quality purposes.

If respondent do not want interview to be monitored, say:

That's alright, this interview will not be monitored?

- (1) Monitored
- (2) Not monitored

Are you a resident of Perth?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Throughout this questionnaire, it is important that you understand that when we refer to 'cannabis' we mean the dried leaves and female flower heads of cannabis or 'marijuana' plants.

Also, when we use the term 'illegal' we do not only mean activities that may result in a criminal record, but also those that can result in civil penalties similar to a speeding fine.

For Interviewer's Information,

If during the interview the respondent appears distressed about the issues raised or otherwise indicates that they would like to speak to a counsellor (or similar) about drug issues you can inform them that:

If you, or someone you know would like to talk to confidentially over the telephone with a trained counsellor regarding cannabis, alcohol, or other drug issues we suggest you call the 24 hour Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) 9442 5000 or Country Toll-free 1800 198 024 or E-mail: adis@health.wa.gov.au

This information will also be conveyed to all respondents at the conclusion of the interview.

IF THE PERSON IDENTIFIED AS PART OF THE NEXT BIRTHDAY METHOD (PERSON A) IS AGED UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE (14 TO 17 YEARS) THEN THE PERSON WILL BE ASKED:

‘Before I interview, I need the permission of an adult. Could I speak to an adult responsible for the household now, that is, someone who is 18 years or over at the moment?’

IF NONE AVAILABLE ARRANGE A CALL-BACK APPOINTMENT

IF RESPONSIBLE ADULT HAS ALREADY BEEN EXPLAINED ABOUT THE STUDY AS PART OF THE ‘NEXT BIRTHDAY’ METHOD ASK:

‘May I have your permission to interview (person A)?’

IF RESPONSIBLE ADULT IS ANOTHER PERSON, SAY:

Good evening. My name is (...) from (...) Health Sciences at Curtin University We are conducting a survey for the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University about certain health and legal issues. In this survey we are wanting to ask about opinions on cannabis and other drug issues

‘This household has been randomly selected for inclusion in the study. All the information collected will be confidential and no information that could identify participants like their name or phone number will be passed on to anyone The randomly selected respondent for this household is [person A], but as he/she is under 18, I need to obtain permission of an adult before I can interview [person A]. I would greatly appreciate your permission to do so

IF PERMISSION IS NOT ABLE TO BE GIVEN RECORD REASONS AND/OR ARRANGE A CALL-BACK APPOINTMENT.

IF PERMISSION REFUSED, RECORD AS SUCH AND SAY:

‘We appreciate your consideration. As we need adult permission to interview people under the age of 18, we are not able to interview (person A) Thank you again for your time.

Just to remind you my name is from the Division of Health Sciences at Curtin University. If you have any questions about this research you can telephone our office on 9266 3789.

IF PERMISSION IS GRANTED RECORD AS SUCH AND SAY:

‘Thanks for that, could I speak to (person A) again?’

PROCEED WITH PERSON A IN INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE PROJECT AND OBTAINING THEIR CONSENT

CANNABIS COMMUNITY OPINION PHONE SURVEY
SECTION A – ATTITUDES TOWARDS CANNABIS

A1 What percent of the adult West Australian population do you think has ever tried cannabis?

A2 What percentage of the adult West Australian population do you think has used cannabis in the last 12 months?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Ask respondent if they agree or disagree with each of the statements, then if appropriate, ask if they (dis)agree 'strongly' or 'somewhat'. Do not read out the 'Don't know' option. These questions should be asked in a random order.

		Strongly agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither agree not disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Don't know	Refused to answer
A3	People usually have a good time when they use cannabis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A4	Cannabis is a dangerous drug	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A5	Cannabis use is a problem in our community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A6	You would be concerned if friends or family were using cannabis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A7	You would use cannabis if a friend offered it to you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A8	You would use cannabis if someone you didn't know offered it to you at a party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A9	Using cannabis once a month is not dangerous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A10	People under 18 years old should not use cannabis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A11	Cannabis use may result in dependence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A12	There is a clear link between cannabis and mental health problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Don't know	Refused to answer
<p>OK, that's great. Now I'd just like to ask a few more similar types of questions. Once again please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements.</p>							
A13	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A13	Cannabis can be beneficial for people with certain medical conditions						
A14	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A14	Most people who use cannabis will go on to use more dangerous drugs						
A15	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A15	The benefits of using cannabis outweigh the harms and risks associated with its use						
A16	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A16	Use of cannabis can lead to people becoming socially isolated						
A17	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A17	It should be legal for people over 18 to use cannabis.						
A18	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A18	Many people who might use cannabis are deterred by the possibility of getting a criminal conviction						
A19	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A19	The sale of a small amount of cannabis from one adult to another should be a criminal offence						
A20	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A20	It should not be illegal for a person to give another a small quantity of cannabis						
A21	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A21	Driving a car while affected by cannabis should be a criminal offence						
A22	q	q	q	q	q	q	q
A22	There has been a lot in the media recently about cannabis law.						

In March 2004 changes were introduced to laws which apply to cannabis in Western Australia.

<p>A23 What have you heard about these new cannabis laws in Western Australia? Refused to answer <input type="checkbox"/> DO NOT PROMPT Then 'to what extent to you believe what you have heard to be true?' What else have you heard? (Then repeat above until 'nothing else')</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Heard</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Don't believe at all that it is true</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Believe somewhat that it is true</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Believe a great deal that it is true</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Don't Know</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Refused to answer</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION B Knowledge of cannabis laws

For the following questions, please state whether you think the answer is ‘TRUE’ or ‘FALSE’ under current West Australian law.

Read these items out in a random order. Do not read out the ‘Don’t Know’ option

		True	False	Don't Know	Refused to answer
B1	People caught with 100 grams or more of cannabis are considered by law to be a dealer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B2	It is LEGAL for adults to possess a small amount of cannabis for their personal use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B3	Police can issue an infringement notice to adults in possession of a small amount of cannabis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B4	Police require a search warrant to search a house where they have reason to believe cannabis may be present	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B5	People who fail to pay their fines can have their driving /vehicle licenses suspended.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B6	People caught cultivating 10 or more cannabis plants are considered by law to be a dealer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B7	Police can issue an infringement notice to adults for cultivation of up to 2 hydroponic cannabis plants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B8	Adults given a cannabis infringement notice can choose to attend an approved cannabis education session rather than pay the fine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B9	It is legal for an adult to possess a pipe or other implement which has been used for smoking cannabis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B10	If police have the evidence, a person found in possession of a small amount of cannabis can be charged with the more serious offence of possession of cannabis with intent to sell or supply.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B11	Police can issue an infringement notice to adults in possession of a small amount of ‘hashish’ or cannabis resin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION C – Attitudes to the current laws

The next few questions are about what you think about the current cannabis laws. Please keep in mind that the word ‘LEGAL’ means an activity that has no sort of penalty attached to it. ‘ILLEGAL’ activities carry a penalty although they are not necessarily a criminal offence.

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the ‘don’t know’ options

- C1 In your opinion should it be legal or illegal for an adult to grow cannabis for personal use.
- Legal
 Illegal
 Don’t know
 Refused to answer
- C2 In your opinion should it be legal or illegal for an adult to possess a small amount of cannabis for personal use?
- Legal
 Illegal
 Don’t Know
 Refused to answer
- C3 Do you think growing 2 cannabis plants should or should not be a criminal offence. This means, if convicted, the person will have a criminal record [If respondent asks whether referring to ‘hydroponic’ or ‘non-hydroponic’, Say: ‘non-hydroponic’]
- Criminal
 Not criminal
 Don’t know
 Refused to answer
- C4 Do you think the current laws concerning possession and growing of cannabis are:
- Too harsh
 About right
 Too lenient
 Don’t know
 Refused to answer

For the items related to likelihood, first ask how likely the respondent thinks the scenario is and then, if necessary, go deeper by asking if they think it is ‘Quite’ or ‘Very’ (un)likely. Do not read out the ‘don’t know option’

- C5 How likely do you think it is that someone in possession of cannabis for personal use will be caught?
- Very likely
 Quite likely
 Possibly
 Quite unlikely
 Very unlikely
 Don’t know
 Refused to answer

- C7 If someone was breaking the law regarding dealing or selling of cannabis, how likely do you think it is that they will be caught?
- Very likely☐
 Quite likely☐
 Possibly☐
 Quite unlikely☐
 Very unlikely☐
 Don't know☐
 Refused to answer☐
- C8 Do you think people are less likely to reuse cannabis if given education rather than a criminal record?
- Yes☐
 No☐
 Don't know☐
 Refused to answer☐
- C9 Do you think the current law concerning the dealing or selling of cannabis are:
- Too harsh☐
 About right☐
 Too lenient☐
 Don't know☐
 Refused to answer☐

The next question is a bit complicated, so please listen carefully and I'll repeat the question if necessary.

- C10 What does it mean if the law regarding cannabis is prohibition with civil penalties? Does it mean that:
- It is legal and no penalties would apply☐
 It is illegal and a fine applies, but no criminal conviction☐
 It is illegal and a criminal conviction would be recorded☐
 Unsure☐
 Refused to answer☐
- Read out options. Do not read out the 'unsure' option.
 May need to repeat this question if necessary

Now, before we continue, I'd like to tell you a little bit about the changes to Cannabis laws which came into effect in WA in March 2004:

These laws are based on a system of *prohibition with civil penalties*.

Under the laws possession or cultivation of any amount of cannabis **REMAINS ILLEGAL**. However, adults found in possession of up to 30 grams of cannabis, or growing up to two (non-hydroponic) plants, or possessing a used cannabis smoking implement can be given a Cannabis Infringement Notice and receive fines totalling up to \$450.

If they pay the fines within 28 days or attend an approved Cannabis Education Session no criminal conviction is recorded against their name. Alternatively they can elect to have the matter heard in court.

In many ways the laws are like those that apply to being caught speeding in a motor vehicle. That is, still illegal, not condoned, but does not usually result in a criminal conviction.

The introduction of the new laws was accompanied by community education about the harms associated with cannabis and about the laws themselves.

Those under 18 years of age are excluded from the Cannabis Infringement Notice scheme, but are dealt with under existing juvenile justice provisions.

[If questioned : Under the juvenile justice provisions the young offender could be cautioned, charged, or offered assessment and counselling]

C11 In general, do you think these new cannabis laws seem

A good idea

A bad idea

Unsure

Refused to answer

I'd just like to explain a little more detail about the Scheme:

Persons who fail to pay their fines or attend an education session within 28 days can incur further costs and have their drivers or vehicle licences suspended.

Possession of amounts of cannabis above the limits (30g or 2 non-hydroponic plants) or involvement in dealing in cannabis remains subject to **STRICT CRIMINAL PENALTIES**.

Under the new scheme, the threshold at which someone is deemed to be a dealer is tougher, down from 100 grams or 25 plants, to 100 grams or 10 plants.

Furthermore, police retain the right to charge people with a criminal supply offence if they have evidence to believe they are dealing in cannabis, even if they are only in possession of small amounts of cannabis.

- C12 In general, do you think the new laws for minor cannabis offenders seem
- Too soft
 - About right
 - Too harsh
 - Refused to answer

Since the new cannabis laws have come into effect, do you think that
Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'Unsure' options.

- C13 the number of people using cannabis has:
- Increased
 - Remained about the same
 - Decreased
 - Unsure
 - Refused to answer

- C14 the cost of purchasing cannabis has:
- Increased
 - Remained about the same
 - Decreased
 - Unsure
 - Refused to answer

- C15 obtaining cannabis has :
- Become easier
 - Remained about the same
 - Become harder
 - Unsure
 - Refused to answer

- C16 the number of people growing their own cannabis has:
- Increased
 - Remained about the same
 - Decreased
 - Unsure

- C17 Under the changes to the cannabis laws the amount of contact cannabis users have with criminals when obtaining cannabis has:
- Increased
 - Remained about the same
 - Decreased
 - Unsure

The next few questions are about hydroponic cannabis. Hydroponic cultivation, involves the growing of plants suspended in a nutrient solution, usually indoors under artificial lighting. Hydroponic cultivation is excluded from the Cannabis Infringement Notice scheme. That is, growing even 1 or 2 cannabis plants hydroponically will still result in criminal penalties.

Do you agree or disagree with these statements regarding hydroponic cannabis?

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'Don't know' options.

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| C18 | The cultivation of even 1 or 2 cannabis plants hydroponically should have been excluded from the new scheme and result in criminal penalties. | Strongly agree <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Agree somewhat <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Neither <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Disagree somewhat <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Don't know <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Refused to answer <input type="radio"/> |
| C19 | Exclusion of hydroponic cannabis plants will result in many users obtaining it from suppliers with criminal associations. | Strongly agree <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Agree somewhat <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Neither <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Disagree somewhat <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Don't know <input type="radio"/> |
| | | Refused to answer <input type="radio"/> |

The new laws also give police the power to act against sellers of hydroponic equipment who knowingly sell equipment for the cultivation of cannabis or who otherwise engage in criminal activity.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

- C20 The laws should give police the power to act against people who sell hydroponic equipment who they have evidence are knowingly selling equipment for cultivation of cannabis.
- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- Neither
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Refused to answer

As I said earlier, the Cannabis Infringement Notice scheme only applies to adults. Those under 18 years of age are excluded from the new system and dealt with under the existing juvenile justice system.

Under the juvenile justice provisions the young offender can be cautioned, charged, or offered assessment and counselling.

- C21 Do you agree or disagree that juveniles should be excluded from the new system and dealt with under the juvenile justice system?
- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- Neither
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Refused to answer

As I said earlier, adults caught by police under the Cannabis Infringement Notice scheme can choose to attend an approved cannabis education session in lieu of paying their fine. Some people have suggested that these requirements should be changed.

C22	Which ONE of the following combinations of penalty do you think is most appropriate for adults caught by police under the Cannabis Infringement Notice scheme?
-----	--

Give the first 4 responses below in a random order. Only give them the 'none of these' if they say 'none these'. Respondents must choose ONE OPTION ONLY

They should be REQUIRED to pay a fine AND attend an education session

They should have the OPTION of paying a fine OR attending an education

They should be REQUIRED to pay a fine with NO REQUIREMENT to attend an education session

They should be REQUIRED to attend an education session with NO REQUIREMENT to pay a fine

None of the above - No penalty should apply

None of the above – More severe penalties should apply

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'Don't know' options.

As before, please tell us the degree to which you agree or disagree with these statements.

C23	The new cannabis laws probably haven't affected the number of people receiving criminal records for a cannabis related offence.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
		Agree somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>
		Neither <input type="checkbox"/>
		Disagree somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>
		Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
		Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
		Refused to answer <input type="checkbox"/>

C24	It is more appropriate to use education to reduce the rate of cannabis use in the community than giving people a criminal record for using the drug.	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
		Agree somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>
		Neither <input type="checkbox"/>
		Disagree somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>
		Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
		Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
		Refused to answer <input type="checkbox"/>

- C25 It is appropriate that police can exercise their discretion in whether to issue a Cannabis Infringement Notice or charge the person to prevent people exploiting the new rules.
If clarification requested provide example: 'like people dealing 'or selling' small amounts of cannabis'
- Strongly agree☐
 Agree somewhat☐
 Neither☐
 Disagree somewhat☐
 Strongly disagree☐
 Don't know☐
 Refused to answer☐

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'Don't know' options.

Are you in favour or against the state government running public education campaigns to:

- C26 Educate the community about cannabis law.
- Strongly in favour☐
 Slightly in favour☐
 No opinion☐
 Slightly against☐
 Strongly against☐
 Don't know☐
 Refused to answer☐
- C27 Educate the community about the harms associated with cannabis.
- Strongly in favour☐
 Slightly in favour☐
 No opinion☐
 Slightly against☐
 Strongly against☐
 Don't know☐
 Refused to answer☐
- C28 Educate young people about the harms associated with cannabis..
- Strongly in favour☐
 Slightly in favour☐
 No opinion☐
 Slightly against☐
 Strongly against☐
 Don't know☐
 Refused to answer☐

SECTION D – General attitudes to laws and the police

Ask these questions in a random order. Begin by asking if they 'agree' or 'disagree', then if necessary go deeper by asking if they (dis)agree 'Somewhat' or 'Strongly'. Do not read out the 'Don't know' option.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| D1 | You are a law abiding citizen | Strongly agree☐
Agree somewhat☐
Neither☐
Disagree somewhat☐
Strongly disagree☐
Don't know☐
Refused to answer☐ |
| D2 | Most laws are worth obeying | Strongly agree☐
Agree somewhat☐
Neither☐
Disagree somewhat☐
Strongly disagree☐
Don't know☐
Refused to answer☐ |
| D3 | People should break laws they disagree with | Strongly agree☐
Agree somewhat☐
Neither☐
Disagree somewhat☐
Strongly disagree☐
Don't know☐
Refused to answer☐ |
| D4 | Strict laws deter illicit drug use | Strongly agree☐
Agree somewhat☐
Neither☐
Disagree somewhat☐
Strongly disagree☐
Don't know☐
Refused to answer☐ |

-
- D5 Police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order
- Strongly agreeQ
 Agree somewhatQ
 NeitherQ
 Disagree somewhatQ
 Strongly disagreeQ
 Don't knowQ
 Refused to answerQ
- D6 Police generally treat cannabis users with respect
- Strongly agreeQ
 Agree somewhatQ
 NeitherQ
 Disagree somewhatQ
 Strongly disagreeQ
 Don't knowQ
 Refused to answerQ
- D7 Police should be given more power to address cannabis in the community
- Strongly agreeQ
 Agree somewhatQ
 NeitherQ
 Disagree somewhatQ
 Strongly disagreeQ
 Don't knowQ
 Refused to answerQ
- D8 Police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offenders
- Strongly agreeQ
 Agree somewhatQ
 NeitherQ
 Disagree somewhatQ
 Strongly disagreeQ
 Don't knowQ
 Refused to answerQ

SECTION E – Personal Cannabis Use

The following questions relate to your personal experience with cannabis. You can refuse to answer any question you wish, although the researchers would like you to answer as many questions as possible. Remember that this survey is anonymous and confidential and no attempt will be made to identify you from the information you give us.

- E1 Have you ever used cannabis? Yes
No
(if no, skip to E3)
Refused to answer
(if refused, skip to E14)
- E2 Have you used cannabis in the last 12 months? Yes
If 'yes' then skip to E4 No
Refused to answer
- E3 Why have you not used cannabis in the last year? It's illegal
No desire to use
OR (if never used cannabis) My friends don't use it
Grew out of it, too old
Concerned my parents might
find out
Concerned about health
effects
Concerned about
psychological/mental health
effects
Can have a good time
without it
Concern about becoming
addicted to it
Prefer to use alcohol
Prefer to use other drugs
Concern about being
caught
Cost/Can't afford it
Can't obtain it
Lack of opportunity
Never been offered it
Don't need it
Concerned about moving on
to more dangerous drugs
Other (Specify _____)
- What factors influenced your decision never to try cannabis?
(tick as many which apply)
- DO NOT PROMPT Record responses to this question in rank order
- Now skip to E14

- E4 How often would you generally use cannabis now?
Read out
 (If no longer uses cannabis, go to (E10) otherwise continue)
- Everyday
 Once a week or more often, but not every day
 2 or 3 times a month
 About once a month
 Every 2 or 3 months
 Every 4 or 5 months
 Once or twice a year
 Less often
 No longer use
- E5 How would you most commonly use cannabis? prompt if necessary
- Smoke it in joints
 Smoke it from a pipe
 Smoke it from a bong
 Smoke it from a bucket bong
 Eat it
 Other
 (Specify) _____
- E6 Is the cannabis you use typically grown hydroponically?
- Yes
 No
 Don't know
 Refused to answer
- E7 Given the option, would you prefer to use cannabis that had been grown hydroponically?
- Always
 Mostly
 Don't care
 Not usually
 Never
 Don't know
 Refused to answer
- E8 What type of cannabis do you most commonly use?
- Leaf
 Heads/buds
 Resin (including hash)
 Oil (including hash oil)
 Skunk
 Other
 (Specify _____)

- E9 What proportion of the cannabis you smoke now have you grown yourself? none
up to 25%
26 to 50%
51 to 75%
76 to 100%
- E10 Since the changes to the cannabis laws in WA, do you think HOW OFTEN you use cannabis has: Increased
Remained the same
Decreased
Don't know
Refused to answer
- E11 Since the changes to the cannabis laws in WA, do you think THE AMOUNT of cannabis you have used has: Increased
Remained the same
Decreased
Don't know
Refused to answer
- E12 To what extent have the changes in cannabis law in WA affected your use of cannabis? Not at all
Somewhat
A great deal
Don't know
- E13 Have you been issued with a Cannabis Infringement Notice in WA? Yes No
- E14 Since the changes to the cannabis laws in WA, do you think your use of other drugs and alcohol has: Increased
Remained the same
Decreased
Don't know
Refused to answer
- E15 Have you or a member of your immediate family ever been charged with a cannabis offence? Yes No
- E16 Have you or a member of your immediate family ever sought or had help for problems associated with cannabis use? Yes - Respondent
Yes - Family member
No
Refused to answer

E17 Where would you go if you wanted more information on cannabis? _____

E16 Since the change in cannabis law, if someone had a problem with cannabis use do you think they would be more or less likely to seek help?

More likely
 Less Likely
 No change
 Don't know

Reasons: _____

Part F – Demographic Information

Now I would like to ask you some brief questions about yourself. Please remember that all the information you provide is completely confidential.

F1) How old are you?

17 or under
 18-25
 26-30
 31-35
 36-40
 41-50
 51-60
 61 or over
 Refused to answer

F2 What sex are you?

Male
 Female
 Refused to answer

F3 What is the postcode of the area in which you live?

Refused to answer

F4 What is your current marital status?

Never married
 Divorced or separated
 Married or defacto relationship
 Widowed
 Refused to answer

<p>F11 What is your current employment situation?</p> <p>Multiple responses possible to this item</p>	Full-time work	q
	Part-time work	q
	Casual work	q
	Unemployed	q
	Benefits or Pension	q
	Student	q
	Home duties	q
	Refused to answer	q
	Other (Please specify)	q _____
<p>F12 Would you mind telling us if you practise any religion and if so, what? (If they ask 'why do you want to know that?' Say 'The researchers are interested in whether peoples' responses to the issues raised in this interview are related to their religious affiliations. But please, only answer this question if you are happy to.'</p>	No religion (Skip to end)	q
	Christian	Christian (unspecified)q
		Anglicanq
		Baptistq
		Catholicq
		Church of Christq
		Jehovah's Witnessesq
		Lutheranq
		Pentecostalq
		Presbyterianq
		Salvation Armyq
		Uniting Churchq
	Non-Christian	Buddhistq
		Islamq
		Judaismq
	Other non-Christianq	
	Refused to answerq	

F13 How important are religious beliefs in your everyday life?

Very important	q
Somewhat important	q
Not very important	q
Not at all important	q
Refused to say	q
Don't know / unsure	q

F14 If you voted in the last state election (Feb 2005) in WA would you mind telling us which party did you vote for in the Lower House (Legislative Assembly) (If they ask 'why do you want to know that?' Say 'The researchers are interested in whether peoples' responses to the issues raised in this interview are related to their political affiliations. But please, only answer this question if you are happy to.')

Australian Labor Party	q
Christian Democratic Party	q
Citizens Electoral Council	q
Community 1st	q
Family First	q
Greens	q
Liberal Party	q
New Country Party	q
One Nation	q
The Nationals	q
Independent	q
Can't remember	q
Refused to say	q
Didn't vote	q

For Your (respondent') Information,

If you, or someone you know would like to talk to confidentially over the telephone with a trained counsellor regarding cannabis, alcohol, or other drug issues we suggest you call the 24 hour Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) 9442 5000 or Country Toll-free 1800 198 024 or E-mail: adis@health.wa.gov.au

That's the end of the survey. On behalf of the National Drug Research Institute, thank you for your time. May I have your first name for auditing purposes if my supervisor needs to follow up this interview?

- (1) Yes Specify _____
- (2) No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Appendix II
The phase one cannabis community attitudes survey

CANNABIS COMMUNITY OPINION PHONE SURVEY

‘Good evening. My name is (...) from (...) Research, a national market research company. We are conducting a survey for the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University of Technology about certain health and legal issues.

I would like to talk to a resident in the household who is aged 14 years or over who is usually a resident of WA and whose birthday is closest to today.’

If not home / unavailable

Appointment Day/Date: ___/___/2002

Time: _____

Phone No. _____

‘In this survey we are wanting to ask your opinion on a number of cannabis and drug issues. You don’t need to have a special knowledge of these issues as it is very important for us to know what a range of Western Australians like yourself think. The National Drug Research Institute is a nationally funded body and is not a part of the government. All the information provided by you will be confidential and no information that could identify you like your name or phone number will be passed on to Curtin University. Could you please spare around twenty minutes to participate in this survey?’

If ‘no’ then discontinue interview.

If ‘yes’ then proceed.

Throughout this questionnaire, it is important that you understand that when we refer to ‘cannabis’ we mean the dried leaves and female flower heads of cannabis or ‘marijuana’ plants.

Also, when we use the term ‘illegal’ we do not only mean activities that may result in a criminal record, but also those that can result in civil penalties similar to a speeding fine.

SECTION A – ATTITUDES TOWARDS CANNABIS

A1 What percent of the adult West Australian population do you think has ever tried cannabis? 0 0 0

A2 What percentage of the adult West Australian population do you think has used cannabis in the last 12 months? 0 0 0

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Ask respondent if they agree or disagree with each of the statements, then if appropriate, ask if they (dis)agree 'strongly' or 'somewhat'. Do not read out the 'Don't know' option. These questions should be asked in a random order.

	Strongly agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
A3 People usually have a good time when they use cannabis	0	0	0	0	0	0
A4 Cannabis is a dangerous drug	0	0	0	0	0	0
A5 Cannabis use is a problem in our community	0	0	0	0	0	0
A6 You would be concerned if friends or family were using cannabis	0	0	0	0	0	0
A7 You would use cannabis if a friend offered it to you	0	0	0	0	0	0
A8 You would use cannabis if someone you didn't know offered it to you at a party	0	0	0	0	0	0
A9 Using cannabis once a month is not dangerous	0	0	0	0	0	0
A10 People under 18 years old should not use cannabis	0	0	0	0	0	0
A11 Cannabis use may result in dependence	0	0	0	0	0	0
A12 There is a clear link between cannabis and mental health problems	0	0	0	0	0	0

		Strongly agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither agree not disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
	OK, that's great. Now I'd just like to ask a few more similar types of questions. Once again please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements.						
A13	Cannabis can be beneficial for people with certain medical conditions	0	0	0	0	0	0
A14	Most people who use cannabis will go on to use more dangerous drugs	0	0	0	0	0	0
A15	The benefits of using cannabis outweigh the harms and risks associated with its use	0	0	0	0	0	0
A16	Use of cannabis can lead to people becoming socially isolated	0	0	0	0	0	0
A17	It should be legal for people over 18 to use cannabis. (Use vs. availability)	0	0	0	0	0	0
A18	Many people who might use cannabis are deterred by the possibility getting a criminal conviction	0	0	0	0	0	0
A19	The sale of a small amount of cannabis from one adult to another should be a criminal offence	0	0	0	0	0	0
A20	It should not be illegal for a person to give another a small quantity of cannabis	0	0	0	0	0	0
A21	Driving a car while affected by cannabis should be a criminal offence	0	0	0	0	0	0
A22	There has been a lot in the media recently about cannabis law.	0	0	0	0	0	0

SECTION B Knowledge of cannabis laws

For the following questions, please state whether you think the answer is 'TRUE' or 'FALSE' under current West Australian law.

Read these items out in a random order. Do not read out the 'Don't Know' option

	True	False	Don't Know
B1 Anyone caught with 100 grams or more of cannabis will be considered a dealer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B2 The maximum penalty for possession of a smoking implement such as bong or a pipe containing traces of cannabis is three years gaol and / or a fine of \$3000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B3 The maximum penalty for possession of less than 100 grams of cannabis is 2 years jail and / or a fine of \$2000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B4 Police require a search warrant to search a house where they have reason to believe cannabis may be present	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B5 People found guilty of minor cannabis offences and who fail to pay their fines face suspension of their driving /vehicle licenses or gaol.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B6 Police have the option of issuing a caution to adults, instead of arresting them, if found in possession of small amounts of cannabis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For the following questions, please answer 'yes' or 'No'.

Read these next three scenarios in a random order

According to the current law, which of the following possible consequences could occur to an adult found in possession of cannabis for the first time? Firstly read out then repeat wording of the question, going through possible consequences one at a time. Ask these items in random order. Respondents may choose more than one.

		Yes	No	Don't know
B7	Formal caution by a police officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B8	Must attend a cannabis education session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B9	Criminal conviction recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B10	Summons to appear in court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B11	Six months jail sentence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B12	A fine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B13	Receive an infringement notice similar to a speeding ticket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B14	Must appear at drug court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B15	No penalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B16	Compulsory drug treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

According to the current law, which of the following possible consequences could occur to an adult found growing a cannabis plant (may choose more than one). Firstly read out then repeat wording of the question, going through possible consequences one at a time. Ask these items in random order. Respondents may choose more than one.

		Yes	No	Don't know
B17	Formal caution by a police officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B18	Attendance at a cannabis education session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B19	Criminal conviction recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B20	Summons to appear in court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B21	Six months jail sentence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B22	A fine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B23	Receive an infringement notice similar to a speeding ticket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B24	Appearance at drug court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B25	No penalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B26	Compulsory drug treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The next few questions are about what you think about the current cannabis laws and their proposed changes. Please keep in mind that the word 'LEGAL' means an activity that has no sort of penalty attached to it. 'ILLEGAL' activities carry a penalty although they are not necessarily a criminal offence.

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'don't know' options

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| C1 | In your opinion should it be legal or illegal for an adult to grow cannabis for personal use. | Legal☐
Illegal☐
Don't know☐ |
| C2 | In your opinion should it be legal or illegal for an adult to possess a small amount (less than 100g) of cannabis for personal use? | Legal☐
Illegal☐
Don't Know☐ |
| C3 | Do you think growing 2 cannabis plants should or should not be a criminal offence. This means, if convicted, the person will have a criminal record | Criminal☐
Not criminal☐
Don't know☐ |
| C4 | Do you think the current laws concerning possession and growing of cannabis are: | Too harsh☐
About right☐
Too lenient☐
Don't know☐ |

For the items related to likelihood, first ask how likely the respondent thinks the scenario is and then, if necessary, go deeper by asking if they think it is 'Quite' or 'Very' (un)likely. Do not read out the 'don't know option'

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| C5 | How likely do you think it is that someone in possession of cannabis for personal use will be caught? | Very likely☐
Quite likely☐
Possibly☐
Quite unlikely☐
Very unlikely☐
Don't know☐ |
|----|---|--|

- C6 If someone was growing cannabis for personal use, how likely do you think it is that they will be caught
- Very likelyQ
Quite likelyQ
PossiblyQ
Quite unlikelyQ
Very unlikelyQ
Don't knowQ
- C7 If someone was breaking the law regarding dealing or selling of cannabis, how likely do you think it is that they will be caught?
- Very likelyQ
Quite likelyQ
PossiblyQ
Quite unlikelyQ
Very unlikelyQ
Don't knowQ
- C8 Do you think people are less likely to reuse cannabis if given education rather than a criminal record
- Very likelyQ
Quite likelyQ
PossiblyQ
Quite unlikelyQ
Very unlikelyQ
Don't knowQ
- C9 Do you think the current law concerning the dealing or selling of cannabis are:
- Too harshQ
About rightQ
Too lenientQ
Don't knowQ

The next question is a bit complicated, so please listen carefully and I'll repeat the question if necessary.

- C10 What would it mean if the law regarding cannabis was prohibition with civil penalties? Would it mean that:
- It would be legal and no penalties would applyQ
It would be illegal and a fine would apply, but no criminal convictionQ
It would be illegal and a criminal conviction would be recordedQ
UnsureQ
- Read out options. Do not read out the 'unsure' option.
May need to repeat this question if necessary

Now, before we continue, I'd like to tell you a little bit about the new laws: When the proposed scheme including changes to the laws regarding cannabis comes into effect the laws will be based on a system of *prohibition with civil penalties*.

Under the proposed laws possession of any amount of cannabis **WILL REMAIN ILLEGAL**. However, adults found in possession of up to 30 grams of cannabis, or growing up to two (non-hydroponic) plants, will be given an infringement notice and receive a fine of up to \$300., but no criminal conviction will be recorded against their name. In this regard the laws will be much like those that apply to being caught speeding in a motor vehicle. That is still illegal, not condoned, but does not usually result in a criminal conviction.

The introduction of the new laws will be accompanied by community education about the harms associated with cannabis and about the laws which apply to its use.

Those under 18 years of age will be excluded from the new system, but will be dealt with under existing juvenile justice provisions.

C11 In general, do you think the proposed cannabis laws seem

A good idea
A bad idea
Unsure

I'd just like to explain a little more detail about the new system: Under the proposed scheme for cannabis, offenders will have to pay their fine within 28 days or attend a specified cannabis education session within the same period.

Possession of amounts of cannabis above these limits (30g or 2 plants) or involvement in dealing in cannabis will remain subject to **STRICT CRIMINAL PENALTIES**. Under the proposed new scheme, the threshold for dealing is tougher, down from 100 grams or 25 plants to 100 grams or 10 plants.

C12 In general, do you think the proposed laws for minor cannabis offenders seem

Too soft
About right
Too harsh

After the proposed new laws come into effect, do you think that

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'Unsure' options.

- C13 the number of people using cannabis will:
- Increase
- Remain about the same
- Decrease
- Unsure
- C14 the cost of purchasing cannabis will:
- Increase
- Remain about the same
- Decrease
- Unsure
- C15 obtaining cannabis will be:
- Easier
- Remain about the same
- Harder
- Unsure
- C16 the number of people growing their own cannabis will:
- Increase
- Remain about the same
- Decrease
- Unsure
- C17 Under the proposed changes to the cannabis laws the amount of contact cannabis users will have with criminals when obtaining cannabis will:
- Increase
- Remain about the same
- Decrease
- Unsure

The next few questions are about hydroponic plants which are excluded from this proposed scheme. That is, growing even 1 or 2 cannabis plants hydroponically will still result in criminal penalties. Do you agree or disagree with these statements regarding hydroponic cannabis?

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'Don't know' options.

- C18 The cultivation of even 1 or 2 cannabis plants hydroponically should be excluded from the new scheme and result in criminal penalties.
- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- Neither
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

C19 If hydroponically grown cannabis was excluded from the new laws many people would continue to obtain it from suppliers with criminal associations.

Strongly agree

Agree somewhat

Neither

Disagree somewhat

Strongly disagree

Don't know

C20 The proposed cannabis laws should have the power to act against people who sell hydroponic equipment who police have evidence are engaging in criminal activities such as commercial cannabis production.

Strongly agree

Agree somewhat

Neither

Disagree somewhat

Strongly disagree

Don't know

As I said earlier, the proposed new scheme will only apply to adults. Those under 18 years of age will be excluded from the new system and dealt with under the existing juvenile justice system.

C21 Do you agree or disagree that juveniles should be included in the new system?

Strongly agree

Agree somewhat

Neither

Disagree somewhat

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Ask these questions in a random order. Do not read out the 'Don't know' options.

As before, please tell us the degree to which you agree or disagree with these statements.

C22 The proposed new laws will not affect the number of people receiving criminal records for a cannabis related offence.

Strongly agree

Agree somewhat

Neither

Disagree somewhat

Strongly disagree

Don't know

- C23 It is more appropriate to use education to reduce the rate of cannabis use in the community than giving people a criminal record for using the drug.
- Strongly agree☐
 Agree somewhat☐
 Neither☐
 Disagree somewhat☐
 Strongly disagree☐
 Don't know☐
- C24 Allowing police the option to exercise their discretion will assist in apprehending people attempting to exploit loopholes the new rules.
If clarification requested provide example: 'like people setting up syndicates to grow and distribute large quantities of cannabis'
- Strongly agree☐
 Agree somewhat☐
 Neither☐
 Disagree somewhat☐
 Strongly disagree☐
 Don't know☐

SECTION D – General attitudes to laws and the police

Ask these questions in a random order. Begin by asking if they 'agree' or 'disagree', then if necessary go deeper by asking if they (dis)agree 'Somewhat' or 'Strongly'. Do not read out the 'Don't know' option.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following

- D1 You are a law abiding citizen
- Strongly agree☐
 Agree somewhat☐
 Neither☐
 Disagree somewhat☐
 Strongly disagree☐
 Don't know☐
- D2 Most laws are worth obeying
- Strongly agree☐
 Agree somewhat☐
 Neither☐
 Disagree somewhat☐
 Strongly disagree☐
 Don't know☐

D3	People should break laws they disagree with	Strongly agree☐ Agree somewhat☐ Neither☐ Disagree somewhat☐ Strongly disagree☐ Don't know☐
D4	Strict laws deter illicit drug use	Strongly agree☐ Agree somewhat☐ Neither☐ Disagree somewhat☐ Strongly disagree☐ Don't know☐
D5	Police deserve respect for their role in maintaining law and order	Strongly agree☐ Agree somewhat☐ Neither☐ Disagree somewhat☐ Strongly disagree☐ Don't know☐
D6	Police generally treat cannabis users with respect	Strongly agree☐ Agree somewhat☐ Neither☐ Disagree somewhat☐ Strongly disagree☐ Don't know☐
D7	Police should be given more power to address cannabis in the community	Strongly agree☐ Agree somewhat☐ Neither☐ Disagree somewhat☐ Strongly disagree☐ Don't know☐
D8	Police time could be better spent than on investigating minor cannabis offenders	Strongly agree☐ Agree somewhat☐ Neither☐ Disagree somewhat☐ Strongly disagree☐ Don't know☐

SECTION E – Personal Cannabis Use

The following questions relate to your personal experience with cannabis. You can refuse to answer any question you wish, although the researchers would like you to answer as many questions as possible. Remember that this survey is anonymous and confidential and no attempt will be made to identify you from the information you give us.

- E1 Have you ever used cannabis? Yes
 No
 Refused to answer
 (if no, skip to E3)
- E2 Have you used cannabis in the last 12 months? Yes
 If 'yes' then skip to E4 No
- E3 Why have you not used cannabis in the last year?
 OR (if never used cannabis)
 What factors influenced your decision never to try cannabis?
 (tick as many which apply)
 DO NOT PROMPT Record responses to this question in rank order
- It's illegal
 No desire to use
 My friends don't use it
 Grew out of it, too old
 Concerned my parents might find out
 Concerned about health effects
 Concerned about psychological effects
 Can have a good time without it
 Concern about becoming addicted to it
 Prefer to use alcohol
 Prefer to use other drugs
 Concern about being caught
 Cost/Can't afford it
 Can't obtain it
 Lack of opportunity
 Never been offered it
 Don't need it
 Concerned about moving on to more dangerous drugs
 Other
 (Specify _____)
- Now skip to E10

- E4 How often would you generally use cannabis now?
 Read out
 (If no longer uses cannabis, go to (E9) otherwise continue)
- Everyday
 Once a week or more often, but not every day
 2 or 3 times a month
 About once a month
 Every 2 or 3 months
 Every 4 or 5 months
 Once or twice a year
 Less often
 No longer use
- E5 How would you most commonly use cannabis? prompt if necessary
- Smoke it in joints
 Smoke it from a pipe
 Smoke it from a bong
 Smoke it from a bucket bong
 Eat it
 Other
 (Specify) _____
- E6 Is the cannabis you use typically grown hydroponically?
- Yes
 No
 Don't know
- E7 Given the option, would you prefer to use cannabis that had been grown hydroponically?
- Always
 Mostly
 Don't care
 Not usually
 Never
 Don't know
- E8 What type of cannabis do you most commonly use? (May choose more than one)
- Leaf
 Heads
 Resin (including hash)
 Oil (including hash oil)
 Skunk
 Other
 (Specify) _____

- E9 What proportion of the cannabis you smoke now have you grown yourself? none
up to 25%
26 to 50%
51 to 75%
76 to 100%
- E10 After the proposed changes to the law are implemented, do you think the amount of cannabis you use will: Increase
Remain the same
Decrease
Don't know
- E11 After the proposed changes to the law are implemented, do you think how often you use cannabis will: Increase
Remain the same
Decrease
Don't know
- E12 After the proposed changes to the law are implemented, do you think your use of other drugs and alcohol will: Increase
Remain the same
Decrease
Don't know
- E13 After the proposed changes to the law are implemented do you think the amount of cannabis plants you would grow will: Increase
Remain the same
Decrease
Don't know
- E14 Have you or a member of your immediate family ever been charged with a cannabis offence? Yes No
- E15 Have you or a member of your immediate family ever sought or had help for problems associated with cannabis use? Yes Respondent
Family member
No
- E16 Where would you go if you wanted more information on cannabis? _____

Part F – Demographic Information

Now I would like to ask you some brief questions about yourself. Please remember that all the information you provide is completely confidential.

F1) How old are you?

- 17 or under
- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 or over
- Refused to answer

F2) What sex are you?

- Male
- Female
- Refused to answer

F3) What is the postcode of the area in which you live?

-
- Refused to answer

F4) What is your current marital status?

- Never married
- Divorced or separated
- Married or defacto relationship
- Widowed
- Refused to answer

F5) Do you have any children?

- yes
 - no
 - Refused to answer
- If 'no' skip to (F7)

- F6 How many children do you have in each of the following age groups? (In total – not just at home)
- 6 or under
- 7 to 9
- 10 to 12
- 13 to 15
- 16 to 18
- 19 to 21
- 22 or over
- Refused to answer
- F7 What is the main language spoken in your home?
- English
- Other
- Refused to answer
- (If 'other' specify _____)
- F8 Do you consider yourself to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?
- yes
- no
- Refused to answer
- F9 In which Country were you born?
- Australia
- Other
- (if other specify _____)
- Refused to answer
- F10 What is the highest level of education you have attained to date?
- Primary school only
- Secondary school 1-2 years
- Secondary school 3-4 years
- Secondary school 5-6 years
- Trade qualifications
- Tertiary qualifications other than university (eg: tech college)
- University undergraduate degree
- Post-graduate university qualifications
- Refused to answer

F11 What is your current employment situation?	Full-time work	q
Multiple responses possible to this item	Part-time work	q
	Casual work	q
	Unemployed	q
	Benefits or Pension	q
	Student	q
	Home duties	q
	Refused to answer	q
	Other (Please specify)	q _____
F12 Would you mind telling us if you practise any religion and if so, what?(If they ask 'why do you want to know that?' Say 'The researchers are interested in whether peoples' responses to the issues raised in this interview are related to their religious affiliations. But please, only answer this question if you are happy to.'	No religion (Skip to end)	q
	Christian	Christian (unspecified)q
		Anglicanq
		Baptistq
		Catholicq
		Church of Christq
		Jehovah's Witnessesq
		Lutheranq
		Pentecostalq
		Presbyterianq
		Salvation Armyq
		Uniting Churchq
		Other Christianq
	Non-Christian	Buddhistq
		Islamq
		Judaismq
		Other non-Christianq
		Refused to answerq

F13 How important are religious beliefs in your everyday life?

Very important	q
Somewhat important	q
Not very important	q
Not at all important	q
Refused to say	q
Don't know / unsure	q

F14 If you voted in the last state election would you mind telling us which party did you vote for in the Lower House (Legislative Assembly) (if they ask 'why do you want to know that?' Say 'The researchers are interested in whether peoples' responses to the issues raised in this interview are related to their political affiliations. But please, only answer this question if you are happy to.')

ALP	q
Liberal	q
National	q
Democrat	q
Greens	q
One Nation	q
Christian Democrats	q
Liberals for Forests	q
Independent	q
Can't remember	q
Refused to say	q
Didn't vote	q

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Appendix III
Coding scheme for qualitative items in the phase two survey

Table 19: Coding key for item A23: ‘What have you heard about these new cannabis laws in Western Australia?’

Definition	Code
Haven't heard anything	0
Heard something but can't remember or unclear on details	1
General answers re: legal status	
mentioning ‘decriminalisation’ or ‘civil penalties’ but with no detail	2
Mentions ‘legalised’ but no detail	3
Mentions softer/weaker laws but not detail	4
Mentions harsher/more strict laws but not detail	5
Other answers about legal status that contain no detail	6
Answers about growing cannabis	
General answer about growing cannabis decriminalised or civil penalties (small amount / specified amount)	7
answer about growing up to 2 plants decriminalised or civil penalties	8
Answer about growing more than 2 plants decriminalised or civil penalties	9
General answer about being allowed / you can have/It's OK to grow	10
Answer about being allowed / you can have/It's OK to grow up to 2 plants	11
Answer about being allowed / you can have/It's OK to grow more than 2 plants	12
General answer about growing cannabis legalised	13
General answer about growing up to 2 plants cannabis legalised	14
General answer about growing more than 2 plants cannabis legalised	15
Other answers about legal status of growing cannabis	16
Answers about possession or use of cannabis	
General answer about possession or use of cannabis decriminalised / not criminal /small amount (<5g =small amount) / specified amount	17
answer about possession or use of up to 30 grams cannabis decriminalised	18
answer about possession or use of more than 30 grams cannabis decriminalised	19
General answer about being allowed / you can have/It's OK to possess or use/small amount (<5g = small amount)/specified amount	20
answer about being allowed / you can have/It's OK to possess or use up to 30g	21
answer about being allowed / you can have/It's OK to possess or use more than 30 g	22
General answer about possession or use of cannabis legalised / small amount (<5g=small amount)	23

Table 19 cont: Coding key for item A23: ‘What have you heard about these new cannabis laws in Western Australia?’

Definition	Code
answer about possession or use of up to 30g cannabis legalised	24
answer about possession or use of more than 30g cannabis legalised	25
Other answer concerning possession or use of cannabis	26
Answers about dealing cannabis	
answer about dealing cannabis decriminalised	27
Answer about being allowed/you can/it’s OK to deal cannabis	28
Answer about dealing cannabis legalised	29
Answer about status of dealing cannabis unchanged or criminal	30
Answer about stronger/harsher penalties for dealing	31
Answer about softer/weaker penalties for dealing	32
Other answers about dealing cannabis	33
Answers about enforcement	
General answers about enforcement	34
answers about enforcement with specific mention of police powers of discretion	35
Answers about scheme design, implementation and results	
General favourable answer answers concerning outcomes of CIN scheme – eg: scheme is working	37
General unfavourable answer answers concerning outcomes of CIN scheme– eg: scheme not working	38
Answers concerned with payment/non-payment of fees	39
Answers concerning CIN scheme– implementation or design	40
Answers concerning CIN scheme- degree of severity	42
Answers concerning CIN scheme – mandatory & public education	43
Answers concerning CIN scheme – fines and payment	44
Other answers concerning overall success or failure of CIN scheme	45
They get a ‘warning’	46
Answer on legal status specific to medicinal marijuana	
Answers dealing with medical marijuana	50
Answer on legal status of cannabis and driving	
Answers concerned with cannabis and driving	60
Miscellaneous	
Miscellaneous answers not applicable elsewhere	70

Table 20: Coding key for item QE3a: ‘Why have you not used cannabis in the last year?’

Description	Code
It’s illegal	1
No desire to use	2
My friends don’t use it	3
Grew out of it, too old	4
Concerned my parents might find out	5
Concerned about health effects (general)	6
Concerned about psychological/mental effects	7
Health effects (definitely have experienced or existing health condition)	8
Can have a good time without it	9
Concern about becoming addicted to it	10
Prefer to use alcohol	11
Prefer to use other drugs	12
Concern about being caught	13
Cost/Can’t afford it	14
Can’t obtain it	15
Lack of opportunity / not exposed to it	16
Never been offered it	17
Don’t need it / doesn’t do anything for me	18
Concerned about moving on to more dangerous drugs	19
Bad previous experiences/Don’t like the effects	20
Answers about pregnancy	21
Answers about being a parent	22
Opposed to drug use / don’t take drugs	23
Influence of friends/family	24
Work place drug testing	25
Witness to bad effects of cannabis/drugs on others	26
Only ever used experimentally	27
Have other responsibilities (not parental)	28
Cannabis is not a social drug	29
Have changed lifestyle	30
Don’t like smoking	31
General concern re: risks unspecified	32
Other	98
Don’t know	99

Table 21: Coding key for QE3b: 'Why have you never used cannabis?'

Description	code
It's illegal	1
No desire to use	2
My friends don't use it	3
Grew out of it, too old	4
Concerned my parents might find out	5
Concerned about health effects (general)	6
Concerned about psychological/mental effects	7
Health effects (definitely have experienced or existing health condition)	8
Can have a good time without it	9
Concern about becoming addicted to it	10
Prefer to use alcohol	11
Prefer to use other drugs	12
Concern about being caught	13
Cost/Can't afford it	14
Can't obtain it	15
Lack of opportunity / not exposed to it	16
Never been offered it	17
Don't need it / doesn't do anything for me	18
Concerned about moving on to more dangerous drugs	19
Influence of family / friends	20
Witnessed bad effects on others	21
Religious/moral reasons	22
Opposed to drug use /don't take drugs	23
Against smoking	24
Career (inc. sports) reasons	25
Concern about losing control/intoxication	26
Don't like the smell	27
Education	28
Never tried cannabis/drugs for reasons not given	29
<i>'I'm too smart/educated/sensible'</i> etc.	30
Fear of cannabis/ what might happen etc.	31
Other responsibilities	32
General concern re: risks unspecified	33
Other	98
Don't know	99

Table 22: Coding Key for item E17: ‘Where would you go if you wanted more information on cannabis?’

Definition	Code
Doctor	1
Library	2
Internet	3
Police	4
Alcohol & Drug Authority / Drug & Alcohol Office/Next step (i.e. Government service)	5
Drug and alcohol service/counselling/dependency group/ rehabilitation etc.	6
Phone line/ADIS / telephone counselling etc.	7
Drug Awareness Group (not treatment)	8
Counsellor/counselling service (not AOD specific)	9
Health Department	10
Hospital	11
Community health service	12
Chemist/Pharmacist	13
Psychologist/Psychiatrist	14
Youth centre	15
School/teachers	16
Books/pamphlets	17
Phone book	18
Local council	19
Cannabis users	20
Friends	21
Family	22
Wouldn't bother seeking information	23
Church	24
Other	98
Don't know	99

Table 23: Coding key for item E18b: ‘Since the change in cannabis law, if someone had a problem with cannabis use do you think they would be more or less likely to seek help & why?’

Definition	Code
Don't know or refused to answer	0
Said ‘<i>More likely</i>’ at QE18	1
Answers specifically about decriminalisation	3
Answers mentioning less threat of legal sanctions	4
Answers mentioning mandated treatment	5
Answers mentioning harsher laws or threats of sanctions	6
Answers about changes to community attitudes	7
Answers mentioning less stigma or more relaxed attitudes about cannabis	8
Social changes	9
Answers about changes to awareness	10
Answers about awareness of health issues	11
Answers about awareness of availability of services	12
Answers about education or media campaigns	13
Answers about changes of profile of services	14
Answers about users' personal choices	15
Answers about choices made due to health concerns	16
Other answers not elsewhere applicable	17
Don't know	18

Table 23 cont : Coding key for item E18b: ‘Since the change in cannabis law, if someone had a problem with cannabis use do you think they would be more or less likely to seek help & why?’

Definition	Code
Said ‘ <i>less likely</i> ’ at QE18	19
Answers about the illicit nature of cannabis	20
Answers concerning fear of consequences	21
Answers expressing beliefs that the laws are now harsher	22
Answers about softer laws do not motivate treatment seeking	23
Answers about services	24
Answers about lack of awareness of services	25
Answers about ‘fears’ or concerns regarding entering treatment	26
Answers concerning lack of belief services can be of help	27
Answers dealing with users being more likely to help themselves than seek treatment	28
Answers about shame and stigma	29
Answers about dependency and addiction	30
Answers about users not wanting/seeking help or not perceiving they have a ‘problem’	31
Answers about users being unaware of harms and dangers of use	32
Answers about users not being capable to make the decision to seek help	33
Other answers not elsewhere applicable	34
Don’t know	35

Table 23 cont: Coding key for item E18b: ‘Since the change in cannabis law, if someone had a problem with cannabis use do you think they would be more or less likely to seek help & why?’

Definition	Code
Said ‘no change’ at QE18	36
Answers about behavioural change	38
Answers concerning how changes to the law will not affect behaviour	39
Answers dealing with lack of serious penalties does not motivate treatment seeking	40
Answers concerning how (il)licit status of cannabis is not an issue	41
Answers dealing with how legal changes have not addressed the real issues	42
Answers stating that people are not aware of legal changes or what the law is	43
Answers about services	44
Answers about the conduct or ethical behaviour of services	45
Answers about the interaction of services and the police	46
Answers about ‘fears’ or concerns re: entering treatment	47
Answers about dependency or addiction	48
Answers dealing with users not wanting/seeking help, not seeing use as a problem, unwilling to change, ‘happy using’ etc.	49
Answers like ‘users just don’t care’	50
Answers like ‘users more likely to help themselves than seek treatment’	51
Answers stating that users are unaware of harms & dangers of use	52
Answers stating that cannabis use does not result in clinically significant issues requiring treatment (or similar)	53
Answers about the acceptability of cannabis	54
Answers stating that users won’t change treatment seeking behaviour because cannabis is more acceptable	55
Answers to the effect that users will not change behaviour unless they are caught	56
Answers stating that users won’t change treatment seeking behaviour because cannabis is less acceptable	57
Other answers not applicable elsewhere	58
Don’t know	59