

Question	Answer
Will this be subsidised for lower income families?	Council is proposing to manufacture, cultivate and produce, not sell medicinal cannabis to the public, which is currently only available on prescription. As such the issue of subsidies for lower income families is not something that would be within Council's control.
On what basis will council proceed? We hear about 'support' and 'appetite', yet the FAQs suggest the proposal will only not proceed "if the opposition is overwhelming".	Council will only move to the next stage, which would be to undertake a feasibility study, if the majority of respondents who provide feedback support this.
What's the demand like for medicinal cannabis at the moment that council is aware of?	Demand for medicinal cannabis has been growing rapidly in recent years, with the Therapeutic Goods Administration special access scheme (SAS-B) approvals for patients more than doubling in the last year.
How can we ensure this venture won't end being a debt trap if it fails?	A feasibility study would ultimately outline the matters critical to understanding funding needs and best avenues to secure it. But, grants money, funding from potential partners, Government, a loan or calling on reserves are all potential options to help fund a start-up, should this be supported by the community.
Should the venture prove successful, what guarantees will the council implement to avoid selling the business in the future, to a private enterprise?	If the venture goes ahead, it is intended the business would remain in the hands of Council to ensure all profits are directly funnelled into reducing rates for residents in the City of Maribyrnong.
Has Council contacted medicinal cannabis producers elsewhere in the country to gain advice as to start-up costs?	We are not at this stage yet, but if the community is supportive of the idea this would be done as part of a feasibility study to better understand the operational model, costs, timeframe and business structure.
<p>This proposed enterprise is of great concern in that it brings in a serious risk of criminality.</p> <p>There are strict guidelines on security measures surrounding any enterprise to cultivate, produce and manufacture medicinal cannabis.</p> <p>Councillors and council staff were not elected or employed with a view to whether they are "fit and proper persons", as required by the Office of Drug Control.</p>	As the questioner correctly states: Council would need to demonstrate it is able to comply with the requirements of the Office of Drug Control to obtain a licence, should the proposal proceed to this stage. This includes the likes of security measures around any cultivation site and providing evidence those involved are 'fit and proper persons' to the satisfaction of the ODC.
What risks have you identified and how will council mitigate against these risks?	Council appreciates there are a number of risks and opportunities to take into

	consideration. These would be quantified as part of a comprehensive analysis as part of a feasibility study, which will only take place should the community support the idea.
<p>The potential to establish a medicinal cannabis enterprise within a local government area is not novel. Lismore City Council in NSW worked with CannaPacific to do just that.</p> <p>However, Lismore's role was not to partner or operate the facility, but to carry out its due diligence and approval role.</p> <p>Councils have obligations relating to planning and other approvals and oversight. Entering into this enterprise is in conflict with council's core roles in this regard.</p>	<p>Maribyrnong's proposal is to investigate the opportunity to partner or to operate a medicinal cannabis venture. This is novel. As noted, Lismore City Council's involvement in the CannaPacific venture was in relation to its role as a regulator, not operator.</p> <p>Council's legal advice has confirmed it is able to enter into such a venture but also recognises challenges in regards to deliberation planning matters, for which it is also responsible. This would need to be further investigated.</p>
<p>What will happen if this venture goes south and ends up costing the council money? What happens to rates then?</p>	<p>Grants money, funding from potential partners or investors are all potential options to help fund a start-up, should this be supported by the community and a feasibility study, yet to be undertaken.</p>
<p>If this goes well, how will the rates cap be managed?</p>	<p>The rates cap is set by Government and determines the maximum increase Council can adopt. Council is able to set rates below the rates cap currently, provided it can service its activities adequately with a lower rates take. If this venture goes well, Council could potentially set a zero increase, regardless of the cap limit, on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The feasibility study will identify any financial risk. The rates can increase only in line with rates cap.</p>
<p>What guidelines will be introduced in regards to the baseline of rates garnering if there is a low year?</p>	<p>It is too early for us to answer given no feasibility study has yet been undertaken to determine the operational model, costs, and forecast earnings.</p>

Not all roads in the municipality are sealed yet council wants to risk ratepayers' funds in an industry they know little about. Why doesn't council provide basic facilities before taking on other risky ventures?	Being able to earn income independently of rates would enable Council to both reduce the amount levied from rates and, depending on the amount of extra income earned, deliver additional services which may include sealing all unsealed roads in the municipality, for example, amongst other things.
Will you need a doctor's referral to access it?	The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) of Australia regulates the supply of medicinal cannabis, which can only be prescribed by a doctor.
Maribyrnong rates are in the highest quartile in Melbourne. What makes council think they can compete commercially on Cannabis if they can't compete with other councils on rates?	Every Council is different in the number of services offered and the amount of revenue it generates other than rates eg parking revenue, ticket machines etc. Medicinal cannabis would be a business venture. Council is currently dependent on rates revenue to fund its 60 plus services and capital projects to maintain assets.
Will the Council be sharing the information they have used to determine the growth potential and market opportunity for this idea?	Readily accessible data available on both Government and industry websites provide information on the current market and forecast growth. Council has not investigated this in detail as yet. This would be included in a feasibility study if the community supports the idea.
Why doesn't council focus on fiscal responsibility to reduce rates and provide basic ratepayer services first?	Council delivers 60 different services and maintains an extensive asset base through the delivery of capital and asset improvement projects. Council is aware of its fiscal responsibilities and delivers a balanced budget every year.
As a ratepayer, I see a great benefit in this venture, and applaud Council's "front-foot" vision. What difference will it make to all the non-ratepayers in the community? How will they benefit?	Non-ratepayers already benefit from the services and activities funded by ratepayers – i.e libraries, roads, waste, parks and sporting facilities. Where Council is able to deliver more and better services (without increasing the impost on ratepayers) all of its community would reap the benefit.
Has the Council considered local green power generation as a business idea?	Council is committed to investigate opportunities to reduce rates through alternative funding opportunities. Yes, local green power generation is among a variety of ideas under consideration.
How can the mayor genuinely say a successful enterprise won't be sold off, given that councillors only hold office at the pleasure of the voters. There is absolutely nothing to stop a future council from selling it off	Council's stated intent is to ensure any venture remains in the hands of ratepayers for their benefit. A future Council could make a different decision if there were no legal impediments preventing it from doing so.

Would it be better if the Council bought shares in an ASX listed company that is already established and making profits?	This idea is not just about creating an income to reduce the reliance on rates, but a potential opportunity for Council to establish a business that promises benefits to its ratepayers in a number of areas – employment, rates relief and health and wellbeing.
If a feasibility study will cost \$100k+ and if \$3m+ will need to be spent to get the venture up and running, what is the bottom line of public money that the Council is willing to lose before they give up on the venture?	Council is not intending to lose any money. At this point in time the only amount it is considering investing is the amount needed to fund a feasibility study, if the community supports the idea, to better understand funding implications on which decisions could then be made.
If this is already a crowded market why is this idea being considered?	While growing, the industry is relatively new in Australia. There is still room for new players to enter the market and money to be made. A feasibility study will identify more robustly the markets potential.
<p>In regards to running costs for council services, and admitting that rates are high, why is MCC at a level of \$3326 expenses per property, and providing services as per head? Are the services per head costly? And if this is a premise of cutting services, why have other councils got efficiencies that does not cost this much per head? And if it is an issue of population, then why hasn't this been addressed at the State level? And if not addressed on this issue, then why is state grants per head (\$101 per head) so low?</p>	<p>The average rate per residential property in Maribyrnong is (\$1,901.93) and average rate per property is \$2,341.76. The indicator of expenses per head is dependent on the density of population.</p> <p>The total expenses for providing the current level of services is the same and not dependent on whether it is divided per head or per property (Different indicators).</p> <p>Every Council is different in the number of services offered and the amount of revenue it generates from sources other than rates eg parking revenue, ticket machines etc.</p> <p>Maribyrnong has fewer ratepayers than other local authorities to share the burden with generally; fewer commercial properties (who pay increased rates) compared to some local authorities to reduce the amount residential ratepayers need to cover; no other income streams compared to some local authorities who also run their own business ventures. As such it is heavily reliant on its residential ratepayers to cover the bulk of service delivery costs, which is why it is investigating medicinal cannabis as an alternate revenue stream.</p>

What services will be available for the everyday people once this project is up and running? (e.g. everyday people who are stressed and anxious due to covid) Will the products be available in pharmacies over the counter?	<p>Council is a long way from getting a venture like this up and running. It is currently only seeking community support for the idea to facilitate a feasibility study understand funding implications among other things.</p> <p>Council is also proposing to manufacture, cultivate and produce - not sell – medicinal cannabis – which is currently only available on prescription.</p>
The suggestion that council would keep 100% of the profits if there is a partnership arrangement afoot?	<p>While there is an opportunity to look at a partnership arrangement, this is yet to be investigated as we are not quite at that stage yet. If the community is supportive of this idea, the feasibility study would look at potential business structures.</p>