

Medicinal cannabis company bound for Shepparton releases first products

SPENCER FOWLER STEEN 13/10/20



On the way: Medicinal cannabis company Cannatrek will soon release its first products.

Medicinal cannabis company Cannatrek — which is setting up shop in Shepparton — will shortly release its first prescription products in Australia having also secured a major export agreement with the United Kingdom.

The \$160 million medicinal cannabis plant in Shepparton will employ upwards of 400 people, and produce 160 tonnes of medicinal cannabis each year.

After several years of research at its Brisbane facility, Cannatrek has selected eight high-value strains of medical cannabis to release to Australian patients via chemists.



An artist's impression of the medicinal cannabis glasshouse growing facility to be built at 280 Lemnos North Rd, Lemnos.

The cannabis oil and flower products will be used to treat illnesses such as pain, anxiety, and insomnia.

Cannatrek chief executive Tommy Huppert said the medicinal cannabis industry was now fully regulated, allowing people to purchase therapeutic cannabis from a chemist with a script.

“The demand for product is growing 20 per cent a month, we’ve technically sold out of our production because the inbound inquiries are so significant from overseas,” he said.

“It means the progress on the development of the Shepparton site is critical — we’re shovel-ready, we just got development approval and licence on-site and our electricity agreement will be rolled out over the next few months — all the ducks are lining up.

“We have sold more than \$2 million of products in Australia to date. Hundreds of doctors are prescribing medicinal cannabis in Australia, thousands of patients are using it, and prices are coming down.”



Big future: Medicinal cannabis company Cannatrek chief executive Tommy Huppert at the site of the new Shepparton plant.

Mr Huppert said, optimistically, phase one of the Shepparton site would be complete by the end of 2021, or first quarter of 2022.

Phase one will employ between 70 and 80 people — a majority of whom will be from Greater Shepparton — on approximately one hectare of land, producing about 15 tonnes of medicinal cannabis each year.

Mr Huppert said Cannatrek was working with Shepparton civil construction group CAF Consulting, while ensuring local trades were used wherever possible.

“We were pleasantly surprised with the (Federal) Budget and its support for apprentices, medical technology, the rail link, clinical trials — it's a real sweet spot for us,” he said.

“We're also finalising close to \$15 million in funding for phase one.”

Cannatrek also announced that it had received import permits for its first products — three strains of herbal cannabis — to Astral Health, a UK-based specialist importer and distributor of medicinal cannabis.

Astral Health is a member of LYPHE Group, a leading UK organisation which has developed a patient-access and distribution service currently seeing more than half of the patients needing medicinal cannabis in the UK.

Cannatrek is currently in active discussions with several medicinal cannabis importers – as well as partners and distributors in Germany, Poland, UK, Italy, Czech Republic, Thailand, Israel, Malaysia, Denmark and Brazil.

Mr Huppert also said Cannatrek had established a partnership with La Trobe University to integrate specific training for its plant into existing agricultural studies.

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