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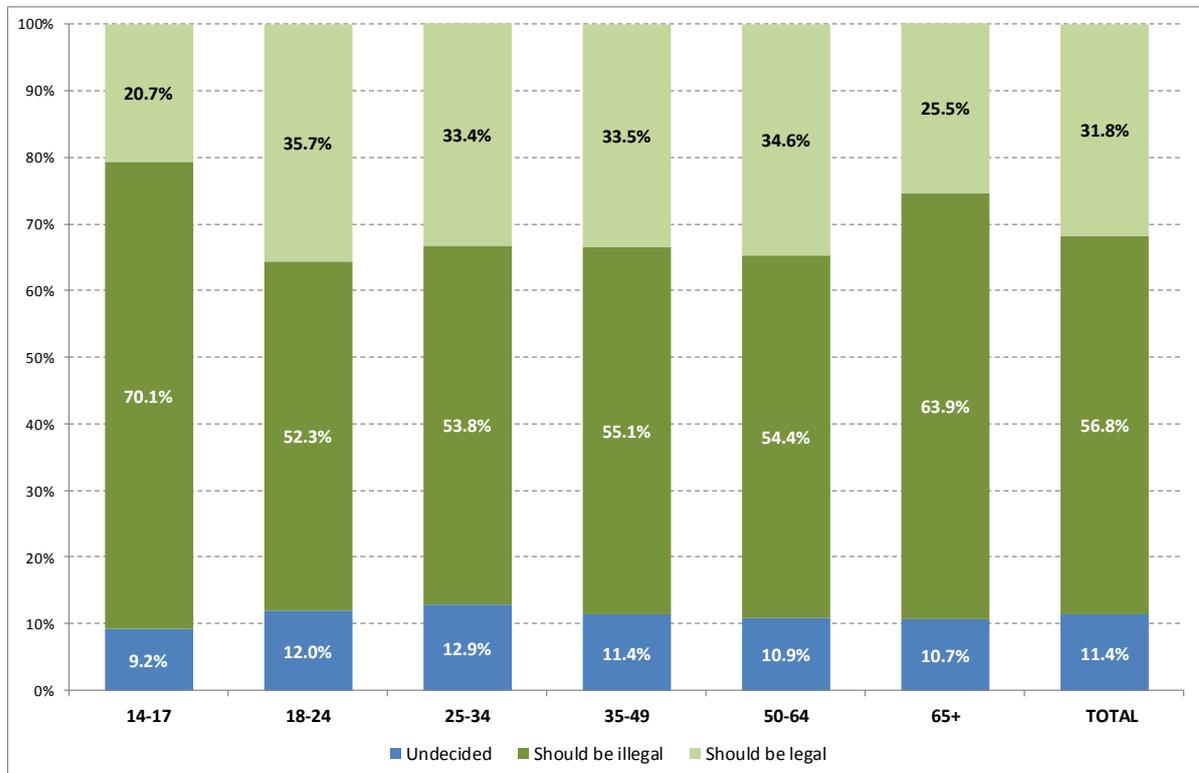
## To legalise or not to legalise? How Australians feel about marijuana

Judging by recent media reports, the use of marijuana for medical purposes could become legal in Australia in the foreseeable future. Politicians such as the Prime Minister, NSW Premier Mike Baird and Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews have expressed their support for the idea, and a clinical trial is due to start soon. But how do Australians feel about the legalisation of marijuana?

Roy Morgan Research has been asking Australians 14+ the question, 'In your opinion should the smoking of marijuana be made legal - or remain illegal?' for many years. Over the last decade, the proportion of the population who believe it should be made legal has grown from 26.8% (2004) to 31.8% (2014).

In this time, the 65+ age bracket has seen the largest proportional increase in favour of legalisation, rising from 16.9% to 25.5% (a 50% growth rate). However, this is still well behind young Australians aged 18-24 (35.7%), the age group with the most support for making smoking marijuana legal.

### How Australians of different ages feel about legalising marijuana



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), January 2014 – December 2014 (n=51,969). Base: Australians 14+

The belief that smoking marijuana should be made legal has become more widespread across all ages except 25-34 year olds (among whom it has declined fractionally). Even 14-17 year olds, traditionally the least likely to support legalisation, seem to have become more open to the idea in the last 10 years, having gone from 15.5% in favour to 20.7%.

University-educated Australians are more likely than those who didn't complete high school to agree that smoking marijuana should be made legal: 35.8% of people currently at university and 32.3% of tertiary graduates are in favour, compared with 30.9% of people who finished at year 10 and 28.4% of people with 'some secondary' education.

### *The flip side*

Of course, Aussies' growing conviction that marijuana smoking should be made legal means the proportion who want it to remain illegal is declining. In 2004, 64.1% of the population thought smoking marijuana should remain illegal; by 2014, it sat at 56.8%. Still a majority, it has to be said, but not such a large one.

Meanwhile, the proportion of Australians who are undecided on this issue has risen from 9.2% to 11.4%.

### **Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:**

*"Whether someone feels that smoking marijuana should be made legal or not often indicates how progressive or traditional their social attitudes are in general. In fact, the gradual increase in the proportion of Australians who support legalisation corresponds with an increase in the proportion who describe their 'viewpoint with regard to social issues and social trends in Australia' as somewhat or very progressive.*

*"However, the current debate is centred on medical use rather than personal recreational use, so this casts a different light on the issue, and may provide a clue as to why there has been significant growth in support for legalisation among Australians aged 50 and over.*

*"Medical marijuana has been found to provide relief from, or slow the progress of, several conditions that are not uncommon among older people: glaucoma, cancer, Alzheimer's, arthritis, Parkinson's disease and more. (Of course, it's also worth noting that many Aussies aged 50+ would have been part of the hippy movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which had very liberal views on marijuana use).*

*"Having measured Australians' attitudes to societal, political, environmental and health issues for many years, Roy Morgan Research has accumulated data that can assist government departments wishing to gauge how the population is feeling about particular issues at any given time."*

**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research's social data, please contact:**

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## About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

## Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2