

Submission Australia Kava Pilot

Phase 2: Allowing the commercial importation of kava

Potential changes to allow for the commercial importation of kava

Question 1: Are you supportive of the use of import permits (option 2) to allow kava importation to be controlled and monitored?

Answer 1: Each state in Australia has different demographics, socioeconomic situations and public concerns not to mention individual rights and freedoms; therefore in general the importation of kava should be as it is in New Zealand and the USA, in Australian states/territories that have an issue with kava consumption, kava should not be subject to any greater regulation than alcohol distribution is.

Question 2: Under option 2 what requirements or conditions do you think are responsible and necessary to be placed on commercial entities in order to allow them to import commercial qualities of kava?

Answer 2: First clearly identify the risks or concerns that are at the bottom of the Australian Kava issue; A recommendation for an independent study of the communities with underlying causes for excessive consumption and harm from kava, clearly differentiating between kava, alcohol, nutrition and socioeconomic factors. (Arnhem Land.) Then requirements or conditions that are responsible and necessary be considered and placed on commercial entities in affected states or territories in order to allow for the import of commercial qualities of kava. No doubt alcohol is a problem in these same communities, which has the most adverse effects has not been established.

Question 3: In addition to state and territory government restrictions on the supply and consumption of kava within their jurisdictions, what other restrictions should be imposed on holders of permits for importing kava into Australia?

Answer 3: There are already Australia and New Zealand food safety standards and international recommended code of practice general principles of food hygiene, there is no need for treating kava any different from any other food import. It would seem reasonable to apply no greater restrictions than apply to alcohol consumption. There are nations developed and underdeveloped that do not have issues with kava; this logic might also apply to the states/territories of Australia.

Question 4: Should kava be sold with further warnings about potential harm, such as those in the food standards? What are your views on what these warnings should be?

Answer 4: As the WHO have noted "Kava is not significantly harmful" it is sufficient to note; Consume in moderation and may cause drowsiness, as long as consumed as recommended there is no evidence that kava diminishes the cognitive abilities as does alcohol.

Impacts of kava?

Question 5: What are your views on the potential health, social and cultural impacts of kava, and do you have any evidence to share?

Answer 5: As has been amply demonstrated in the Pacific islands human testing of kava for thousands of years, kava consumed as a water suspension contributes to mindful discussions, (*The drinker never becomes angry, unpleasant, quarrelsome or noisy, as happens with alcohol.* **Lewin 1927**). The developing café style kava bars in the USA and New Zealand are introducing this alternative to alcohol, as kava allows relaxation and social engagement without the hang over and other detrimental effects of alcohol. This is the exact reason missionaries introduced kava to Arnhem Land, hoping to reduce the detrimental social impacts of alcohol on their communities, it appears that unique underlying socioeconomic issues in these communities need to be addressed.

Question 6: Are you concerned about any particular risks that may be caused by allowing the commercial importation of kava?

Answer 6: The only concern will be if the normal recommended food and health standards are not adhered to or kavalactone extraction is undertaken using other than water, steam or ethanol. The restriction on adding kava to any other foods needs to be clarified, for example; explain the data behind prohibiting the mixing of a nonalcoholic kava Pina Colada.

Question 7: Do you have any suggestions for how to limit any potential negative impacts or risks of using kava and / or commercially importing kava into Australia?

Answer 7: The Australian and New Zealand food safety regulations and observation of The International Code of Practice General Principles of Food Hygiene are sufficient. **Keep in mind the WHO have stated;** "Kava is not significantly harmful"

Question 8: What benefits may be achieved from commercially importing kava into Australia?

Answer 8: Modern societies like Australia have all these daily problems: non specific stress disorder, insomnia, muscle tension, kava has been shown to assist in relieving these not to mention the small but politically correct Australian assistance to the economies of the Pacific islands where China has been making vast and rapid inroads.

Question 9: What businesses may be involved in the commercial importation and supply of kava and how will kava potentially be priced, marketed and retailed?

Answer 9: Small village farm holdings in the Pacific islands would have an additional revenue source to supplement the general subsistence based economies, these would in turn help develop the supply chain through to the consumer in Australia, market forces determine pricing, marketing probably through the growing Pacific island communities in Australia, herbal health sector and café style kava bars will be an added economic activity contributing to the global GDP.

Monitoring and evaluation

Question 10: What methods should be used to monitor and evaluate the success and impacts of the pilot?

Answer 10: The same methods used to monitor and evaluate the success and impacts of any other social activity that concerns the public. Pacific island statistics on exports of kava and the value of such exports will also be relevant.

Question 11: What methods should be used to monitor and evaluate the health, social, economic and regulatory impacts of kava consumption during the pilot?

Answer 11: The same methods used to monitor and evaluate the success and impacts of any other health, social, economic and regulatory activity that concerns the public. Should imports open up then the increased exports from the source islands will be an indicator of benefits to the pacific islands and therefore the Australian contribution.

Question 12: Who may be able to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot?

Answer 12: Church leaders and community youth leaders in the pacific islands are familiar with kava so for their communities they would be of assistance, in general police reports of community disruptive behavior have suspected contributory causes noted, these reports might be monitored for any mention of kava, then the statistics might show the trend.

Question 13: What data should be collected to effectively measure the health, social, and economic and regulatory impacts of kava?

Answer 13: To effectively measure the effect of kava on a Australian community you are looking at statistical data that may not be representative of the general population, therefore as it is accepted that abuse (*the detrimental effects of excessively large quantities of kava consumed over a short period.*) has been identified in specific Australian communities it would seem reasonable to focus on these areas to determine effects and appropriate localized response, most likely community social engagement and economic activity will need to be improved in the affected locations particularly in line with recovery plans for the current covid-19 pandemic if a positive change is to be achieved in Australia.