

# Small-scale cannabis growers' preferences for the regulation of cannabis production

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## Background

- In jurisdictions that have legalised cannabis only 61.5% of domestic growers indicated in a global survey that their grows were compliant with the law.
- As one of the arguments in favour of cannabis regulation is to reduce the administrative and financial burden on the justice system,
- there may be merit in designing a cannabis regulatory environment that encourages compliance with the law.

## Objective

We set out to study the attitudes of domestic cannabis growers to the regulation of cannabis production under a (hypothetical) regulated cannabis model.

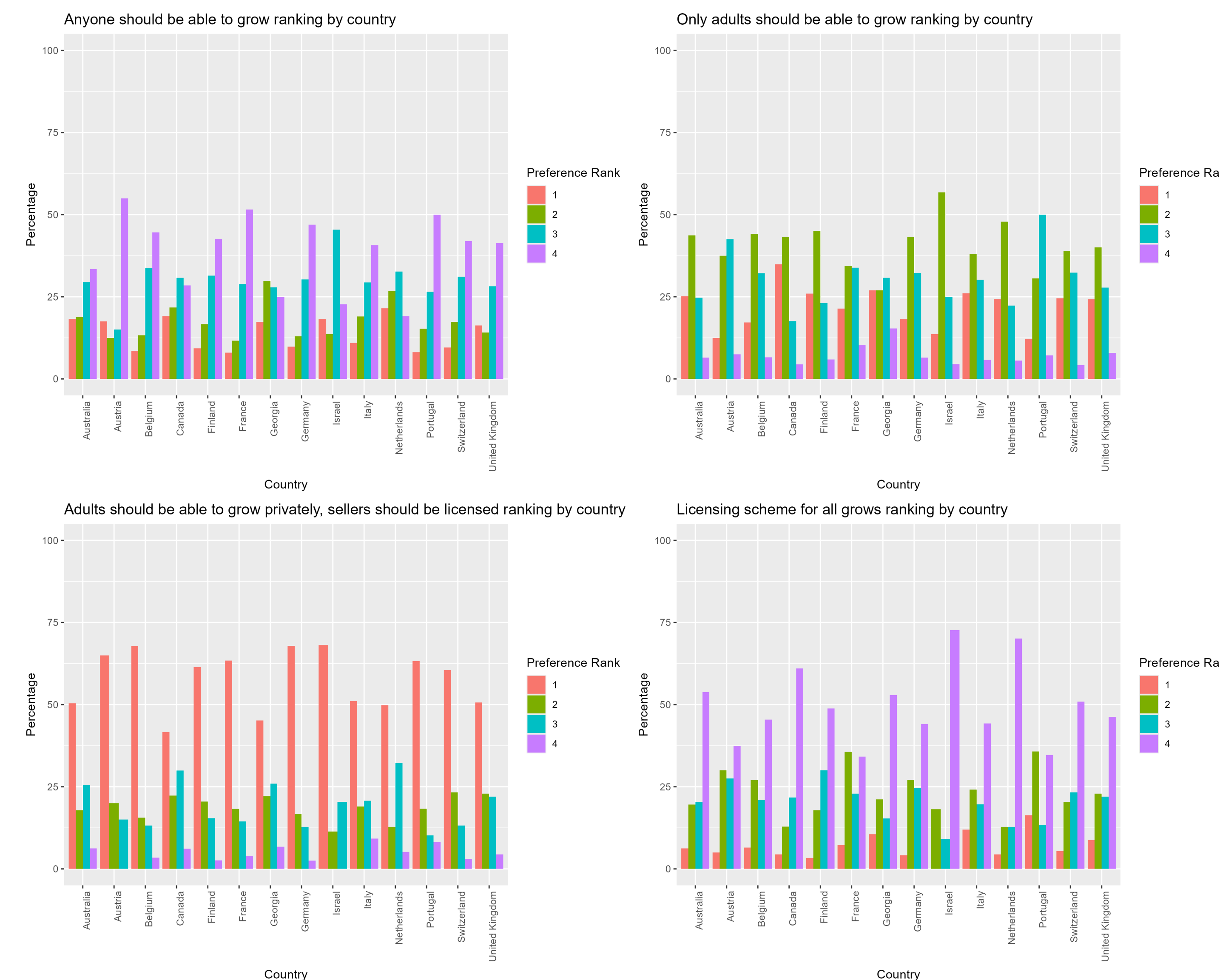
## Methods

- We, members of the Global Cannabis Cultivation Research Consortium (GCCRC), surveyed 11,479 small-scale cannabis growers (ICCQ V2) from 2020 to 2021.
- Responses were included if participants answered 50% or more of the compulsory core questions, reported growing cannabis within the past five years, reported their age and reported being from one of the 18 core countries of the GCCRC.
- No duplicates were detected.
- Here, we analysed a subsample of 6,296 respondents from 14 jurisdictions. 13 of these jurisdictions had not yet regulated recreational cannabis, while one of the included jurisdictions had.
- We measured levels of support for an array of policy options.
- We asked respondents to rank their preferred model of regulation of cannabis cultivation, as well as asking respondents their thoughts on:
  - plant limits for private grows,
  - types of information they would be willing to provide authorities,
  - and whether they were likely to comply with cannabis cultivation regulations across a range of hypothetical situations.
- We used R to conduct descriptive statistics to summarise levels of support for a range of policy options.
- We conducted a stepwise univariate ordinal regression analyses to identify demographic information or cannabis-related activities that were predictive of support for the most popular policy option.

## Results

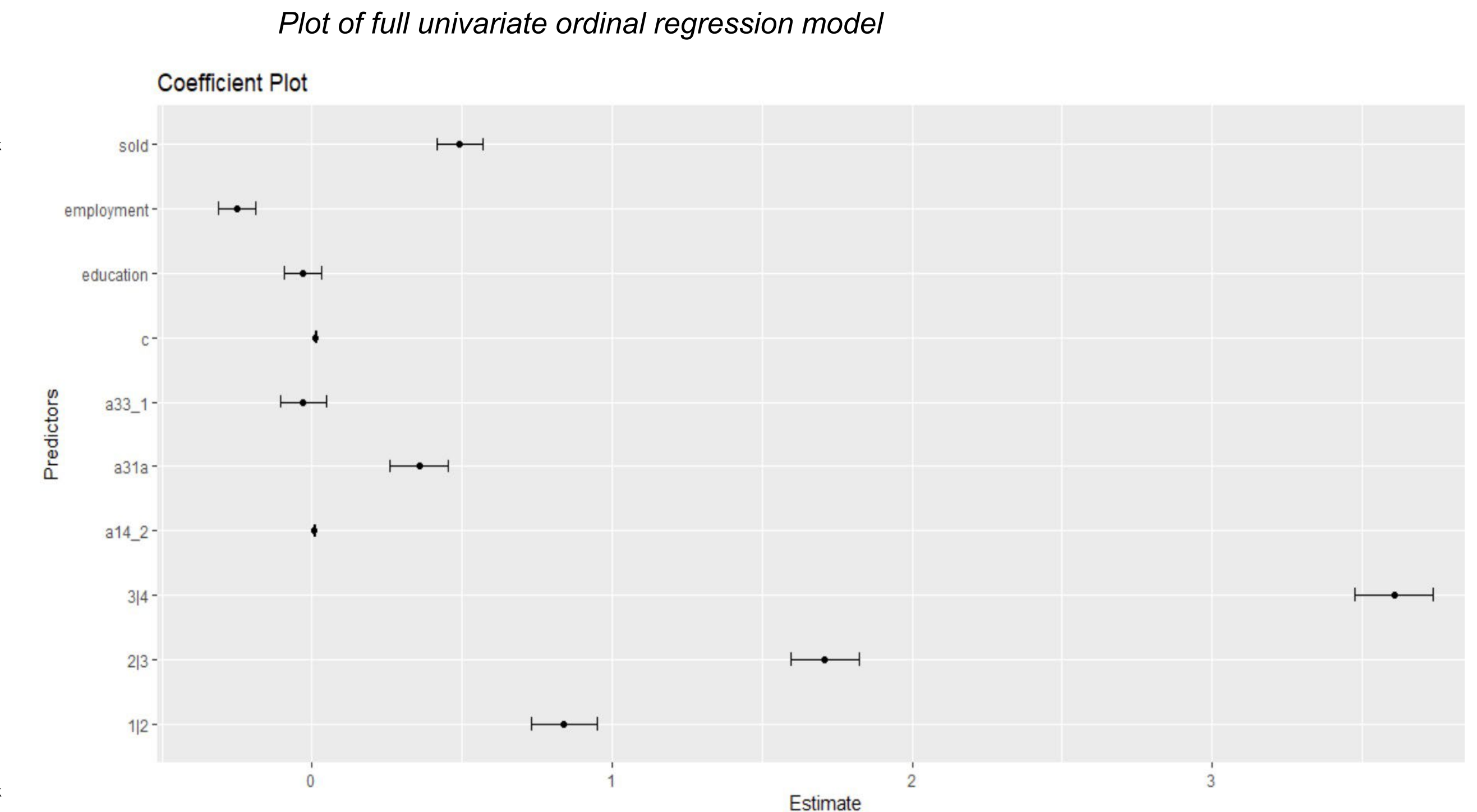
- Our respondents preferred a model of regulation where only adults could legally grow cannabis, and distribution of cannabis would be regulated through a licensing scheme. Government monopolies of the production of cannabis were not supported.
- 45.4% of respondents thought private grows could be limited to six plants, although a limit of nine plants would capture 58.8% of respondents.
- The results from the forward selection stepwise regressions are summarised in the table, subsequently we chose to fit the variables that had a more than negligible effect size ( $> 0.01$ ), and that were statistically significant ( $t$  value  $> 2$ ).

Levels of support for a range of policy propositions: least restrictive option (top left) to most restrictive option (bottom right)



Model	AIC	BIC	LogLik	Effect Size	Std Error	T Value
Model 1 - Country	12486.21	12512.891	-6239.105	0.002038112	0.000543999	3.74653482
Model 2 - Age	12460.843	12487.524	-6226.422	0.012541755	0.001996377	6.28225881
Model 3 - Gender	12278.016	12304.638	-6135.008	0.097886581	0.072318099	1.35355579
Model 4 - n. Mature plants	12281.383	12308.01	-6136.692	0.012243034	0.002001459	6.11705483
Model 5 - Cannabis dependence	10456.516	10482.558	-5224.258	0.004014802	0.012036558	0.33355064
Model 6 - Police attn. due to canabis growing	12327.642	12354.292	-6159.821	0.528149417	0.073944568	7.1425046
Model 7 - Area where you live	12341.183	12367.821	-6166.592	0.021253294	0.032152109	0.66102332
Model 8 - Employment, full categories	12184.216	12210.816	-6088.108	0.039351791	0.006311313	6.23511988
Model 9 - In employment, or not	12450.885	12477.566	-6221.442	-0.3659903	0.052084007	-7.02692283
Model 10 - Education, full categories	12288.082	12314.701	-6140.041	-0.070909588	0.018966373	-3.73870049
Model 11 - Post-secondary education, or not	12491.133	12517.814	-6241.567	-0.155842526	0.051846979	-3.00581693
Model 12 - Sold any of your cannabis past 12m	9297.413	9322.927	-4644.706	0.545124397	0.073083939	7.45888091
Model 13 - income band	8792.667	8868.796	-4384.334	-0.027632817	0.393552384	-0.07021382
Model 14 - Convicted for cannabis possession	12276.43	12303.048	-6134.215	0.195198073	0.061556906	3.17101827

The results from the full model are as follows:



Only three variables were still predictive (both in terms of effect size and statistical significance) of support for this policy position: police attention due to cannabis growing, sold any of own cannabis in past 12m and employment. Having encountered police due to cannabis growing or selling any of your own cannabis in the past 12m decreased likelihood of supporting this proposed policy, while being in employment (full-time, part-time or casual) increased the likelihood of supporting this proposed policy. 78% of respondents indicated that if growing cannabis in their jurisdiction required registration of licensing, they would become a registered grower.

## Conclusions

- Most of our respondents indicated that they would find a regulatory model of cannabis production acceptable and would act to comply with the law.
- The preferred model would allow for unlicensed private grows of cannabis by adults, alongside a licensing system for commercial production of cannabis. This model was widely supported in every jurisdiction. Only one variable was predictive of support for this model, being in paid employment. Conversely contact with police over growing, and having sold your own cannabis was predictive of decreased support for this model. This likely reflects the difficulties jurisdictions face with bringing the existing unregulated for-profit market into the regulatory fold.
- We saw stronger country level differences when it came to nuanced policy details. For instance, while a limit of 6 plants would be acceptable by the majority of growers in many jurisdictions, a slightly larger limit would capture the majority of respondents globally.

## Implications

An inclusive regulatory model that included a pathway for domestic production of cannabis would likely be met by high levels of compliance by people who are currently growing their own cannabis and are not involved in trafficking.

## Acknowledgements

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