

## Party Pills: Successful Safety Record

Press Release: Stargate International  
Date: 13 March 2008

The developer of party pills today said that the eight year availability of party pills without a single fatality or lasting injury from their usage was a testament to their safety, and signaled a strong future for the development of safer alternatives to alcohol and drugs.

Matt Bowden, Founder of Stargate International who first developed BZP based party pills in New Zealand as a safer solution for P users said this evening "my message for the last ten years has been that safer non-addictive drug alternatives can be regulated, and used by drug users as a substitute for harder drugs - and it has worked. Before this industry began, 'drug overdose' meant you were going to a funeral, today it just means somebody had a day off work. The difference is life vs. death; it is real progress, and we should be proud of it," said Mr. Bowden.

Industry sources confirm that in New Zealand alone, approximately 400,000 adults consumed over 26 million pills with no recorded fatalities or lasting injuries. "In the ten years that I've been saying this, alcohol has killed about 1,000 kiwis per year, cigarettes about 5,000, and party pills have killed zero people. If one compares the safety record of party pills to the tally of around 50,000 people killed by tobacco and alcohol during those years, I'd say that this message has proven to be correct."

Mr Bowden said that today's ban was predominantly a moral positioning statement by the two main political parties. "If the pills were really dangerous they would have been banned 6-7 years ago. The politicians pushing for a ban today are probably looking to attract votes; it is unfortunate that it means 400,000 consumers will probably switch to illegal drugs. The government tells us the pills have a 'moderate' risk of harm, but we now know from international experts that they are not really harmful enough to ban at all."

Mr. Bowden referred to a report on BZP published by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Abuse (EMCDDA) last week categorising BZP as "low risk." In New Zealand this would mean that the pills are not harmful enough to be made illegal, and should stay in the R18 Restricted Substances category.

"It is clear that prohibition doesn't work, it just empowers organised crime because no matter what we do with supply, the consumer demand for these products is enormous." Mr. Bowden said that choice of social tonic was primarily a cultural and generational issue, "different age groups and cultures have varying musical and clothing tastes, and likewise they use different stimulants, it's that simple. "

"I am 36 years old, most people I know in my demographic prefer pills that make us feel social and friendly rather than booze that makes us agro. People in their 20s are even more accustomed to pill taking. It is normal now, just check your SPAM folder, it is not going to go away, and we shouldn't treat this whole demographic as criminals. The sensible option is to foster an industry to keep developing safer alternatives so people

can make safer choices, that is where I see the industry and regulatory environment focusing next.”

Mr. Bowden said that both industry and government are working towards a regime where safety standards are set for new drugs before they are marketed to the public, but that BZP should have been allowed to stay available until all parties had agreed on a safer alternative.

“We accurately predicted from what was known about BZP many years ago that it would be a low risk substance and so it has been, moving forwards we want a system whereby we put new drugs through the same rigorous toxicity testing as medicines go through to show that they are low risk before they hit the shelves.”

Contact: Matt Bowden  
Tel 021 77 23 23

References:

**EMCDDA News Release: “‘Appropriate Controls’ for BZP.”**

[http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att\\_49695\\_EN\\_BZPDecision2008FinalEN.pdf](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_49695_EN_BZPDecision2008FinalEN.pdf)

**Risk Assessment Report of a new psychoactive substance: 1-benzylpiperazine (BZP)**

[https://ednd-cma.emcdda.europa.eu/assets/upload/Risk\\_Assessment\\_Report\\_BZP.pdf](https://ednd-cma.emcdda.europa.eu/assets/upload/Risk_Assessment_Report_BZP.pdf)