



S.T.A.N.Z.
Social Tonics Association
of New Zealand
P O Box 300 840
Albany, Auckland
Tel: 021 77 23 23
Fax: 09 478 9472

Government Plans To Ban BZP Based On Anecdotal Evidence

Social Tonics Association of New Zealand

11th October 2007

MP Jacqui Dean admitted to the Health Select Committee in Parliament on Wednesday that the reasoning behind her call to ban BZP – the belief that “it is a gateway to harder drugs” – is based mostly on anecdotal evidence.

The National MP was chastised by Progressive Party leader Jim Anderton in September for pushing for legislation to ban water, which she had misidentified as a dangerous drug.

The Social Tonics Association of New Zealand [STANZ] has slammed the MP for her sloppy, emotionally-driven and hearsay-based approach to policy-making.

“Ms Dean’s attempt to push forward a policy based only on anecdotal evidence is an embarrassment to her party,” said Matt Bowden, chairman of the Social Tonics Association of New Zealand.

“Her arguments for banning both BZP and water lack credibility and her statements on drug regulation are consistently devoid of facts – even by her own admission.”

“Contrary to what Ms Dean has said, BZP is predominantly used as a gateway off harder drugs and does not contribute to serious crime.”

The Government's own research shows that tens of thousands of people quit using illegal drugs in favour of party pills.

“However, through fear-based unsubstantiated accusations against these safer alternatives – such as Ms Dean’s – the Government is getting the wrong message.”

Mr Bowden said that New Zealanders should learn from Logan Millar, the well-respected “Party Pill Millionaire” who passed away last week at the age of 31. Mr Millar was highly regarded in industry and the wider community for being the first to comply with new regulations, even at great personal cost.

“Logan Millar set a high standard of behavior and social responsibility. This is the type of figure that should be associated with the harm-reduction policies and the production of legal alternatives.”

Mr Millar had pressed for a realistic assessment of the importance and usage of controlled substances in society.

“Logan’s message was clear,” said Mr. Bowden. “He would ask you, ‘if somebody in your family or close to you decided that they wanted to try recreational drugs, is there anything that you could do to stop them? There isn’t.’”

“In a world where there are no safe alternatives, their only option is addictive illegal drugs with unknown composition, produced in black market substandard conditions by gangsters.”

“Our alternative, which Logan called ‘Option B,’ is the ability to buy demonstrably safer and non-addictive products in a retail store that have been manufactured in certified laboratories to pharmaceutical standards and get quality education and advice.”



S.T.A.N.Z.
Social Tonics Association
of New Zealand
P O Box 300 840
Albany, Auckland
Tel: 021 77 23 23
Fax: 09 478 9472

“These are the only two choices you have for your young adults when they decide they want to try using substances, as Logan would say, ‘do you want ‘Option A’ – the gangs and tinny houses, or ‘Option B’ – safer alternatives at properly controlled outlets.”

Society needs a proactive government approach to the regulation – not prohibition – of controlled substances. Unfortunately, the Government is not currently under enough pressure to do so.

The Minister presiding over drug policy has said that he currently has cross-party support for the bill that effectively criminalises 400,000 party pill consumers.

“We encourage consumers to make their voices heard about this issue immediately as we are at an extremely important moment in drug legislation,” Mr Bowden says. “We have tried prohibition before, with alcohol it gave us Al Capone, with other drugs it has been a disaster. We haven’t tried out regulation as an option despite a weight of expert advice that the right level of regulation would effectively manage any risks associated with BZP.”

Public submissions for the Misuse of Drugs (Classification of BZP) Amendment Bill close tomorrow – Friday, October 12 – and concerned citizens should write to the Health Select Committee by email to john.thomson@parliament.govt.nz now in support of effective regulation – rather than prohibition – of BZP and related substances as a matter of public health, safety and a socially responsible government.

Contact: Matt Bowden

Tel: 021 77 23 23