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Party Pill ban removes safety barrier for young adults.

STANZ

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The Social Tonics Association of New Zealand (STANZ) today decried the ban on party pills as removing the safety barrier for young adults partying behaviours, and said that it was inconsistent with moves to review the Misuse of Drugs Act. Associate Health Minister Jim Anderton announced the review of the Misuse of Drugs Act to be conducted by the Law Commission next year after too many ad hoc adjustments had been made to the legislation over the years, but then also introduced to the House today a new Bill to ban party pills before Christmas this year.

"The Misuse of Drugs Act is scheduled for an overhaul in 2008 after 40 years of continually tougher prohibition laws being a staple election promise. These tougher laws tickle the ears of voters, but have proven fruitless at changing the normal human behaviour of using substances to relax or to celebrate life," said STANZ Chairman Matt Bowden. "Party pills are proving to be even safer than other accepted legal drugs such as alcohol, it would be better to wait until the review of the Misuse of Drugs Act before making changes that criminalise the activities of nearly half a million New Zealanders."

"BZP has a safety record of 7 years use by 400,000 New Zealanders consuming 26 million pills over 9.5 million occasions with no deaths or lasting injuries. All available research shows that banning BZP will send many thousands of young adults to the more dangerous illegal drug market of counterfeit street ecstasy and methamphetamine (P)."

Mr Bowden said that the prohibition of products with high consumer demand such as party pills creates a black market, burdens the justice system and forces consumers into more risky behaviours. "The drug market has always been driven by demand, and not supply," he said, "Putting pressure on supply only creates a black market with no quality control. Party pills were designed to reduce demand for more dangerous drugs and have been successful in this regard. Banning them takes away this very real safety barrier."

"The policy of drug prohibition failed with alcohol last century and has not achieved its goals of stamping out any drug use ever since. It is insane to think that banning a safer drug alternative like BZP will be beneficial to anybody today," he said.

Mr Bowden said that the industry had lobbied since their beginnings 7 years ago for age limits, standards around manufacture processes and restrictions around where and how party pills can be sold, to make the industry safer. "Banning party pills give us precisely the opposite effect," he said.

"The only hope for parents is that young adults find God and opt not to drink alcohol or use other substances because as long as we subscribe to the war on drugs philosophy, our young peoples will be picking from an illegal and dangerous drug black market which only benefits gangsters and campaigning politicians."

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