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## **Party pills will be safer regulated than on the black market.**

The Social Tonics Association of New Zealand today corrected a misconception that party pills contain illegal drugs and identified evidence of the trend for party pill ingredients to make their way onto the black market.

STANZ Chairman Matt Bowden said today "Again it has been reported that some party pills contain illegal drugs, when in fact the opposite is true. What we are seeing is evidence that BZP is making its way onto the black market, where it will be more dangerous because it will be mixed in dangerous chemical cocktails and misrepresented as ecstasy."

"This evidence underlines our need for regulations, not prohibition," he said.

Mr. Bowden pointed out that ESR's comments of late point to black market pills containing dangerous mixtures of chemicals including ecstasy and ketamine and party pill ingredients. "Consumers should properly be warned that the quality of ecstasy in New Zealand is very poor at the moment. The black market street ecstasy supply is becoming more contaminated with potentially lethal cocktails of unknown chemicals. Well publicised recent events tell us that the combination of BZP and ecstasy is very risky behaviour."

Mr. Bowden referred to comment by researchers at Victoria University and surveys at retail outlets on a probable trend for some of the 400,000 BZP users in New Zealand to seek out illegal ecstasy as well as the more harmful drugs like alcohol and P to replace BZP. "The problem with this is that there are millions of grams of BZP already in the country, it is easier to manufacture than P, and tablet presses are easy to access, so locally made street ecstasy pills here are heavily contaminated. Consumers could well be combining BZP with MDMA (pure ecstasy) already without knowing it."

Mr. Bowden said however that New Zealand is leading the world in sensible drug policy with the development of the restricted substances category under the Misuse of Drugs Act and that in years to come demand for harmful drugs would be greatly decreased by the development and availability of safer alternatives.

"Technology is getting to the point that in five to ten years time we won't have the same problems with dangerous recreational substances, we will be able to buy properly manufactured drug alternatives from qualified retail outlets, diminishing the black market. We will look back on drug prohibition as a failed policy. We have some teething pains to get through yet but I am confident that New Zealand will be seen as offering practical regulatory solutions to the global market in the area of drug policy."

"An E.U. report into BZP recently noted that the evidence of harm from BZP is weak and that it is possible in the E.U., as in New Zealand that BZP is being used by some people as an alternative to more harmful drugs. Our Select Committee should look carefully at this."

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