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## **STANZ offers full safety code for party pills**

A comprehensive regulatory regime and safety code governing the manufacture, sale and use of party pills were today released by the Social Tonics Association of New Zealand.

The documents were sent to Associate Health Minister Jim Anderton earlier in the week.

STANZ Chairperson, Matt Bowden, said that if the protection of the public was the issue, regulation was the way to go and that it was incumbent on the Government to at least trial this approach before moving to ban BZP and related substances.

“Prohibition has never worked, not in any country and not at any time, and will not work in New Zealand either. It will simply deliver the market to the gangs, and to hard drugs like P.

“BZP was designed as a stimulant which – unlike P – is not addictive and does not provoke violent or criminal behaviour,” he said. “A lot of the commentary from opponents has failed to grasp this essential fact: BZP is the safe alternative to P.”

He also said that there were democratic rights involved and that these should not be casually cast aside.

“More than 24 million party pills have been sold in New Zealand since 2000, the very large proportion of them repeat purchases. This demonstrates that there is high demand for legal access to these products and that, for the great majority of users, they provide a positive experience.”

Mr Bowden noted that the advice from the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs was tentative in its conclusions, acknowledging that there were no guarantees that banning BZP would reduce use and that there was a risk that it might exacerbate the problems.

The committee had also stated that there were potential advantages in retaining BZP as a Restricted Substance subject to tougher regulations, but did not recommend this because it would *require the establishment of a significant administrative and enforcement capacity*.

“It is simply not good enough to put young lives at risk just to save money, especially when the Government already has the power under the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Act 2005 to regulate.



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“In fact, the Act anticipates regulation, and that was clearly the Parliament’s intention. But the Government, despite sustained pressure from STANZ, has allowed these provisions to remain dormant.

“That is why STANZ has now taken the extra step of commissioning draft regulations which address the Government’s main concerns while avoiding the known risks associated with prohibition.

“The restrictions in the Act now are absolutely minimal being confined to an age restriction of 18, a ban on advertising in the mainstream media and a ban on retailers, manufacturers or distributors from offering restricted substances free of charge or as a gift, prize or promotion.

“We are proposing to supplement this with a further 26 regulations. They include:

- A tablet must contain no more than 200 milligrams of BZP and a package no more than 600 milligrams;
- BZP raw material must be 99 per cent pure;
- BZP must only be sold from premises where entry is restricted to persons aged over 18 years or from licensed premises (not including convenience stores or supermarkets);
- BZP products cannot be sold within 250 metres of a school, recreational centre or playground;
- Any advertising must be limited to places where restricted substances are sold and where entry is available only to persons over 18 and must not be visible from the street; and
- Health warnings, including the importance of drinking plenty of water, not mixing with alcohol and not exceeding the maximum recommended dose, must be featured on the packaging.

“Further to this, STANZ has prepared a Code of Good Manufacturing Practice. This is a detailed document modelled on the New Zealand Code of Practice for Medicinal Products and incorporates such matters as quality control, testing and analysis of all batches, training, complaints, tracing procedures, record keeping and hygiene.

“Party pills are already safer than most of the alternatives, including alcohol. Tighter regulation of the sort that STANZ is proposing will make them safer still. This has got to be the better and more responsible option and we urge the Government to give it serious consideration,” Mr Bowden said.

The draft regulations and the code are available on STANZ website: [www.stanz.org.nz](http://www.stanz.org.nz)

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