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## Water banning reflex no joke.

Social Tonics Association of New Zealand  
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The Social Tonics Association of New Zealand (STANZ) today called for Oamaru MP Jacqui Dean to step down from speaking on drug issues after she demonstrated a lack of credibility in calling for the ban of dihydrogen monoxide (water.) A group of party pill consumers successfully used the DHMO (water banning) hoax to determine whether Ms Dean's position on substances was evidence based or not, and whether there would be any consideration for the impact this proposed ban would have on the public.

If Ms Dean reacted to the test as predicted, she would pressure the government to ban this "drug" without first finding out what it was, or what benefits it had to society. Unfortunately for her, this is exactly what the former Play School host did.

STANZ Chairman Matt Bowden said today "The DHMO hoax played on the member this week is not a joke, it highlights a serious issue at the heart of drug policy making. Ms Dean demonstrated a 'ban anything moderately harmful' reflex. This approach is just downright dangerous."

In 2001 Dr Nick Smith accused the Greens of scientific illiteracy when one of their office staff got caught up in the same spoof. To rephrase Dr Smith's response at the time, "Jacqui Dean's support for a ban on dihydrogen monoxide shows just how scientifically illiterate her approach to drug and substance use is. She would ban anything if it has a slightly scientific name, regardless of the fact that all life would cease without water," Dr Smith would have said.

Mr Bowden said "Jacqui Dean has clearly demonstrated a lack of credibility in her requests to the Minister to consider banning water; She has also seriously embarrassed her National Party colleagues who can no longer have confidence in her petitions to ban BZP or anything else."

"The truth is that water claims many more lives than party pills ever will, but banning water won't work. Instead, we put flags and lifeguards on surf beaches and we teach water skills to improve safety. Likewise, if we regulated party pills properly they would be even safer. Banning them will make them more dangerous, and people will get hurt," said Mr Bowden.

"Everybody knows that hundreds of thousands of kiwi adults take BZP, society is changing - many people prefer taking pills to drinking alcohol and this is not a bad trend when alcohol is the more dangerous substance. If BZP is banned many of these everyday people will go to harder drugs or become criminalised. It isn't fair, it smacks of commercial bias and it is not sustainable. Even a number of the government's own advisory committee experts were uncomfortable with it."

Mr Bowden called for all party pill users to write to the Health Select Committee to make their voices heard if they wanted to prevent a ban.

**ENDS**

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Editors Notes:

- Approx 100 people die from DHMO (water) poisoning/overdose every year in NZ.
- Dr Nick Smith's criticism of the Greens can be found at: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0110/S00440.htm>