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BZP drink withdrawn from dairies, highlights need for control

The Social Tonics Association of New Zealand (STANZ) said while a drink containing 'party pill' ingredients would be voluntarily withdrawn from sale from dairies, the case underlined the need for sensible regulation of the industry.

"The manufacturers of the drink Ammo, which contains BZP, have taken a responsible step in withdrawing this product from the dairy drink fridges, but clearly some legal controls are required," said STANZ Chair Matt Bowden.

"BZP-based products have been proven safe by New Zealand's Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs (EACD), but they are clearly not suitable for children. London Underground – the product manufacturer - is leading the way in removing these products from places frequented by children."

Mr Bowden said while these products were safe when used as directed by adults, he agreed fully with drug counsellor Pauline Gardiner that they needed to be behind shop counters and away from children.

A spokesperson for London Underground said "This product has been approved for sale as a dietary supplement so there is no reason why it shouldn't be sold in specialty shops and night clubs - places where adults go."

Mr Bowden said while the vast majority of the industry was taking a responsible approach to the sale of legal party products, there was a need for further legislated regulations.

The Health Select Committee is currently looking at including these products in a new fourth schedule of the Misuse of Drugs Act and requiring an 18 age limit and standards around manufacture, labelling and marketing.

"STANZ has pushed hard for these controls and hopes they are enacted quickly."

Mr Bowden said these products were playing a very important harm minimisation role in providing a safe, legal and non-addictive alternative to illegal drugs such as P.

"The EACD has noted that if these products were to be prohibited there would be a swing back towards drugs like P which many communities are already battling against."

Matt Bowden said he was currently writing to all retailers reminding them of their responsibilities until a sensible regulatory regime was introduced. In the meantime STANZ would continue to work with Government agencies to ensure a workable and effective regulatory regime was reached.

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