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For immediate release

EACD decision based on evidence and harm minimisation.

The industry selling energy pills said today's decision by the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs not to schedule the ingredients BZP and TFMPP was based on the evidence and was entirely consistent with the Committee's commitment to harm minimisation.

Industry spokesperson Matt Bowden said perhaps as many as five million legal energy pills had been sold to New Zealanders of all walks of life over the last four years with no significant adverse effects.

"We congratulate the Expert Committee's decision as a major first step towards an evidence-based approach to the issue."

Mr Bowden said removing the products from the market would have left a gap that would inevitably be filled with dangerous and illegal drugs.

"The Committee has made the right decision based on the evidence and common sense, and has not been swayed by sensational comment and reporting."

Mr Bowden said while he welcomed the decision, the industry was keen to continue working co-operatively with the Ministry and the EACD to address some concerns over use of the products.

"We are currently working to develop an industry-wide code of practice to cover the manufacture, labelling, marketing and dosage recommendations for these products, restrictions on the outlets that can sell them and an 18 year age limit," he said.

"We agree that these products should not be sold to children. Some things are suitable for adults only."

Mr Bowden said the industry would assist with further inquiries wherever it could. He said it was important that as many people as possible who had used the products gave feedback to the EACD so it could gather as full a picture as possible.

Mr Bowden said some of the adverse effects that have been blamed on these products have usually been associated with binge drinking of alcohol or to explain to police the effects of illegal drug use.

"Unfortunately, the use of dangerous and illegal drugs is growing at an alarming rate in New Zealand. What the industry has been trying to achieve is the provision of safe and legal alternatives that give people energy and reduce risk.

"These products have been safely and widely used across mainstream New Zealand for years now. We believe they are providing a safer, legal and valuable alternative to illegal drugs at a time when drugs such as P are extending their reach into the community."

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