

Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform

committed to preventing tragedy that arises from illicit drug use

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MEDIA RELEASE

Federal Government more interested in slogans than effective drug solutions

“The condemnation of drug testing at clubs and rave parties by Christopher Pyne, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, shows that the Federal Government is more interested in political point scoring than turning around the frightening drug situation,” said Mr Bill Bush of Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform.

The minister has labelled the proposal of the Australian Drug Foundation to test what is in drugs being consumed at parties as making a mockery of the Government’s “Tough on Drugs” policy.

“It is his Government’s policy that is a mockery when it comes to party drugs,” said Mr Bush.

- The senior health minister, Mr Abbott, admitted last week that household surveys of 1998 and 2001 show that "increasing use of ecstasy and other party drugs is of particular concern, with research showing use among young adults aged 20-29 years increased dramatically in recent years from 14% to 20%". This has occurred during the Government’s watch.
- Black market party drugs, because their composition is unknown and they often contain very dangerous compounds, are alarming health workers. The illicit drug reporting system warns that users of potent methylamphetamine stimulants reach a state of chaos “after only a few months of heavy use.” This is in contrast to use of the older methylamphetamine powder that “may take some years of heavy chronic use” before users reach such states of disorder.
- The black market tablets can contain anything. According to his Government’s latest illicit drug report: “New South Wales police reported that in 2001-02 half the tablets sold as ecstasy contained methylamphetamine and not the active ingredient of ecstasy, the phenethylamine known as MDMA. The proportion had been 3:1 in favour of methylamphetamine in 2000-01.”
- These very dangerous drugs have been flooding into Australia through the same channels as heroin while the Government has been claiming credit for the heroin drought. They are now being manufactured here too.
- The Government boasts about the large quantities being seized but police and researchers know that high levels of seizure almost always show that there are a lot of drugs around.
- The report of the House of Representatives Committee into substance abuse that was stacked with a government majority, devoted just two of its 350 pages to these psychostimulants that are wreaking such havoc.

“All illicit drugs may be dangerous,” added Mr Bush, “but some are clearly much more dangerous than others. It is alarming that a minister responsible for health and the Government should display such ignorance about the drug situation in Australia and stand in the way of anyone becoming informed.”

In the party scene things have gone from bad to worse under this Government which has no realistic plan to turn the situation around.

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Associated with the **AUSTRALIAN DRUG LAW REFORM FOUNDATION**