

# Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform

*committed to preventing tragedy that arises from illicit drug use*

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN DRUGS LEADS TO INCREASE IN DRUG VARIETIES AND MORE DEATHS**

“The death of a young man following the ingestion of a synthetic drug has drawn the same predictable response from police”, said Brian McConnell, President of Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform.

The head of the NSW Drug Squad, Superintendent Nick Bingham following this tragic death said that a request was being made to the NSW government to have the substance put on the prohibited list.

“It is not that simple. We need some intelligent thinking on the whole effectiveness of prohibition”, said Brian McConnell.

“We have already prohibited many drugs but people still get them. What is now worse is the number of synthetic drugs that are appearing. And young people are turning to these synthetics as substitutes for the prohibited ones”.

There are now many more drugs on sale than the 234 banned by the 1961 and 1971 UN Conventions. Moves to ban new drugs simply inspire chemical innovation that sidesteps the law.

There are 700 websites in the EU alone selling these drugs and many dozens of others by post and it is probably not much different here in Australia.

We need a Drug Summit to discuss the whole issue of illegal drugs. Perhaps one outcome might be the one in the Netherlands where there are pill-testing laboratories with professionals who test pills for impurities then give them back to the consumer with a calculation of their contents and contaminants. Apparently the knowledge that a user can have their drugs tested keeps Dutch dealers honest – and the drug supply chain purer than elsewhere in the EU.

“In the Netherlands, because of this scheme there is little interest in so called legal highs”.

Young people are being exposed to significant and avoidable risks. We can do better.

Brian McConnell

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