



Office of Hon Peter Dunne

MP for Ohariu

Minister of Internal Affairs

Associate Minister of Health

Associate Minister of Conservation

- 8 SEP 2015

Ms Vanessa van Uden
Mayor
Queenstown Lakes District Council
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Ref. 1530183

Dear Ms van Uden

Thank you for your letter of 28 July 2015 about psychoactive substances. The Government shares your concerns about the effects that psychoactive substances can have on individuals and communities, but has no plans to ban these products.

Currently no psychoactive products are approved. Any product approved by the Psychoactive Substances Regulatory Authority will have met the criteria for posing no more than a low risk of harm to the user, similar to the assessment for over-the-counter medicines. This approval process ensures that products have been formulated, manufactured and tested to a high level of quality. The pre-market approval process requires testing for safety and the potential for dependence, the potential misuse of the substance, and its effects on vulnerable members of the community.

When the Act came into effect in July 2013, in order to manage products already on the market, about 50 products were given interim approval. Eleven products were subsequently removed from sale after significant adverse effects were reported. As you are aware, the Government responded to community concerns by revoking all interim product approvals on 8 May 2014. Any products that were previously on the market, including those that held an interim product approval will have to meet all the requirements for pre-market approval before they can be sold again. No product will automatically be granted a licence.

Internationally, no other jurisdiction has found a more effective approach to dealing with new psychoactive substances, which have proliferated worldwide. Some countries have introduced product bans. All that has done has been to drive the market underground and out of sight of the police and health authorities to the detriment of those adversely affected by their use.

The Government's view is that it is preferable to regulate such substances and to permit access to low risk products rather than drive potentially more harmful products underground.

Yours sincerely

Hon Peter Dunne
Associate Minister of Health