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MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 26 October 2007

DOCTOR CONTINUES TO IGNORE THE “E-MERGENCY”

Independent MLC Ann Bressington today slammed Adelaide trauma and emergency doctor David Caldicott’s use of the term “hug drug” to promote ecstasy as irresponsible and dangerous.

Ann was staggered that just one week after politicians, the media and the general public strongly called to reject terms such as “party” and “recreational” drugs, Dr Caldicott would describe entheogenic drugs effects as “mystical” and promote them as a source of “spiritual enlightenment”.

“Young people won’t find reason or insight in ecstasy, nor will they find genuine, long-lasting feelings of love and intimacy with others,” Ann said, citing a report by the National Institute on Drugs (NIDA), which in part reads:

“Myths abound about both the acute effects and long-term consequences of this drug, often called ecstasy or "X". Indeed, one reason for the rapid rise in the drug’s popularity is that many young people believe that MDMA is a new safe drug. But MDMA is not new to the scientific community, as many laboratories began investigating this drug in the 1980s, and the picture emerging from their efforts is of a drug that is far from benign. For example, MDMA can cause a dangerous increase in body temperature that can lead to kidney failure. MDMA can also increase heart rate, blood pressure, and heart wall stress. Animal studies show that MDMA can damage specific neurons in the brain. In humans, the research is not conclusive at this time; however, a number of studies show that long-term, heavy MDMA users suffer cognitive deficits, including problems with memory.”

“Irresponsible statements like those made by Dr Caldicott hinder those who are trying to change our children’s false perception that illicit drug use is acceptable or harmless,” Ann said.

“We need to stop making excuses for drug use and start dealing with the problem. If our kids need more to believe in then we should make it clear they will not get what they are looking for from drugs. Long-term what they will get is more struggles to be overcome.”

Ann commended a recent article in the Advertiser entitled ‘Drug E-mergency’ (*October 17, 2007*), which criticised the use of throwaway terms such as ‘party’ and ‘recreational’ and called on authorities to “immediately ban” such tags.

“It is pleasing to see a growing awareness in the media and general public of the great ecstasy ‘party’ con. A recent parliamentary report revealed Australia has the highest consumption per head of population in the world of ecstasy at 3.4%. Every weekend, Australians consume 100,000 ecstasy tablets. This is a serious problem, and we must be committed to reducing demand, rather than promoting it through the language used by the likes of Dr Caldicott. He appears to be a loose cannon and a law unto himself and his peers should be taking steps to reign him in”