

Kāpiti Coast
Older Persons' Council
A Voice For Our Community

INFORM - ADVOCATE - EMPOWER

The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council opposes substances being used to alter the body unless they have been through rigorous scientific testing to ensure safety. Because psychoactive substances are relatively new, no one knows with any certainty what the long-term effects of their use may be. The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council submits that the precautionary principle should be employed where possible.

The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council submits that the Kāpiti Coast District Council should continue to lobby for stronger evidence that these substances are no more harmful than other substances which affect human physiology, such as medicines, alcohol and caffeine. It is important that all chemicals in a product must be listed, so people can avoid those they may be allergic to.

However banning psychoactive substances as they emerge has not been effective because new ones, potentially more dangerous, emerge shortly after one is banned. Other countries which have tried to ban psychoactive substances products in different ways, such as banning entire classes of substances, have all had the same problem: new ones which evade the laws are developed and put on sale quicker than the government can keep up.

Banning is also likely to result in extending the underground market for illicit substances. Susceptible people who have been badly affected by use of these substances can be reluctant to seek health services because of their illegal activity.

On balance, the Kāpiti Coast District Council seems to have taken the most sensible available approach of limiting sales to a narrow area, and under current legislation has little option to do otherwise. However the consultation with affected neighbours of any outlet must be thorough and receptive. Any zone must consider the high percentage of elderly in Kapiti, who can be feel vulnerable when confronted by "spaced out" younger people. Therefore any sales area should not be close to retirement establishments.

The Kāpiti Coast Older Persons' Council also submits that any psychoactive substances selling zone should not include, or be adjacent to, educational establishments.