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Over half a billion dollars worth of P off the streets

The latest Customs seizure of the pills used to manufacture P, brings to a total since 2004, of over half a billion dollars worth of P that won't make its way to users, according to MethCon Group director Mike Sabin.

Customs latest seizure of pseudoephedrine which is in the form of Chinese cold and flu medication known as Contac NT, is the third largest they have made at 100 kg, and follows hot on the heels of an 80 kg seizure of the same substance in mid September.

"Since 2004 Customs, who makes on average a seizure a related to methamphetamine, has now seized over 1750 kg of Contac NT, which would be enough to have made around 525 kg of P, valued at between \$420m and \$525m by the time it made the street." Said Mr. Sabin

"The concerning trend that emerges from these seizures is that it reflects an enormous ongoing demand for the drug despite efforts of enforcement agencies to resolve this problem." Said Mr. Sabin.

"Customs readily accept that they believe they only seize about 10 to 20 percent of what is likely to be coming into the country and while it is great to see such large interceptions, it indicates a far more sinister overall picture." Claimed Mr. Sabin.

"We are a country in denial with respect to this drug with over 1300 meth labs having been dismantled by Police since 1997, most of which has involved locally accessed pseudoephedrine, let alone imported product.

New Zealand's meth crisis is shared in many other countries with this drug problem now considered pandemic world-wide and given the global nature of pseudoephedrine supply, as we are now seeing with seizures of Contac NT from China, this trend is likely to continue in the absence of effective demand reduction." Said Mr. Sabin.

Mr. Sabin who researched solutions to the New Zealand meth crisis presenting his findings and recommendations to Parliament in May this year, urges a more balanced approach to reducing demand, healing drug users and stemming supply, something that should be given the same importance and priority as any mainstream health or economic policy.

"We are a country in the grip of a drug and alcohol fueled crime and social dysfunction endemic, which we must be prepared to confront and address in a substantial and sustainable way. My fear is that until our leaders can acknowledge and fully understand the link between methamphetamine addiction and crime the required initiatives are left wanting." Said Mr. Sabin

Links to research and conference:

<http://www.methcon.co.nz/press/research.pdf>

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(NZ's only specialist methamphetamine education providers)
