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## The 'Key' to Tackling P

While there are some positive advances announced by the Prime Minister in the government's new strategy for tackling P, in the main it appears that the approach is to try and do the same thing - harder, while expecting a different outcome, according to MethCon Group director Mike Sabin.

"While there has been some criticism surrounding the proposed classification of pseudoephedrine as a prescription only medicine, it is a necessary and important move, given examples on the global stage have shown that anything short of this is ineffective in the medium term" claimed Mr. Sabin.

"This, together with enhancing Police and Customs powers and focus are helpful additions to achieving reductions in the supply-side, but beyond this, the strategies outlined by Mr. Key amount to throwing good money after bad, looking to get better outcomes from a model that has proven to be a failure for many years in this country" said Mr. Sabin.

"While enhancing access to treatment and its effectiveness is vital, the current model, centred on the 'harm minimisation' has proven ineffective for P and in all the studies I have done to look at this approach, I have not identified a single country that has seen reductions in drug use or harm that follows this approach" claimed Mr. Sabin.

"Besides this, for every 'hard core' addicted P user there is probably 10 who are just starting out or in a so called 'recreational phase' and reaching these people and providing brief intervention within a domestic setting and utilising the coercive nature of the criminal justice system with the likes of fully fledged drug treatment courts, would have delivered a greater return, both financially and in terms of demand reduction" said Mr. Sabin.

"The new policy also sets out intentions to help communities "resist drug use" but the detail in just how this will be achieved is conspicuous by its absence and given we have an unmatched appetite for both cannabis and methamphetamine anything short of a comprehensive attitude change through social marketing and demand reduction strategies will fail to meet the immense challenges we face as a society" said Mr. Sabin.

"One could argue that the National led government had a genuine mandate for change and policy reform at the last election. While I commend the government for looking to address the problem, this P policy is an add-on to our existing drug policy that has been failing miserably for many years and maintaining this approach to drug use and abuse under the harm minimisation umbrella will inhibit any reductions in uptake" claimed Mr. Sabin.

"P is a multi-billion dollar gold mine to well organised transnational cartels who now work closely with our own organised crime syndicates. The existence and survival of these groups relies on one thing - demand. Regardless what initiatives are in place to limit supply, preventing drug use before it starts is the key to solving the problem and strategies that don't meet this challenge are unlikely to yield any real change in the

medium to long term" claimed Mr. Sabin.

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(NZ's only specialist methamphetamine education providers)

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