



Media Release
Friday 15 May 2015

Local Approved Products Policy Adopted

Selwyn District Council has adopted a local approved products policy at a meeting this week following consultation and feedback on a draft policy.

The policy restricts any future sales of psychoactive substances (commonly known as 'legal highs') to a small area in central Rolleston.

The selling of psychoactive substances is controlled by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry requires all retailers to have their products tested and approved as safe to be sold. The Ministry also issues licenses to retailers to sell the product.

Under new legislation, the Council has the option to develop a Local Approved Products Policy. The Council's policy can only regulate where products can be sold and cannot prohibit the sale of legal highs in the district.

If the Council does not develop a policy, then limitations on where retailers can sell legal highs would be guided by District Plan rules, which would provide less control on where legal high retailers could operate from.

78 submissions were received on the Council's draft policy. Many submissions requested that the Council ban the sale of approved products in Selwyn.

"While the working party appreciated that many submitters have concerns about legal highs, banning these products is something the Council does not have the power to do," says Councillor Sarah Walters the Chair of the Local Approved Products Working Party.

Currently there are no stores selling legal highs in Selwyn and the Council is not aware of any retailers planning to establish stores.

Councillor Walters says that as a result of concerns raised in submissions about retail stores potentially locating near Rolleston School and the Council's concern around the lack of supervision of any activities on the vacant land west of the Council Headquarters after hours, the Council has reduced the area in which retailers selling approved products could locate in central Rolleston. The vacant land between the Council Headquarters and the State Highway has been removed from the permitted area. The permitted area runs along Rolleston Drive between the New World and Countdown supermarkets and takes in the area around Countdown. A map showing the approved area is available online at www.selwyn.govt.nz.

The policy does not allow for approved products to be sold in any other areas in Selwyn. Under the policy retailers selling legal highs also cannot locate within 100 metres of another retailer selling these products.

The Council has also written a letter to the Minister of Health setting out its concerns with the legislation relating to psychoactive substances. The Council was concerned that it was unable to adequately represent the views of the community (as many submitters wanted to ban approved products in Selwyn) but could not because of the government's legislation. The Council also highlighted the financial cost of developing a policy that is unable to adequately address the community's concerns.

Selwyn's adopted policy is similar to policies in place in neighbouring Ashburton and Christchurch where permitted areas for legal highs have been established in the central business areas of Ashburton and Christchurch City.

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