



Media release
Monday 19 January 2015

Consultation on Legal Highs Policy starts

Selwyn residents are being invited to make submissions on a new policy which controls where legal highs can be sold in the district.

The selling of psychoactive substances (commonly known as 'legal highs') 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, Councils have the option to develop a Local Approved Products Policy. The Psychoactive Substances Regulatory Authority have indicated that it is their intention to take these policies into consideration when deciding whether to approve a license application. Council policies can only regulate locations where products can be sold and cannot prohibit the sale of legal highs in the District.

"The Council does not have the option to ban the sale of legal highs if these substances are approved for sale by the Ministry of Health. However the community have an opportunity to have input into where retailers may establish through consultation on a Local Approved Products Policy," says John Christensen, Selwyn District Council's Environmental Services Manager.

If councils decide not to 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.

The Council's draft Local Approved Products Policy would only allow psychoactive substances to be sold within parts of the central shopping area of Rolleston.

The permitted area for the sale of legal highs runs along Rolleston Drive between the New World and Countdown supermarkets and takes in the area around Countdown. A second permitted area in Rolleston is the vacant land to the north of the Council offices along Rolleston Drive between Norman Kirk Drive and the State Highway. The policy does not allow for products to be sold in any other areas in Selwyn.

Under the draft policy retailers selling legal highs cannot locate within 100 metres of another retailer selling these products.

"Other areas aside from central Rolleston have not been identified as being suitable for shops selling psychoactive substances as they have smaller shopping areas with a limited Police presence," says Selwyn Environmental Services Manager John Christensen.

Mr Christensen is inviting the community to make submissions on the draft policy. "We hope that people will take the time to make a submission expressing their views on the policy."

Consultation on the new policy is open until 20 February 2015. Council staff will be available to answer questions about the draft policy at:

- the Selwyn Central Community Board meeting at 4.30pm on Wednesday 21 January at Selwyn District Council Headquarters in Rolleston
- the Malvern Community Board meeting at 4pm on Monday 26 January at the Darfield Library and Service Centre, and
- Selwyn District Council Headquarters in Rolleston at a public information session from 4 to 6pm on Wednesday 11 February

The policy and a submission form is available online at www.selwyn.govt.nz/haveyoursay. These documents are also available from Council libraries and services centres.

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