



We will confront the P problem

All of you will have heard stories about the dangerous and addictive drug P. Some of you will have family members or friends who have struggled, or who are still struggling with it.

Last week in response to community concern I held a public meeting in the Christchurch Town Hall in learn about the drug and its consequences. We learned about a drug that is hugely damaging to those who take it and the people who share their lives. It comes hand in hand with violence. It allows gangs and organised crime to flourish. It entices young people into crime. Some of the personal stories we heard were heart breaking.

The National-led Government is committed to using every tool we have to fight P use and today the Prime Minister announced our plan.



" Sadly, P is a very New Zealand problem. We have one of the highest proportion of P users in the world. Some say we can't fight it. It's been around too long. The gangs will never give up. There's nothing we can do.

I don't accept that. And this National-led Government won't accept that. We will confront the P problem, using the full force of the Government's arsenal. "

PM John Key, 8th October, 2009

Firstly, we're going to make it harder for people to manufacture P by controlling the availability of precursor chemicals.

The main precursor – pseudoephedrine – can be bought over the pharmacy counter in a range of cold and flu medications. Up to a third of P labs busted by police each year have used cold and flu medication.

There's a clinically safe alternative for cold and flu relief – phenylephrine. It's already used in up to three quarters of our cold and flu medications, and can be bought over the counter.

That's why we're making pseudoephedrine prescription only.

Secondly, we're coming down on gangs and organised crime syndicates who peddle P for a business.

Customs is establishing dedicated anti-drug taskforces aimed at increasing seizures of P and its precursors at the border. Police will have more tools at their disposal than ever before, and they will take profits of these criminals and use them to fund anti-P initiatives.

Thirdly, we're committed to reducing demand for P, helping addicts quit and deterring new users.

We'll make treatment available for more than 3000 extra patients over the next three years. We're expanding specialist services where addicts can get the immediate support they need, and follow-up services to help them stay off the drug.

Police and the Courts have the power to divert users into treatment. We're also making sure frontline staff in government agencies know how to provide P users with information and support. Most importantly, we'll help families and doctors get addicts into treatment.


Fourthly, we'll help our schools, whānau, clubs, and businesses to support addicts and deter new users. We'll work with voluntary organisations, promote new drug guidelines for schools, and direct community programmes to focus on tackling P.

Finally, we'll make government chief executives accountable for getting results.

I know that the people of Christchurch will be pleased to hear that National is tackling P from all directions. We're cracking down on precursors, breaking supply chains, providing better routes into treatment, supporting families and communities, and strengthening leadership and accountability.

This will make a difference for hundreds of families and make our community safer.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nukky Wagner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

P.S. I am always keen to hear from you, flick me an email, call my Christchurch office on 03 3658297, or pop in to my office at 189 Montreal St, Christchurch. And if you're a local do join our next Christchurch event.....