

Saturday 2 January 2010

COALITION WILL BAN BONGS

A Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Government will ban the sale of bongos in Victoria to reduce the harm to Victorian families caused by cannabis and stop Victorians using dangerous drugs.

Cannabis is a dangerous drug which causes serious mental and physical damage to many Victorians every year.

Victoria is the only state not to restrict the sale of bongos despite clear evidence of their use by many young Victorians to smoke cannabis.

Banning the sale of bongos sends a clear message that cannabis is a dangerous and harmful substance.

The Mental Health Council of Australia has found that cannabis users are three times more likely to develop psychosis and that Victorian secondary school students who use cannabis weekly are five times more likely to harm themselves.

For many young people, cannabis can be used as a 'gateway' drug into more dangerous illicit drugs, with most heroin and cocaine users first experimenting with cannabis and research showing regular cannabis users are 140 times more likely to advance to stronger drugs than people who had not tried cannabis.

As long as John Brumby allows bongos to be sold freely at more than 100 outlets across the state, Victoria's young people and families will continue to suffer from the damaging effects of cannabis.

Victorians can't trust a government that claims it is tough on drugs yet won't take this important step to reduce drug use.

As Opposition Leader in 1996, John Brumby introduced a Private Member's Bill to decriminalise cannabis, and as Premier he has repeatedly refused to ban the sale of bongos.

Under the Coalition's plan, amendments to the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* will restrict the sale of bongos and Consumer Affairs Victoria inspectors will police the ban.

Policy

A Coalition Government will also provide improved community information and education about the ban and the harmful effects of cannabis.

We have had enough of seeing thousands of Victorian families being torn apart each year by the devastating effects of illicit drugs.