



## **DRUGS**

United**Future**'s approach to drug policy is to concentrate on drugs that cause most harm to New Zealand communities. We believe that drug policy should be based on expert medical evidence and social sector advice rather than knee-jerk media hysteria. It is often overlooked but must be remembered that the two most harmful substances in New Zealand are alcohol and tobacco.

## **Drugs and the Law**

It is United**Future** policy to:

- Focus resources to deal with the most socially harmful drugs as identified through scientific research and the assessments of justice, education and health experts. Currently the most socially harmful substances in New Zealand are methamphetamine, specifically 'P', cannabis, alcohol and tobacco.
- Regularly review the classification of drugs to ensure that they accurately reflect their health, behavioural and social effects.
- Oppose the decriminalisation of cannabis for recreational use.
- Introduce tougher penalties for drug dealers who supply people under the age of 18.
- Undertake thorough research into the relationship between the level of drug use and all other crime.
- Raise penalties for receiving income from the proceeds of drugs.
- Require prisoners to undergo full toxicology testing on admission to prison to establish the level of drug use and provide them with a clean start through targeted detection, deterrence, treatment and education programmes.
- Remove being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while committing a crime as a mitigating factor in sentencing.
- Deny home detention to drug dealers as it is well-known that a high proportion of drug dealers do business from home.
- Crack down on the level of drug use in prisons with the aim of making all prisons 'clean'. Adequately fund the Department of Corrections to ensure that it can provide a comprehensive programme for the elimination of drug use within all prisons and youth correction facilities, reporting progress annually on its achievements.
- Ensure that re-integration and parole services for inmates who have previously tested positive for the use of drugs include mandatory drug-testing and drug treatment options.
- Ensure that Customs are sufficiently funded to stop the importation of drugs.
- Crack down on sales of alcohol to minors by increasing police resources to enforce underage drinking laws and introduce stronger penalties for supply.
- Introduce a Restricted Substances Act that would regulate the sale and use of substances such as nitrous oxide and solvents that also have legitimate uses.

## **Drugs and Health**

It is United**Future** policy to:

- Boost funding for drug treatment programmes, and ensure that residential treatment centres are available and properly funded in each region.
- Review the use and availability of methadone with the intention of reducing methadone reliance.
- Place greater emphasis on increased funding and co-ordination between alcohol and drug services and mental health services to ensure appropriate, accurate assessment with correctly directed treatment.
- Require the Ministry of Health to undertake research to establish the relative cost effectiveness of existing treatments, including day treatment, residential treatment programmes and other options, with the clear objective of achieving recovery for drug dependency rather than just maintaining it.
- Ensure that tax revenues from the sale of legal drugs - alcohol and tobacco - are directly channelled into programmes to address drug abuse and cover the terrible cost to both our health system and to our families.
- Investigate the role of alcohol and other drugs in youth suicide and other forms of self-harm.

## **Drugs and Education**

It is United**Future** policy to:

- Support public education campaigns that highlight the negative health effects of smoking, alcohol and substance abuse.
- Work with schools to ensure that they remain drug-free by promoting treatment options in conjunction with punishment for drug offences.
- Ensure that schools implement anti-drug policy programmes in consultation with the police and other agencies such as DARE and Life Education Trust.