

To the TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration)

Alkyl Nitrates (Poppers)

I am writing to express my concern in regard to taking 'poppers' and placing them into Schedule 9 of the Goods and Poisons Act.

In order to make this submission I need to explain my background and employment and personal history.

Potential for abuse of Poppers

Since graduating as a Registered Nurse I have worked within the fields of Mental Health, AOD Alcohol and Other Drugs of addiction, in general wards and in Community health. During all of this time, not once have I seen, heard or witnessed a single person with addiction to Alkyl Nitrates. I have never once observed both in the GLBTI community, which I am part of - the potential for abuse of poppers, unlike other illicit substances such as ICE, Methamphetamines, Speed, Heroin - the list goes on.

I live in an area, where the streets are full of those on heroin, ice, and drugs of addiction. Not once have I seen a single person in the streets high on Poppers.

Lets make no mistake - Poppers have an instant hit, they last less 30-60 seconds, during which time the person using poppers does not loose their thought process, become violent or incoherent as those who use illicit drugs of addiction become.

Any other matters that are necessary to protect public health

I have already heard of those who are not happy with the idea of poppers becoming a Schedule 9 and as for me, I definitely believe it goes against all knowledge of what a drug of addiction is. Lets get it straight - you take poppers off the market - people WILL look for the alternative. They always do. ICE use, GHB, Speed, MDMA, these are drugs that cause social damage, crime, violence. Can you produce one instance of crime or violence caused by Poppers. As a avid news follower - I have never seen one on the news! You take poppers off the market - expect a public health rebound of illicit drug use. Gay, Bisexual, Hetrosexual and Women I know personally have all used Poppers to relax during anal penetration. If poppers are placed on Schedule 9 - I already have heard my friends directly tell me - we "WILL" find something else to use.

Further to this - the individual who has poppers in their possession - are they to be criminalised, booked, fined, and have a conviction. This would destroy some peoples careers, lives, and for what? Because they are in possession of something so minor - as a popper.

Once again - there is a demonisation of something used for short term pleasure targeting the GLBTII community. The real concern here is - where has been the education on Poppers? I don't see anything on any packaging which states how to use the product, how much to use, the expiry dates, and further - there is no understanding /warning of toxicity of the substances used in poppers. How is this going to be policed? Do we head back to a "Tasty raid"? History shows this is what occurs in my community when education is not given to those who choose to use the letter of the law as a tool for victimisation.

On a chemistry note: the Poppers which cause "Maculopathy" is directly the 'isopropyl nitrite' which you are aware of. Why not ban this substance all together or place it in Schedule 9. This makes sense. However, I have already overheard people talk about "making it in the back yard" and "selling poppers in the community". Again - pushing a substance underground does many things. The cost of purchase, the "impure" chemicals used, the unknown substance for those in the GLBTI community makes this more dangerous.

