

Hello,

You have made it so difficult for the average person to make a submission. I finally found my way to do doing this. It can only mean that you are not interested in the views of ordinary people. Typical 'big government' driven by a vocal minority.

I am a gay man – a member of the community most affected by the proposed changes. I am a trained volunteer providing social and emotional support to people living with HIV.

I have used inhaled nitrites, popularly known as 'poppers' for many years. The effects of poppers use are extremely short-acting. They play an important role for many gay men like me in making sex more fun.

Poppers have been used by gay men for sexual purposes since the 1970s. The medical literature shows a smattering of case reports documenting injuries attributed to poppers use. Only recently have there been reports of retinal injuries after poppers use. This must not result in a 'knee jerk' reaction punishing the vast majority of responsible people who use this legal product.

Banning will result in product substitution – a completely negative result and just another 'nanny state' knee jerk reaction.

Following a similar EU and Canadian regulatory action, alternative products have been brought to market. These are packaged in aerosol cans – how bad is that. Just think of the consequences in other communities in Australia. These are not nitrite inhalants and their result is effectively the same as paint-sniffing. Is that what you want?

These products would not be captured by the proposed ban, and indeed the proposed ban is highly likely to increase the market for such products.

Poppers have been in use for nearly five decades with very few reports of serious harm, and recent case reports describe a previously undocumented form of harm. These very limited situations are a result of blatant misuse by a small minority of users (if those people were real poppers users).

Banning nitrite inhalants as a class will have a significant impact on the capability of many gay men to achieve sexual pleasure. In addition, it will expose a historically marginalised, stigmatised and criminalised community to a new vulnerability to criminal prosecution. It will also open up a secondary impact as outlined above.

A more targeted ban, leaving long-standing formulations legal, would reduce the risks of rare but serious clinical harms, and prevent the import and widespread uptake of copycat products whose risks are substantially unknown.

Yours sincerely,

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