Time To Review Kava Licensing

Recent revelations that kava use has increased significantly in Arnhemland should be ringing warning bells for the Martin Labor Government, according to Shadow Minister for Health, Dr Richard Lim.

“It is unbelievable that the Martin Labor Government is prepared to sit on its hands, refusing to consider what changes may be required to control the widespread abuse of kava which is taking place with the consequence of health deterioration among the many indigenous people who abuse kava and pointing the finger at the Federal Government,” Dr Lim said.

“While the Martin Labor government insists on waiting for the federal government, there are things that they can do. They could start by initiating a thorough review of the current situation, however again we see no action.

“I was one of the members of the first Select Committee on Kava which studied the magnitude and consequences of kava use in Arnhemland.

“Kava legislation was brought in, with the support of the Country Liberal Party, in an attempt to control kava abuse.

“We have now learnt that the quantity of kava legally allowed to be purchased under the Northern Territory legislation is twice what is considered to be safe for normal health.

“It is also clear that the legislation to allow legal supply has not working as it was intended, with the consequence that black market kava has gone through the roof.

“I am now calling on the Martin Labor Government to establish a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly, which has to be adequately resourced to undertake a review of the legislation, the extent of abuse with its health consequences and the amount of black market kava that is in the Northern Territory.

“I would now need to be convinced that there was a good reason not to ban Kava.

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