



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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SYNTHETIC CANNABIS BANNED IN NSW

The Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, today warned retailers and consumers about the Government's decision to ban a number of synthetic cannabinoids, with the law to come into full effect next Friday.

"Earlier this week the Minister for Mental Health and Healthy Lifestyles, Kevin Humphries, announced the Government's intent to ban the synthetic cannabinoids contained in herbal smoking products after warnings from doctors and psychiatrists about the harmful effects," Mr Smith said.

"People have until Friday, 8 July 2011 before the prohibition on the sale, possession and use of synthetic cannabinoids comes into effect via regulations under the *Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act*.

"This means that the synthetic cannabinoid ingredients contained in the herbal smoking products will be prohibited drugs in the same category as cannabis, heroin and cocaine.

"In the meantime, retailers of synthetic cannabinoids or products containing synthetic cannabinoids, as well as their customers, should consider themselves warned and immediately take steps to dispose of these substances safely and responsibly."

The synthetic cannabinoids may be found in various products with brand names including Kronic, Spice, Kaos, Voodoo, Mango and Northern Lights which have a cannabis-like effect when smoked.

Use of these drugs may produce similar effects to cannabis and can raise heart rate, blood pressure and cause anxiety and hallucinations. Of particular concern is their potential for impairing judgment, therefore creating a hazard when an affected person drives or operates machinery.

Mr Smith said cannabis and cannabis-like drugs could affect a person's mental health and physical wellbeing.

"These are not harmless products," Mr Smith said. "There are clear risks to people's health and safety and the Government has a duty to act."

Further information will be available at www.health.nsw.gov.au.

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