

Sex Party says proposed bong ban racist

Written by Herald Sun | Ashley Gardiner
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A ban on bongs has been described as racist because it gave special exemptions to Middle Eastern communities for the hookah.

Sex Party president Fiona Patten said the State Government's proposed ban banned bongs used by young Caucasians and water pipes used by Chinese.

But the hookah was exempt from the law.

"How can you send Chinese and Caucasian Australians to jail for selling and displaying bongs and then exempt Lebanese and Egyptian Australians from selling and displaying their version of a bong?" Ms Patten said today.

Under the legislation, introduced into State Parliament in August, the display of hookahs will be restricted.

Hookah pipes are used for tobacco smoking, and the exemption was introduced following consultation with Middle Eastern and Arabic communities.

Mental Health Minister Mary Wooldridge said in August that the changes would bring Victoria into line with other states.

"We want to stop the confusing message that while it's okay to display and sell equipment used for smoking cannabis it's illegal to smoke cannabis," Ms Wooldridge said.

"The Coalition Government is determined to reduce the harm to Victorian families caused by cannabis use, and prohibiting the sale of bongs is an important part of achieving that," Ms Wooldridge said.

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The laws will come into effect on January 1 next year.

A poll by the Sex Party found that 72 per cent of Victorians surveyed thought the ban would not stop young people from smoking marijuana.

Younger people were far more likely to agree that the bong ban would have no impact, according to the survey conducted by Newspoll.

Ms Patten said bongs, hookahs and traditional water pipes should all be sold from age-restricted premises.

The ban would force marijuana users to smoke cannabis through home-made devices. When in Government, the ALP voted against this Bill when it was initially brought on by the DLP," Ms Patten said.

"They cited the deleterious effects of smoking substances through plastic as opposed to glass or ceramic or wood."

Ms Patten said cigarette papers were the most popular way of smoking marijuana.

"A far more effective bill would be to restrict the sale of all smoking utensils, pipes, cigarettes and cigarette papers to adults-only venues such as tobacconists, pubs and adult shops," Ms Patten said.

Source: [The Australian](#)