



Report on the Regional Alcohol Planning Forum – 2 June 2011

Executive summary

The following report outlines the discussions and findings from the Auckland Regional Alcohol Planning Forum that was held on June 2nd, 2011.

Auckland Council is currently developing their alcohol framework, consolidating the bylaws and carrying out the research phase to further their alcohol planning. The main purpose of the forum was to support and inform the Auckland Council to help with these activities. The forum was also beneficial in that it provided an opportunity for people working in the alcohol harm reduction sector to share ideas and possible solutions, it helped inform other agencies on strategies and priority areas for future work, and it offered an opportunity for liaison between the Auckland Council and alcohol harm reduction agencies.

The forum had approximately 90 people in attendance that came from a range of sectors. Following a mihi and karakia from Thomas Strickland of Hapai Te Hauora Tapui, Councillor George Wood provided the opening address for the forum. Rebecca Williams, Director of Alcohol Healthwatch then confirmed the agenda, spoke about the purpose of the forum, and provided some context for the day. Michael Sinclair, Principal Policy Analyst for Community and Cultural Policy at the Auckland Council was the final speaker before the workshops began. His presentation explained the new structure of the Council and gave details about the development of the Alcohol Programme and Framework.

For the workshops, the participants were grouped into sector groups such as Community Action/Health Promotion, Policy and Planning, Community Safety, Social Services, Licensing and Enforcement and Treatment/Addictions/Intervention. Local Board members, researchers and community members who attended were asked to join sector groups that were of interest to them. Facilitators took each group through a number of workshops throughout the day which canvassed the following issues:

- Key alcohol related harms and issues for Auckland
- What is happening in our region in response to these issues
- What is working well, things we could do differently, and opportunities to reduce alcohol related harm
- Our vision for what a liveable city would look like in 30 years, in relation to alcohol, and
- Moving forward – Priorities, strategies and objectives for the next three years.

After each workshop, the facilitators fed back to the wider group the three most important points of discussion that were expressed by their sector group. Post-forum the worksheets that the facilitators completed during each session were transcribed, and an analysis was undertaken by members of the

Alcohol Healthwatch team to pull out key issues, themes and discussion points. These are included in the following report along with some discussion and recommendations for moving forward (which came out of the forum discussions).

Key findings from the forum include the following:

- There is strong commitment and energy within the alcohol harm reduction sector to focus on solutions – we are past selling the problem. An improvement in cohesiveness, collaboration, communication, consistency and coordination within the sector and also with the Auckland Council is a focus
- A number of sector groups believed that the Auckland Council need to take leadership nationally in decreasing alcohol-related harm, and to advocate to central government for effective public policy
- All sector groups reported similar alcohol-related issues and harms. The most commonly reported issues included ready-to-drink alcohol products, the accessibility of alcohol particularly for young people, the proliferation of alcohol advertising, the number of liquor outlets in communities, the normalisation of alcohol and heavy drinking in society, and alcohol-related violence
- A range of programmes to reduce alcohol-related harm are happening across the region and nationally but it was felt that they are currently operating in silos. While there are some pockets of effective collaboration happening such as in the enforcement and liquor licensing area, it was felt that collaboration could be improved through the continuum of sector groups. Current programmes and projects cover a diverse range of audiences and predominantly use an educative approach. Additionally, social marketing, advocacy, lobbying, awareness building, and enforcement/monitoring strategies are implemented, but to a much lesser extent. There was little evidence to demonstrate that formal evaluation of programmes had been completed, however this may be due to groups not having the time to consider this information fully.
- There were various opportunities identified by sector groups for work to move forward. These included further collaboration between the alcohol harm reduction sector and the Auckland Council, increasing local data collection and intelligence, supporting the Auckland Council to be bold and take the lead with alcohol harm reduction measures and advocate to central government, supporting more local initiatives, activities and programmes that are alcohol and drug free, improving processes and systematic structures in the alcohol harm reduction sector to achieve effective outcomes, improving integrated planning, and moving past talking about the problem and implementing some solutions to decrease alcohol-related harm.

Overall, feedback from the participants and facilitators at the forum was very positive and confirmed that the forum achieved its purpose as well as satisfying the participant's expectations.

For a copy of the full report please visit www.ahw.org.nz