

Alcohol Healthwatch Media Release

18 June 2014

Community alcohol survey results support restrictions

The survey results released today by Auckland's Regional Public Health Service demonstrate strong public support for meaningful restrictions on the number of alcohol outlets and trading hours, and for limiting alcohol outlets around schools and other sensitive sites.

Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams says the community's strong support for these restrictions aligns well with the evidence. "There is a robust evidence base that shows that when you reduce alcohol availability you reduce harms."

Williams says Auckland's Draft Local Alcohol Policy goes some way towards improving the status quo, however further refinements are needed before it can do the job it was intended to do.

These include:

- reducing the proposed trading hours by at least one more hour at each end of the day, and removing the ability for some licences to extend these hours
- extending the proposed "temporary freeze" to include on-licences as well as off-licences, and for this to apply to all of Auckland for the full policy period (six years) – effectively implementing a cap on the number of liquor outlets across Auckland
- including provisions for priority areas to opt into a "sinking lid" on the number of premises, based on Environmental and Community Impact Assessments
- including specific restrictions on the proximity of alcohol outlets to schools and other sensitive sites.

Williams says that with a bit of sharpening up the policy will do a good job of reducing violence, disorder and other crimes, and improve health and social outcomes in Auckland. This is what makes a city vibrant and dynamic.

Alcohol Healthwatch urges Aucklanders to have their say on the policy to ensure it reflects their wishes and protects it from undue influence of those with a vested interest in keeping things as they are.

A tool-kit and submission guide are available and can be found at www.ahw.org.nz.

For further comment contact:

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A copy of the survey report can be found at:

<http://www.arphs.govt.nz/Portals/0/Health%20Information/Alcohol/Public%20Support%20for%20Alcohol%20Policies.pdf>

