



**Alcohol Healthwatch media release, 14 April 2014**

**Hospitality sector tactics mar Local Alcohol Policy process**

An analysis of submissions on the Draft Local Alcohol Policy for Hasting and Napier District Councils shows only about a third of the 260 submissions presented by Hospitality New Zealand could be considered “genuine”. The remainder were found to be from people or addresses that didn’t exist or who said when contacted that they hadn’t made a submission.

One submitter said he was offered a jug at a Havelock North bar for signing a submission form that had already been filled in. That person has since withdrawn the submission.

Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams says tactics like these undermine the integrity of the Local Alcohol Policy processes and the good will of community stakeholders participating in them.

She says around 30 draft Local Alcohol Policies have been out for public consultation so far.

Hospitality New Zealand template submissions have been used in all of these processes, meaning the same thing might have happened in other places.

“It would seem these tactics are aimed at preserving the status quo and avoiding more restrictive measures being put in place.

“The Government made it clear that Local Alcohol Policies were intended to reduce the availability and accessibility of alcohol, and improve community input into licensing decisions. The Hospitality sector, like others in the alcohol industry, can’t seem to get their heads around this.”

Ms Williams says the law has changed and across the country individuals and agencies are working hard to ensure the new law works to address our drinking culture and reduce the harm associated with alcohol.

“Let’s also consider that the costs of these shenanigans are picked up by ratepayers and taxpayers.”

She advises all Councils to be vigilant and cross-check submissions on their Local Alcohol Policies from the Hospitality sector because these submissions cannot be relied upon to represent the views of those who have allegedly put their names to them.

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For further comment contact

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