



ALCOHOL
HEALTHWATCH

MEDIA RELEASE
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Alcohol Healthwatch calls for the implementation of more effective alcohol policies and specific strategies to deal with issues such as student drinking.

Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams says the way alcohol is treated in society encourages the sort of antics Dunedin experienced over the weekend. It is not an ordinary product yet we treat it as one. We allow it to be readily available, cheap and aggressively marketed then shake our heads when young people get into trouble with it.

Williams says the “Undie 500” event is just one example of student events and activities that cause significant levels of harm and serve the interests of no-one. She believes that event organisers need to be held accountable for the mayhem and damage caused. It is ludicrous to expect that you can control an event and ensure the safety of participants and others when alcohol is such a significant factor.

The upcoming review of the National Alcohol Strategy provides a golden opportunity to prioritise strategies that work more effectively to reduce alcohol-related harms across the general population and include strategies that specifically target high risk drinkers and environments.

University students are a particularly high risk drinking group. Research shows that those attending University are more likely to participate in high risk drinking and experience alcohol-related harms than their non-student peers.

Alcohol Healthwatch is hosting a symposium on 21 September 2007 to enable interested stakeholders to learn more about the issues relating to student drinking and plan for effective interventions.

Williams hopes all tertiary institutions will attend the symposium so that there will be consistency in the response to the issues.

A fact sheet **Alcohol and University Students** can be found on:

http://www.ahw.co.nz/alcohol_health_promotion.html

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Action on Liquor Campaign information and briefing papers (including topics Blood Alcohol Concentration, alcohol advertising and marketing, taxation, sale of liquor) be found at www.ahw.co.nz