



MEDIA RELEASE
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Where are the party policies on Alcohol?

Alcohol Healthwatch congratulates the Progressive Party for releasing its policy on alcohol and calls for all political parties to follow suit and make their policy on alcohol clear to the public during this election campaign.

Director Rebecca Williams says we have heard a lot from political parties about increased police and hospital resources but little about investment in prevention. It is time to stop the “bottom of the cliff” mentality and focus on doing what is known to work to reduce the harm.

A strong policy foundation including returning the legal purchase age to 20 years, reducing the number of liquor outlets and opening hours, lowering blood alcohol levels for driving, increasing the price of alcohol via taxation and banning alcohol advertising/sponsorship is essential. This must be built on with comprehensive strategies to address specific issues such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Tertiary Student Drinking and the early onset of drinking.

Alcohol consumption plays a significant role in many of the problems faced by New Zealand families and communities. Alcohol harm continues to drain on resources from our public services, particularly health and policing. The cost to our nation of alcohol-related harm has been estimated to be anywhere between \$1.4 and \$16 billion a year. Williams says that this burden warrants action based on evidenced-based policies, even more so now given the challenging economic times.

Communities all over the country are expressing their concerns about alcohol-related harm, particularly violence and crime. Many have learnt the hard way how powerless they are to address the issues in their neighbourhood.

Voters have the right to know how future decision-makers will respond to and address their concerns regarding alcohol-related harm.

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Action on Liquor see www.ahw.co.nz for policy briefing papers on key liquor issues. Sale of Liquor, Taxation, Alcohol Advertising, Blood Alcohol Concentration, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.