



ALCOHOL
HEALTHWATCH

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Addressing Youth Drinking – Empty Proposals

Government today released its proposals resulting from reviews into the sale and supply of alcohol to minors and the regulation of alcohol advertising.

Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams describes the changes as minor tweaks and says that the overall effect will be minimal. The Government have taken the path of least resistance and effective strategies have been ignored or watered down. The proposals will disappointment families and communities.

The proposals have a concerning trend towards blaming and sanctioning young people. Williams says this is incredibly hypocritical. “We put a toxin in the system, make it cheaply available on every street corner, promote the stuff then blame the kids for the harms they experience as a result.”

Effective measures such as increasing price, limiting the number and location of outlets and hours of operation, restricting marketing and taking control out of industry hands have been rejected.

Alcohol Healthwatch has previously expressed its support for the proposal to reduce the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for young drivers, as this is backed up by evidence to reduce harm. However, there is also strong evidence to support a lower BAC for all drivers and doing this would not only lower the death and injury toll but also support adults to set a better example for those younger. Alcohol Healthwatch also supports the moves to strengthen the ID culture.

Williams cites the “three strikes you’re out” approach for supply to minors by licensed premises as an example of watering down effective strategies. It is illegal for a licensed premise to supply a minor – full stop. She doubts parents would be happy knowing that the premise has to be convicted three times in two years before they lose their licence.

Overall the Government’s proposals have missed the target and wasted an incredible opportunity to support parents and communities who are awash with alcohol and the downstream effects. The community is calling for some leadership on this and once again have been left wanting.

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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