



ALCOHOL  
HEALTHWATCH

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**Community win on shorter opening hours**

**Community voice on liquor shop opening hours has been heard and honoured by the High Court in Christchurch.**

In its recent (4.6.08) decision on an appeal of an earlier Liquor Licensing Authority (LLA) decision, the High Court determined that the Queenstown Lakes District Council liquor policy represents the community desire to reduce the opening hours of licensed premises.

Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams says the decision is a bulls-eyes for community safety and harm prevention efforts. She says longer opening hours result in increased violence and harm and need to be pegged back.

The Queenstown Lakes District Council adopted a new liquor licensing policy in May 2007 which clawed back the existing 24 hours policy to 4am closing. The LLA heard a number of applications for license renewals or variations and made its decision on opening hour conditions in line with the new policy. This decision was then appealed at the High Court by four liquor industry players.

Williams is thrilled with the High Court decision and says making these matters clearer within the Sale of Liquor Act now needs to be a priority. Ensuring community input into licensing matters is paramount and this is currently not enabled by the Act.

This decision and LLA decision last week knocking back a supermarket application for a 'store within a store' licence to sell spirits, represent tremendous steps towards safer communities.

The High Court decision also demonstrates that robust community consultation can bring about good local policies that stand up to scrutiny at High Court level.

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Action on Liquor see [www.ahw.co.nz](http://www.ahw.co.nz) for policy briefing papers on key liquor issues.