



MEDIA RELEASE
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Alcohol Healthwatch fully endorses and supports the move by the University of Otago to eliminate advertising and sponsorship of alcohol from its University campuses, calling it a very brave move.

Director Rebecca Williams says that hazardous drinking by university students is a serious and long-standing issue, and the link between exposure to alcohol marketing and increased likelihood of heavier drinking is clear. She says it makes good sense to support student wellbeing and academic achievement by reducing the negative influence of alcohol marketing.

Williams' points out that student associations are independent of the University, and the advertising and sponsorship ban will provide a challenging environment for student activities such as disseminating student publications and Orientation Week events. These traditionally have alcohol advertising and sponsorship. She says students find it difficult to attract sponsorship, and suggests that efforts are made to secure alternatives sources of funding to support student activities.

Tertiary students are identified as high risk drinkers – they are shown to drink more harmfully than their non-student peers. While the drunken antics of students are often portrayed as harmless fun they too often result in far more serious consequences, and sometimes tragic death. As well as the failure to achieve academic expectations other risks include injury, poisoning, violence, unplanned pregnancies and unwanted sex. Other students, communities and universities pick-up a significant part of the tab as a result of the second-hand effects of student drinking, these include vandalism, disruption of study and loss of reputations.

Alcohol Healthwatch convenes the National Advisory Group on Tertiary Student Drinking. The group, which includes representatives from a number of universities and other agencies, supports national policies that better control the price, marketing and availability of alcohol. The group also calls for increased investment in effective targeted interventions, such as the use of electronic brief interventions in campus settings.

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Action on Liquor - See www.ahw.org.nz for policy briefing papers on key liquor issues: including Warning Labels, Taxation, Sale of Liquor, **Advertising and Marketing**, Blood Alcohol Concentration for driving and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Also see Fact Sheet on Tertiary Student Drinking