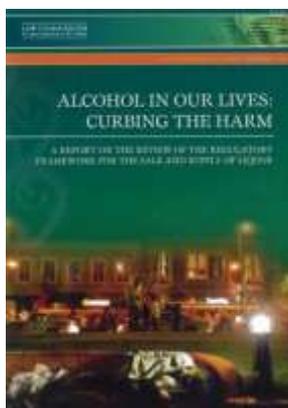


Law Reform Heats Up



Interest in the Alcohol Law Reform process is heating up as we await the Government Bill on the matter to be tabled in Parliament for its first reading.

In August the Government released its response to the Law

Commission's report, unveiling its alcohol law reform proposals in a Cabinet paper. The Bill will give effect to these proposals.

The package adopts in full, or in part, 126 of the 153 Law Commission recommendations. The Bill is expected to be tabled in October and, once it is we will know more about the select committee process and the time frames for public submissions.

Included in the proposals are some positive steps forward. These include the creation of a new Act with broader harm minimisation objectives. The criteria for obtaining a liquor licence will be changed, making it harder for some types of premises to obtain a licence. Communities will get a greater say in liquor licensing matters through local alcohol plans and there are some measures to restrict the promotion of alcohol and the supply of alcohol to minors.

Although the Government's reform package includes some positive measures, it has rejected Law Commission recommendations to increase the price of alcohol and restrict alcohol advertising. Instead of restoring the minimum purchase age to 20 years the Government has proposed a split purchase

age, 18 years for on-licence purchase and 20 years for off-licence, without the evidence to support this.

Earlier this year the Government also rejected an option to lower the blood alcohol limit for driving as part of the Safer Journeys Road Safety strategy.

Without the inclusion of these effective policy options any plan to address our harmful drinking culture will be significantly compromised, if not completely undermined.

These policies effectively target the early onset of drinking, heavy and other risky drinking behaviours at the core of our hazardous drinking culture.

Our public services, communities and families will find it very difficult to achieve desirable change while the unbridled marketing and promotion of discount liquor serves to maintain a competitive and hostile environment.

You can find a copy of the Cabinet paper at <http://www.justice.govt.nz>.



If you are keen to stay updated on the law reform process or to get involved please visit www.ourturn2shout.org.nz or contact Alcohol Healthwatch directly.

Dates and locations of a series of practical workshops aimed at supporting those engaging in the law reform process will soon be announced.

It's time to mobilise and make the most of this golden opportunity to achieve the best possible package of alcohol laws.

FASD Awareness Day

September 9th every year is World Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day (FASDay). The aim of the day is to increase awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), how it can be prevented and how best to support those affected.

To mark FASDay this year a number of events were held across New Zealand to achieve these aims.

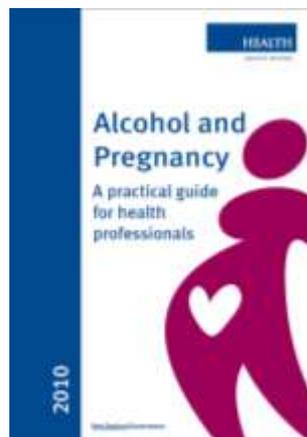
'BreakFASD' and launch of health resource

Kicking off the events for FASDay the Fetal Alcohol Network of New Zealand (FANNZ) and Alcohol Healthwatch held a 'BreakFASD' at the Barry Court Hotel in Parnell.

A brand new health guide was launched by the Ministry of Health at the event. The resource aims to support health professionals in dealing with the issue of drinking during pregnancy.

Guest speakers included Associate Minister of Health, Hon Peter Dunne and Dr Pat Tuohy, Chief Advisor Child & Youth from the Ministry of Health.

The new guide, *Alcohol and Pregnancy: A Practical Guide for Health Professionals* is a positive step towards the prevention of FASD in New Zealand. It's available at www.moh.govt.nz



Pregnant Pauses in Tai Tokerau (Northland)

Communities all across the Northland region took part this year in *Pregnant Pause* flash mobs to mark FASDay at 9.09am - *the ninth minute, of the ninth hour, of the ninth day, of the ninth month.*

Participants in the flash mob are required to hold a freeze frame position to symbolise the

importance of taking a *pause* from drinking during the 9 months of pregnancy.

This flash mob big freeze is like no other, because everyone in freeze mode looks '*pregnant*' with balloons up their shirts.

FASDay flash mobs could be seen on the streets of Whangarei, Kawakawa, Kerikeri, Kaikohe, Kaitaia and Rawene.

A big thank you to all involved. You can view some of the footage from the event on youtube.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd3hhYT6ZFU>

Bells ringing in Dunedin

First Church's bells rang out across Dunedin at 9.09am as part of the *FASD Bell Concordance* on World FASD Awareness Day.

Every year on FASDay bells ring out across the world to represent those living with the disorder. The bell ringing can range from mission bells in New Zealand to the historic 56 bell carillon in Cape Town, South Africa, through to wind chimes and rain sticks played by First Nation children in the Yukon, Canada.

Dunedin residents Jenny Salmon and her husband Gwilym, who are both campanologists (bell ringers) rang the church bells this year. Jenny is currently researching the long-term effects of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders on individuals and families.

Youth Preventing FASD Event

This year to coincide with FASDay, a free *Youth Preventing FASD* awareness event took place at the newly opened Dream Centre in Manukau City on Saturday September 11.

The event included special guest appearances by the newly crowned World Hip Hop Champions ReQuest, Temepara George from the Silver Ferns, and the talented Auckland graphic artist Marcus Winter.

The event showcased a fantastic array of talent and was also a great opportunity to get the

important prevention message across to our young people.

There is increasingly widespread concern about youth drinking in New Zealand and in particular increased drinking by young women.

It is important our young people know the harm that can be caused by drinking during pregnancy, as they are our country's future parents.



Marcus Winter sand art performance



Finished sand art



FANNZ members with Temepara George



World Champs ReQuest dance crew in action

Building FASD Diagnostic Capacity

Alcohol Healthwatch is pleased to release its final report, "Toward Multidisciplinary Diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder".

The report documents a project supported by a National Drug Policy Discretionary Grant which enabled New Zealand clinicians with an interest to undertake training in how best to diagnose and treat FASD using a team approach.

The outcome from the project suggests that building diagnostic capacity for New Zealand is feasible, and that further training is justifiable and urgent. In particular the importance of clinical neuropsychology that specialises in developmental disorders is critical to effective diagnosis and such services are lacking in the child and adolescent service in the New Zealand public health system.

Diagnostic guidelines similar to those that exist internationally would help to enhance a standardised approach across multiple sectors. In addition educational programmes are needed to ensure community-based services understand FASD, and appropriate and cost-effective screening, referrals and responses are developed.

A copy of the report or Executive Summary can be found at www.ahw.org.nz.

Rally for Alcohol Law Reform

Hundreds of people braved the winter weather to attend a public march/rally calling for alcohol law reform in Manukau City on Sunday August 15.

Marchers set off from three locations across the city all meeting at 2pm in the Manukau Square for the rally.

The march/rally, organised by the Manukau Alcohol Action Group, demonstrated the community concern over alcohol-related harm in New Zealand and called upon the Government to adopt the full package of recommendations put forward by the Law Commission in its report entitled *Alcohol in our Lives: Curbing the Harm*.

These include increasing alcohol prices, restoring the purchase age to 20 years, restricting liquor marketing and promotion, reducing alcohol availability and lowering the adult blood alcohol limit for driving to 0.05 – all recommendations that are backed by strong evidence to show they reduce harm.

Guest speakers at the rally included Major Campbell Roberts of the Salvation Army, Professor Doug Sellman of the National Addictions Centre/Alcohol Action NZ, Labour leader Hon Phil Goff, Greens MP David Clendon and National MP Dr Paul Hutchinson.



Manukau Alcohol Action Group at the Rally



Marchers on route to the Rally

Rejection of lower BAC limit

Alcohol Healthwatch is disappointed with Cabinet's decision not to lower the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for driving to 50mg alcohol/100ml (0.05) blood.

Cabinet decided in July to delay the decision in favour of undertaking more research.

We simply do not need more research to tell us this will effectively save lives and reduce the number of alcohol-related crashes on our roads.

An extensive body of evidence already exists that shows lowering the BAC to at least 0.05 works.

The overwhelming conclusion of nearly 300 studies is that essential driving skills are significantly impaired at our current legal limit of 0.08, and that this impairment begins at much lower levels.

We also know that the costs of implementing this intervention are relatively small, as all the basic infrastructure is already in place.

Lack of public support cannot be used as an excuse either, as support for lowering the BAC is positive and growing.

Ninety eight percent (98%) of those submitting to the Law Commission on the issue favoured lowering the level to 0.05.

A UMR public opinion survey this year found that 70 percent of New Zealanders supported lowering the limit to 0.05. And the latest Ministry of Transport Public Attitudes to Road Safety Survey (2009) shows that 85 percent of those surveyed thought drivers should be limited to two or fewer drinks before driving.

This closely equates to a 0.05 level and clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of New Zealanders would support and readily accept it.

Since the decision was made a number of media outlets have conducted their own polls of which all showed significant public support for the change.

A conservative estimate is that we can save 14 lives and around 640 injuries a year by adopting the lower limit. It is doubtful any other single strategy will be as effective at reducing our road toll.

Ireland has recently joined the list of countries to adopt the lower limit, further highlighting how out of step New Zealand is with international road safety best practice.

Labour MP Darren Hughes has put forward a Private Members Bill calling for the BAC to be lowered to 0.05.

We encourage interested readers to renew the call for 0.05 in your submissions on the law reform bill.

For further information on the issue please visit our website www.ahw.org.nz or contact Roanne Govender at roanne@ahw.org.nz

Opening Hours and Violence

New research conducted by the University of Newcastle in Australia found that restricting pub closing hours in the Newcastle Central Business District (CBD) reduced the assault rate by 37 percent.

In March 2008, in response to ongoing concerns about alcohol-related violence in the CBD, the New South Wales judiciary restricted pubs and clubs closing times to 3.00am initially, then 3.30am. Premises were also required to implement a one-way door policy from 1.00am/1.30am to prevent more patrons from entering the venue.

Researcher Kypros Kypri and colleagues investigated the effect of this intervention.

The study, published in the scientific journal *Addiction*, reveals the number of recorded assaults in the Newcastle CBD fell from 99 per quarter before the restrictions were put in place, to 67.7 per quarter afterwards.

The research strengthens existing evidence that earlier closing times can effectively reduce alcohol-related harm.

The researchers also compared the Newcastle CBD assault rates with those in the nearby suburb of Hamilton, where pubs were not subject to the restrictions.

They found that contrary to common belief that restricting closing times would shift the problems to neighbouring suburbs, the evidence showed there was no such effect.

Following its recent review of liquor laws the Law Commission recommended national maximum trading hours of:

- 9.00am – 10.00pm for off-licences and,
- 9.00am – 4.00am, with a mandatory one-way door from 2.00am for on-licences, licensed clubs and special licences.

They also made provisions for communities to further restrict hours through Local Alcohol Plans.

However, the Government's response greatly weakens these. They have proposed trading hours of:

- 7.00am – 11.00pm for off-licences and,
- 8.00am – 4.00am for on-licences, licensed clubs and special licences.

While they will enable 'one way door' policies, they will not be a mandatory requirement.

They too will allow further restrictions to these hours through Local Alcohol Plans. However, the Government will also allow them to be extended.

Alcohol Healthwatch director Rebecca Williams believes these variations water down the Law Commission's recommendations and undermines their intention.

"The Government's proposals on hours are hardly any better than what we already have and illustrate that commercial interests continue to be prioritised over those of the community."

Community Outrage Over New Liquor Stores

The *Mt Roskill Against More Liquor* group is angry about the opening of a new liquor store on May Road in the Auckland suburb.

The store has been granted an off-licence and residents are concerned about the impacts another liquor outlet will have on the area.

There are already three liquor stores in the area including a New World supermarket just across the road, and a further five outlets little more than two kilometres away.

Local resident and member of the group, Suzanne Paul says the process of notifying the public has been inadequate and the

communities need wider grounds on which to object to liquor licence applications."

The store owner has assured the community that he will operate the store responsibly and is happy to talk with any residents who have concerns.

The group have recently heard of yet another application for another outlet also on May Rd, and plan to lodge an objection.

Coming Events

Alcohol Law Reform Forum - 'Creating a Brighter Future'

Wednesday 3 November 2010

Waipuna Conference Centre, Auckland

Visit www.ahw.org.nz for further information and registration details.

The 2nd Sport and Alcohol Conference 'Finding the Balance'

9-11 February 2011

Massey University, Auckland

Organised by the School of Sport and Exercise, Massey University.

6th International Conference on Drugs and Young People

2-4 May 2011

Melbourne.

Visit www.adf.org.au for further details



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Disclaimer: The views in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of Alcohol Healthwatch Trust

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