



The two day symposium - *From Harm to Harmony* - was held in Auckland on 13th and 14th November 2012. The event had a special focus on addressing the impacts of alcohol on the lives of women, and the burden of alcohol-related injuries and violence in New Zealand. Guest speakers included Dr. Evelyn Gillan, Alcohol Focus Scotland, Caterina Giorgi, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Australia, and leading New Zealand experts on alcohol issues: Prof. Sally Casswell, SHORE Massey University and Prof. Jennie Connor, University of Otago.

Over 150 people participated in the symposium.

The first day of the symposium canvassed the theme *'The harm - who hurts and how'*. Prof. Casswell gave the opening address, providing



Prof. Sally Casswell

a global and national context to the discussions. She highlighted the extent of alcohol harms including new research showing the concerning rates of heavy drinking among young people in New Zealand, and alarming increases in the

proportion of young women consuming large amounts of alcohol. She also addressed the issues of 'who gains and how', identifying the alcohol industry as the group who benefit from harmful drinking patterns.

Summaries of literature reviews on women and alcohol and alcohol-related injuries were then presented. Each session was followed by an interactive response session, allowing panel members, each with special interest to provide a response to the information shared and participant comment and discussion.

Draft policy briefing papers on women and alcohol and alcohol-related injuries and violence were launched, and participants were treated to a sneak preview of an upcoming documentary on women and alcohol, *"True Stories – A Glass Too Full"*

Prof. Connor summarised the key issues that



Prof. Jennie Connor

had emerged, and day one concluded with reflections from the two international guests.

Day two was themed *'The road to harmony - achieving transformation'*. It was

opened by Prof. Connor who summarised the 'best buys' for reducing alcohol-related harm.

Dr. Gillan then took the audience on a trip to the northern hemisphere to look at Scotland's approach to addressing alcohol-related harm, and their journey towards minimum pricing.



Dr. Evelyn Gillan

Caterina Giorgi's presentation, themed 'Change', provided insights into how alcohol harm reduction was progressing in Australia, using their approach to achieving warning



Caterina Giorgi

labels on alcohol as an example. Both international speakers shared success stories, lessons learnt and identified opportunities for achieving change.

In the afternoon of the second day it was time for the participants to identify how we could move towards harmony in New Zealand. Four workstream groups discussed building better policy; building better practice; building more resilient communities; building better evidence base.

The groups identified priorities and actions in these four areas, mapping out practical steps forward to reducing alcohol-related harm in New Zealand.

Participants identified the need for working more collaboratively across sectors, building capacity within workforces and within the community, especially in relation to the new legislation coming into force.

They also suggested that the sector create its own collaborative alcohol action plan based on achieving the Law Commission's recommendations and Alcohol Action New Zealand's 5+ Solution.

Feedback from the symposium was very positive, with the evaluation survey showing that the majority of participants found the symposium informative and useful in relation to their work/involvement in alcohol harm reduction. More than half of the respondents said that they had identified an action/s that they could take to support alcohol-harm reduction following the symposium.

The symposium was organised by Alcohol Healthwatch, in collaboration with Women's Health Action and Hapai Te Hauora Tapui Māori Public Health.

All symposium presentations can be downloaded from our website. www.ahw.org.nz

A full symposium report and the final Policy Briefing Papers will be available on our website in January 2013.

Limited copies of the Documentary "True Stories – A Glass Too Full" will also be available. Please contact us in the New Year if you'd like to arrange a viewing.



Participants at the From Harm to Harmony Symposium


Alcohol Healthwatch
Whakatūpato Waipiro

Produced by:

Alcohol Healthwatch Trust
P O Box 99 407
Newmarket
Auckland
Ph: (09) 520 7036
Fax: (09) 520 7175

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