

Greetings readers,

It's great to end the year with some fantastic news. In this newsletter we celebrate Cabinet's decision to lower the legal alcohol limit for drivers over 20 years to 0.05 – finally.

What's so special about 18th December 2013? How effective are reduced trading hours at addressing alcohol-related harm? Why does gender matter? These are some of the things you'll find discussed in this newsletter.

In a special edition we also provide you with highlights from the Global Alcohol Policy Conference 2013, held in Seoul Korea in October.

Merry Christmas - Meri Kirikimete

Wishing you a safe and joyous holiday

Alcohol Healthwatch Team



Lower limit – Safer Roads

On the 4th November Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee announced Cabinet's agreement to lower the legal blood alcohol limit for driving. Alcohol Healthwatch warmly welcomed this news as it is something we, along with many others, have been promoting for years. This is great news for road safety.

The Land Transport Amendment Bill, that will lower the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) from 80 milligrams (mg) of alcohol per 100 millilitres (ml) of blood to 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood; and the legal breath alcohol limit from 400 micrograms (mcg) of alcohol per litre of breath to 250mcg of alcohol per litre of breath, passed its first reading in

Parliament in early December and submissions are now open.

The Bill provides for drivers who commit an offence between 251-400mcg of breath to be issued with a \$200 infringement fee and receive 50 demerit points. Drivers who accumulate 100 or more demerit points from driving offences within two years receive a three month driver licence suspension.

The Bill also proposes changes relating to enforcement, offences and penalties.

A Ministry of Transport review estimated that a reduction in BAC will save 3.4 lives and 64 injury causing crashes a year, and save \$200 million of social costs over 10 years.

However it is not a done deal yet. The Bill is now with the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee who are accepting submissions until Friday, 14 February 2014.

We encourage you to make a submission in support of the lower limit.

If you would like any information or help to make a submission on the bill, please contact Raj at raj@ahw.org.nz or (09) 5207039.

What's happening on the Local Alcohol Policy front?

Twenty-seven Territorial Authorities have now consulted on their draft policies with more to come in the new year.

The content of the draft policies varies greatly around the country. Some Councils have seized the opportunity to reduce alcohol-related harm in their communities by proposing more restrictive trading hours for licensed premises than the national default hours that the new legislation prescribes. Others have frittered the opportunity away by

not utilising the control mechanisms available to them.

So far submission processes around the country have been stacked and racked with alcohol industry players. Not surprisingly, this has resulted in draft policies being weakened after the consultation process.

As we've watched these processes unfold we have wondered whether this is what Government expected when they said the intent of this legislation was to enable communities to have a say in local licensing decisions.

We also question how extensions to default trading hours or other moves to promote or facilitate late night trading can possibly meet the object of the Act. We would certainly like to see the evidence for this.

Councils are able to notify their provisional Local Alcohol Policy from the 18th December 2013. Once notified, there is a 30 day window for appeals.

Local Government New Zealand has suggested that Territorial Authorities hold off until at least mid January to notify their provisional policy, as there are concerns that the 30 day appeal window over the Christmas/New Year period would not be good process and allow adequate time for consideration.

Dealing with Alcohol and the Night-time economy

We had the pleasure of hosting Associate Professor Peter Miller from Deakin University, Australia, here in Auckland in November. Peter was the lead researcher of two large studies in Australia – Dealing with Alcohol and the Night Time Economy (DANTE) and Patron Offending and Intoxication in Night-Time Entertainment Districts (POINTED). Peter presented the findings from these two studies at our research seminar “**Violence to**

Vibrancy: How can we make this our new reality”. Dr Michael Cameron from the University of Waikato also presented on The Locally Specific Impacts of Alcohol Outlet Density in the North Island of New Zealand 2006-2011.

The presentation of the key findings from these pieces of research was both timely and relevant for the Local Alcohol Policy processes happening around the country at the moment.

Some of the key findings from the Australian research include: restrict trading hours to reduce alcohol-related harm; introduce mandatory licensing conditions; ban bulk-buys, two for one offers and other promotions based on price; improve data collection and access; and include government produced public health advertisements on all alcohol sales.

Additionally, the outlet density study found that although there is variation across the North Island, the most substantial positive relationships with violent offences were observed for bar and nightclub density, and supermarket and grocery store density. Other on-licence density and licensed club density also had significant positive relationships with violent offences, while other off-licence density had a marginally significant negative relationship with violent offences.

Both presentations are available on our website www.ahw.org.nz.

D Day – new law fully in force

December the 18th 2013 sees the new Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 fully come into force. The key changes include:

National default maximum trading hours apply. These are 7am-11pm for off-licences, and 8am – 4am for on-licences. Licensed premises with shorter hours on their existing licence will remain operating at their current hours.

A person can only supply alcohol to a person under the age of 18 years if they are a parent/guardian of the minor or, they have express consent from the parent/guardian of the minor or, the young person is married/in a civil union or living with a de facto partner who is over 18 years of age. They must also supply alcohol responsibly e.g. supplying food/non-alcoholic options and safe transport. There is a fine of up to \$2000 for failing to comply with these requirements.

New Alcohol Regulatory & Licensing Authority (ARLA) replaces the Liquor Licensing Authority (LLA). They will consider all contested licensing applications and managers certificates.

District Licensing Committees (DLCs) will replace the District Licensing Agency (DLA).

Provisional Local Alcohol Policies can be notified and appealed/adopted.

The following types of promotion will be offences: promoting excessive drinking, promoting alcohol in a way that has special appeal to minors, advertising free alcohol or discounts of 25% or more, offering free goods or services with purchase of alcohol.

Restrictions on supermarket alcohol display and promotion to one single non-prominent area in the store.

Local Councils and regulatory services have been busy with preparations for these changes coming into force. This has involved training of staff and DLC members, planning transport options and gearing up for enforcement.

Good luck to those involved for a smooth transition.

FASD in the Spotlight

Those attending the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Conference 'A time to learn, a time to act', in Brisbane called for joint FASD action. Delegates urged all health professionals, service providers, governments and the community to work together to reduce the prevalence of FASD and improve the quality of life of those living with FASD.

The Call to Action highlights the significance of FASD and draws attention to the serious gaps and barriers to investment in prevention, treatment research and workforce training. It was developed with consideration of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to grow and develop healthily and have access to the best health care. It notes the cost of failing in this endeavour.

Existing foundational work on FASD planning and priority recommendations was acknowledged as the platform for immediate action. A copy of the FASD Call to Action can be downloaded from www.ahw.org.nz.

Improving Child Health

The recent report by Parliament's Health Select Committee - '**Inquiry into improving child health outcomes and preventing child abuse, with a focus on preconception until three years of age**' - calls on the Government to put more focus and investment into early intervention policies that make significant difference to improving children's health outcomes and preventing child abuse.

The report makes 12 major recommendations and 130 more detailed recommendations to the Government, with timelines for implementation.

The table below shows a summary of the alcohol-specific recommendations and the timeframes to achieve them. These are expressed from the time the report was published, Nov 2013.

Recommendations	Timeframes
1. Develop evidence-based guidelines for low-risk alcohol consumption and promote them widely.	18 months
2. Increase screening for alcohol misuse (all ED, all antenatal assessments), and follow-up intervention.	24 months
3. DHB's to follow up all	36 months

alcohol-related emergency department presentations.	
4. Unequivocal health warning labels on alcohol products	24 months
5. Develop an action plan to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).	18 months
6. When available, implement evidence-based recommendations of the Alcohol Advertising Forum on alcohol marketing and sponsorship.	
7. Consider introduction of minimum pricing, further increase alcohol excise tax	

Gender Matters

Alcohol Healthwatch and Women's Health Action launched a new policy briefing paper at an event in Auckland on the 3rd December.

The paper *Women and Alcohol in Aotearoa New Zealand* highlights the key issues for women in relation to alcohol use in New Zealand.

Women are drinking larger amounts and more frequently than ever before, increasing their risk of a number of health concerns including breast and other cancers, injuries, reproductive and sexual health problems, mental health and alcohol abuse disorders.

In addition, women experience greater levels of harm from others' drinking, including sexual assault and other forms of violence.

A number of factors are contributing to the greater levels of harmful drinking among women, including changing social and economic conditions and a liberal alcohol policy environment.

We make a number of recommendations to address the issues raised and highlight the opportunities presented by the upcoming

review of the National Drug Policy to facilitate the implementation of these.

Copies of the paper and the research report it is based on can be found at www.ahw.org.nz. A limited number of hard copies are available on request.

Making it Home Safely

Auckland Transport has launched a new online app in a bid to reduce drink-driving in the lead up to Christmas. The app allows people to choose their ultimate Christmas outfit - with a twist! Users can upload an image via their Facebook account, their phone's gallery or a computer, and choose from a selection of Christmas themed outfits.

To support the campaign please visit: www.facebook.com/makeithome or www.makeithome.co.nz

Coming Events

Action on Alcohol: Change is coming
20 March 2014

Te Papa, Wellington

www.alcoholaction.org.nz for more details



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