

## Auckland's Draft LAP

The Auckland Council released the city's Draft Local Alcohol Policy (LAP) for public consultation on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Written submissions closed on the 16<sup>th</sup> July.

There is a general consensus among public health practitioners in Auckland that the Draft policy is a good start. However, there are some elements that need to be strengthened.

Local Alcohol Policies are aimed at reducing the accessibility and availability of alcohol in order to reduce harm, and improving community input into licensing decision-making.

If used well they can be an effective tool to addressing problems like the oversupply of alcohol in neighbourhoods, licensed premises popping up next to schools and kindergartens, or late night trading hours that result in noise, violence and crime, concerns communities have raised over the years.

Alcohol Healthwatch held a community workshop on the draft LAP on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and feedback from this was used to formulate a submission guide and submission templates which have been made available to support those wishing to make a submission.

A number of other resources were also developed to support the community to engage in the consultation process.

We now await the oral hearings which are scheduled for August/September.

We are also awaiting the outcomes of the first appeals on provisional LAPs for Waimakariri and Tasman/Marlborough scheduled for late July/early August.

## Community Supports Change

A recent survey in Auckland shows strong community support for restrictions on trading hours, the number of licensed premises and the location of premises near schools.

The survey, conducted by Wyllie & Associates for Auckland Regional Public Health Service, was undertaken to gauge public opinion on the aspects (such as trading hours and number of outlets) able to be included in local alcohol policies.



*Key findings from public survey undertaken by  
Auckland Regional Public Health Service*

Auckland Regional Public Health Service hopes that these findings will assist Auckland Council in developing a Local Alcohol Policy that reflects community views in addition to academic evidence.

**For a copy of the full survey report visit:**

[www.arphs.govt.nz](http://www.arphs.govt.nz) – search “Public support for alcohol policies.”

## Spotlight on Advertising

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Chairman Graham Lowe and other members of the Ministerial Forum have been out and about talking to a number of groups as they consider whether further restrictions on alcohol advertising and sponsorship are required.

The Forum is also considering the 242 written submissions they received.

Looking at the summary of submissions you can see that battle lines are clearly drawn. Most of the public health and community sector are aligned in calling for the restrictions the Law Commission recommended back in 2010. Whereas those with a vested interest maintain that there is no need for further restrictions and that the current voluntary codes of practice are working just fine.

The Forum is due to report back to the Government in October, after this year's national elections.

A summary of submissions can be found at [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)



## FASD Symposium on 5<sup>th</sup> Sept

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The School of Population Health (University of Auckland) has teamed up with Alcohol

Healthwatch and the FASD sector to host a one day FASD symposium.

The Symposium will be held on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September and will be followed by a Round-Table meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

International Guest speaker Associate Professor Jocelynn Cook, Executive Director of the Canadian FASD Research Network will be joined by a range of New Zealand experts involved with improving the lives of children affected by FASD. These include Children's Commissioner Dr Russell Wills, Auckland District & Youth Court Judge Tony FitzGerald and Neuropsychologist Dr Valerie McGinn among others.

No FASD discussion is complete without a family/whanau viewpoint and Claire Gyde, Chair of the organisation for families living with FASD, FASD-CAN will also present.

These events contribute to World Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day which falls on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month each year. For further details email [christine@ahw.org.nz](mailto:christine@ahw.org.nz)

Useful links: [www.canfasd.ca/](http://www.canfasd.ca/) [www.fasd-can.org.nz](http://www.fasd-can.org.nz)

## Alcohol Research Update

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The following is a summary of some of the new research that has been published recently.

*Effects of lowering the minimum alcohol purchasing age on weekend hospitalised assault.*

New research from the University of Otago shows that reducing the minimum alcohol purchasing age to 18 years in December 1999, was associated with an increase in assaults of 15-19 year-old males in New Zealand.

Study researchers examined characteristics of patients admitted to New Zealand hospitals with assault injuries on weekends four years before, and up to 12 years after, the law change. They found the rate of increase for

hospital admissions due to assaults was a fifth higher for 18 and 19 year-old men and a quarter higher for 15 to 17 year-old men than 20 and 21 year-old men, who were unaffected by the change.

While girls and young women are drinking more than ever, they still account for only one in five or six assault hospitalisations. Among females, the differences between the three age groups over time were not statistically significant. The authors propose that this is partly because the assault rate is lower among females than males, and that it is also likely that the dynamics of assault are quite different when females are injured.

The authors recommend decision makers to consider increasing the minimum alcohol purchasing age as a countermeasure for the rising incidence of assaults in New Zealand.

Kypri K, Davie G, et al. (2014). *Effects of lowering the minimum alcohol purchasing age on weekend hospitalised assault. American Journal of Public Health, 104(8) e1–e6.*

### ***International Alcohol Control study: pricing data and hours of purchase predict heavier drinking.***

Survey results of this New Zealand study found that:

- In 2011, NZ drinkers over 15 years of age spent an estimated \$3.9 billion on alcohol (\$84 million a week).
- The average volume of absolute alcohol drunk in the previous 6 months by respondents was 5.8 litres. Eighteen to 19 years old consumed the highest amount of average alcohol, 9.8 litres.
- Drinkers who paid low prices at on- and off-licensed premises were almost twice as likely to consume 6 and more drinks in a typical occasion.
- Drinkers who purchased alcohol after 2am on on-licences were 2.9 times more likely

to drink larger amounts than those who purchased before 2am. Drinkers who purchased at off-licences after 10pm were 2.1 times more likely to drink in large amounts, and also be daily drinkers.

- Drinkers paying lower prices from off-license premises were more likely to be daily drinkers, and drink 6 or more drinks on a typical occasion.

The International Alcohol Control Study is an ongoing study that examines the alcohol buying behaviour of survey respondents and looks at the effects of alcohol policies that are in place in the 11 participating countries including New Zealand.

Casswell S, Huckle T, et al. (2014). *International Alcohol Control study: pricing data and hours of purchase predict heavier drinking. Alcoholism Clinical and Experimental Research, 38(5):1425-31.*

## **Lower BAC on the way**

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After considering 106 written and 21 oral submissions on the Land Transport Amendment Bill, the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee reported back to Parliament on 19 June 2014.

The Bill proposes to lower the legal adult blood alcohol limit from 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood to 50mg (0.05), lower the breath alcohol limit from 400mcg of alcohol per litre of breath to 250mcg.

Under the proposals a driver failing an evidential breath test at the new limit will incur an infringement fee of \$200 plus 50 demerit points.

The Committee heard strong support for lowering the blood and breath alcohol limits and recommended this accordingly. The Committee also recommended a number of changes to the Bill including:

- Increasing the infringement fee for adults who fail or refuse to undergo breath test (from \$500 to \$700);
- Requiring all drivers who elect or are required to provide a blood specimen to pay for their blood tests, regardless of test results (there is an exemption for those who will pay the proposed \$700 infringement fee);
- That all drivers required to undergo a breath test be informed of the possible consequences;

The Bill passed its second reading on 3 July 2014, and is expected to proceed through the remaining Parliamentary stages and be passed into law later this year.

Further details are available at [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz).

## Warning Label Debacle

Food Safety Ministers from both sides of the Tasman have recently considered evaluations of alcohol industry voluntary efforts to place pregnancy warnings on alcohol products.

At a meeting in Australia on 27<sup>th</sup> June Ministers agreed to extend the trial of voluntary labelling for a further two years. This was despite finding that after two years there was still wide variability across product types and low uptake of labelling in the mixed alcoholic beverages or ready to drink category.

A second independent audit undertaken in Australia showed that alcohol industry efforts have been totally inadequate. The audit of 250 products in Australia found that while there had been some improvements since 2012:

- Only 37 percent carried any version of the Drinkwise consumer information messages
- Only 26 percent carried a pregnancy-related message

- The majority of warning messages (86 percent) took up less than 5 percent of the label
- Of products carrying the industry label most (59 percent) were at the back of the product.

Alcohol is the leading cause of preventable mental retardation yet the products are not required to carry clear and consistent messaging to warn consumers of this or other dangers.

Copy of the audit can be found at [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au)

## Coming Events

### FASD Symposium

5 September 2014

Details: contact [Christine@ahw.org.nz](mailto:Christine@ahw.org.nz)

### Population Health Congress

October 6-8, 2014

Aotea Centre, Auckland

[www.pophealthcongress.org.nz](http://www.pophealthcongress.org.nz)

### National Injury Prevention Conference 'In Our Own Backyard'

November 6-7, 2014

Te Papa, Wellington

[www.injuryprevention.org.nz/](http://www.injuryprevention.org.nz/)



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