



**A L C O H O L  
H E A L T H W A T C H**

**MEDIA RELEASE  
Wednesday 16 May 2007**

Alcohol Healthwatch stands in support of the NZ Police National Road Safety Manager Dave Cliff's call to lower the blood/breath alcohol concentrations for driving to reduce the harm associated with drink driving.

Mr Cliff has proposed the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) be reduced from 80mg to 50mg per 100ml of blood for adult drivers and what would amount to a 'zero tolerance' approach for drivers under 20 years.

Director Rebecca Williams says that lives will be saved and injuries prevented. She believes that a zero tolerance approach is also necessary for all restricted drivers and all those convicted of drinking and driving. She stresses our current levels are high and many people will already be significantly impaired before reaching these. She says there is no point in maintaining a legal limit that allows unsafe drivers on the road while at the same time wanting to lower the road toll.

Lower levels are proven to reduce alcohol-related crashes, deaths and injuries. It is also a low cost option to reduce alcohol-related harm as the necessary enforcement infrastructure and publicity mechanisms are already in place. There needs to be both a high public perception and reality of getting caught in order for the ultimate gains to be made.

Williams believes that adopting the lower BAC for driving will also support a change in drinking culture as it sends a clear message that a high level of responsibility goes with drinking alcohol. Staying below the proposed limits means people will make better decisions about whether to continue drinking and whether to drive or not.

Williams says that back in 2003 when these proposals were last debated there was a high level of public support for the change. She believes that most people will support the move to lower levels as they are very aware of the carnage and tragedies on our roads that could be prevented.

**Media Contact:**

Rebecca Williams  
Director  
Alcohol Healthwatch  
Ph: (09) 520 7035  
Mob: 021 862 250

Action on Liquor Campaign information and a range of briefing papers on topics including **blood alcohol concentration**, sale of liquor, taxation, advertising and marketing can be found at [www.ahw.co.nz](http://www.ahw.co.nz)