



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

**MEDIA RELEASE  
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**New Zealand Rugby Football Union tactics on liquor sponsorship are ill-informed and likely to be an own-goal in the long term.**

Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams says the NZRFU is asking rugby clubs and unions throughout New Zealand to submit to the review of the regulation of alcohol advertising saying they want no change to the current self-regulatory system. She says this is simply short-sighted and counter-productive.

The NZRFU have supplied a standard letter to clubs and unions requesting that they sign and send it to the review committee. The letter says that “current legislation and codes of conduct provide suitable control and guidance”. This, says Williams, indicates that the NZRFU have not considered the current research on the effects of alcohol marketing, the ineffectiveness of the current system or the negative effects that alcohol is having on many sports clubs, their players and support base.

Williams said that because they are worried about loss of income from alcohol sponsorship they are not looking at the wider issues. Alcohol marketing is shown to increase the likelihood of young people drinking earlier in life and to drink more heavily.

The NZRFU actions illustrate the strong grip the liquor industry has on sport in New Zealand and the profit driven dependency on liquor sponsorship they have created from grass roots through to top level. Williams says there are ample opportunities for other sponsorships to develop should the liquor industry have to step aside. She urges clubs and unions to give some thought as to whether they are happy being used by the liquor industry to market its products and to consider the downsides of alcohol on their club and local community before signing the letter.

Alcohol consumption contributes nothing to sporting performance and achievement. It puts players at greater risk of slower injury recovery times, violence and road crash not to mention the other 60 odd negative health consequences of drinking. Of course clubs need financial support but this does not need to come from liquor companies, any more that it needs to come from tobacco companies.

Williams adds that clubs have an opportunity to consider creating more family-friendly environments so as to encourage participation by young people and families. Surely this is the lifeblood of clubs not booze.

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Attached: Alcohol Marketing – Key Issues

**Action on Liquor** Campaign information and briefing papers (including one on Alcohol Advertising and an additional update on alcohol marketing) can be found at [www.ahw.co.nz](http://www.ahw.co.nz)