**Submission to the Ministerial Forum on Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship**

28 April 2014

Mr Graham Lowe ONZM, QSM

Chair

Ministerial Forum on Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship review.

Include a blurb about yourself and/or your organisation and its members.

**I/We** have elected not to complete the submission form provided, rather we make the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

The evidence gathered by 2010 concluded that **exposure of young people to alcohol marketing speeds up the onset of drinking and increases the amount consumed by those already drinking**.

In 2010 following its review of our alcohol laws the New Zealand Law Commission concluded *that having considered the recent research linking the advertising of alcohol and increased alcohol consumption by young people, and having heard the views of submitters and consultees greater controls are needed on advertising, sponsorship and other promotion of alcohol. These controls are in terms of the content of advertising, the levels of exposure to advertising and sponsorship messages, and inappropriate sales promotions. There is a strong argument that a self-regulatory body for alcohol advertising is inappropriate.*

***I/We note*** that 2,281 out of 2,939 submissions to the Law Commission commented on the range of policy options presented on alcohol advertising and marketing. Of the 2,281 submissions **86% supported banning or restricting all advertising of all alcohol in all media.**

We believe that more recent evidence that will be presented to you during the course of your review will only add weight to the Law Commission’s findings and recommendations, and the urgency for action.

**I/We** note that **Stage 1:** of the Law Commission’s recommendations has been implemented by the inclusion on a new clause making it an offence to promote the excessive consumption of alcohol in the *Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012*. However, we are unaware of any test cases based on this new law.

**I/We recommend** that the Review Forum consider mechanisms to monitor the impact and effect of this legislation.

It has now been four years since the Law Commission’s recommendations were made. In this time New Zealanders young and old have been continuously exposed to the harmful effects of alcohol advertising and sponsorship. This is no time for further review; rather it is time to act.

**I/We recommend** that the Review Forum support the immediate implementation of Stage 2 and 3 of the Law Commission recommendations on alcohol advertising and sponsorship as set out in their report ***Alcohol in Our Lives – Curbing the Harm 2010***.[[1]](#footnote-1) These being:

**Stage 2:** An interdepartmental committee to consider adopting legislated measures designed to reduce exposure, particularly of young people.

**Stage 3:** This stage would implement restrictions including:

* Messages and images may refer only to the qualities of products, such as origin, composition, means of production and patterns of consumption;
* The banning of images of drinkers or the depiction of a drinking atmosphere;
* Only allowing advertising in press with a majority readership over 20 years of age;
* No alcohol-related sponsorship of any cultural or sports events or activities.

**I/We** understand that this means a ban on all forms of alcohol advertising and sponsorship in all media, other than objective product information.

**I/We recommend** that any permitted alcohol advertising is accompanied by health advisory messages developed by public health experts.

At the recent Global Alcohol Policy Conference in Seoul Korea, internationally renowned alcohol policy researcher Professor Thomas Babor told delegates that self-regulation of advertising by those with a vested interest has shown to be ***“spectacularly ineffective”.***

**I/We** wholeheartedly agree. It serves no purpose but to maintain the unacceptable status quo and delay effective measures to curb the harm alcohol-advertising is shown to contribute to.

**I/We recommend** that the Review Forum ensure that self-regulation of alcohol advertising and sponsorship in New Zealand is ended immediately.

**I/We** consider that there are practical ways in which much of the existing alcohol advertising and sponsorship activities could be limited.

These include:

* The establishment of an independent body to take over the management and regulation of alcohol advertising and sponsorship, and ending self-regulation.
* Setting out what is alcohol advertising is allowed (i.e. objective product information only), and ban all other advertising. This would apply to ALL broadcast, bill-board and outdoor advertising, all print media, and all website and social media content that is generated by New Zealand based companies/individuals.
* New Zealand companies/individuals are prohibited for promoting or contributing to any overseas based promotions in New Zealand.
* A fund is established from alcohol excise tax to support alternative funding options for alcohol sponsorship, and this is phased out over the next 1-2 years.

**Conclusion**

**I/We** believe that this matter has been discussed and reviewed enough. The evidence available is strong enough to warrant immediate action, and there is strong public support for reducing the exposure of all New Zealanders to alcohol advertising in all of its forms.

**I/We** urge the forum to recommend an action plan which will implement the Law Commission’s recommendations as put forward in their report in 2010. In particular our children and young people need to be protected from the negative impacts that alcohol advertising and sponsorship have on their lives. Your role must be one of creating an environment that promotes healthy choices, and not one where choices are influenced by the needs of the alcohol industry.

*Signed*

Name:

Address:

Email:

Contact phone number:

Note: This submission may be requested under the Official Information Act 1982. If this happens, it will normally be released to the person who requested it. However, your personal details will be removed from the submission if you check/tick the following boxes:

* I do not give permission for my personal details to be released under the Official Information Act 1982.
* I do not give permission for my name to be listed in the published summary of submissions.

1. Law Commission (2010). *Alcohol in our lives: Curbing the harm. A report on the review of the regulatory framework for the sale and supply of liquor*. Report 114. Wellington: New Zealand. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)