



Media Release

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Law Commission report gets the thumbs up

Alcohol Healthwatch is applauding the Law Commission for the comprehensive mix of recommendations made in its report, 'Alcohol in Our Lives: Curbing the Harm'. The report, which reviews New Zealand's liquor laws, was released today.

Director Rebecca Williams says the Law Commission has listened to community concerns and taken heed of the strong body of evidence in making its recommendations on how best to reduce alcohol-related harm. She says the Government will now need to ensure it follows through on delivering these measures.

"Harmful drinking patterns have developed over a long period of time and are deeply entrenched in our society. It will take a range of strategies to target the various influences and address the substantial burden of alcohol-related harm."

The report recommends creating a new Alcohol Harm Reduction Act to replace the current Sale of Liquor Act.

Williams says the specific recommendations within the report - which include alcohol price increases, the restoration of the purchase age to 20, restrictions on liquor marketing and promotion, an introduction of national maximum closing hours for both on- and off-licences and increases to community influence over the sale of liquor - are all backed by strong evidence that they reduce harm.

Williams says that, contrary to opposing views claiming that there will be public backlash against the recommendations, there is a groundswell of community support for these changes. Strong support is also evident across the professional sector.

"Police, hospital and emergency doctors and treatment service providers are all expressing the need for the laws to change."

Williams says the proposals will address the issues that are important to New Zealanders including targeting heavy drinking and youth drinking.

"Moderate social drinkers have nothing to worry about and instead can look forward to enjoying healthier and safer communities in which to live and raise their families."

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