



Press release

19 November 2013

Alcohol Healthwatch welcomes yesterday's Health Committee report into improving child health outcomes and preventing child abuse.

Director Rebecca Williams says it is encouraging to see alcohol included as a risk factor that needs to be addressed, and specific recommendations made to reduce alcohol-related harm.

The Committee calls on the Government to develop an action plan to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), and to require warning labels on alcohol products. It also puts controls on alcohol advertising and the introduction of pricing mechanisms to reduce alcohol-related harm back on the Government's agenda.

These measures are now internationally recognised as best practice, yet New Zealand has dragged its feet on them. Ms Williams hopes the Committee's recommendations might have some influence in getting alcohol-related harm prevention measures moving forward.

"Work on an FASD action plan was undertaken years ago yet it never saw the light of day. An application for warning labels has been floating in the system since 2006, yet still we haven't seen labelling mandated. Work on establishing an 'expert committee' to undertake yet another review on alcohol advertising and the investigation into pricing and sales data both seem to have gone into a black hole.

"There is strong evidence and good public support for these interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm. These are not hard or random policies; they are well established in our evidence base. The block is Parliament."

Ms Williams suggests all political parties consider where they are in relation to the implementation of best practice alcohol policies, and whether they are serving to facilitate or undermine better public health approaches.

"Parties' policies should be made clear to the voting public as we approach the next elections.

"This is about children, this is about ensuring that everyone has the best shot possible at life."

Ends.

For further details and comment contact Rebecca Williams: 09 520 7035 or 021 862 250