

11/03/2006

## SUBMISSION

To the HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE  
On the INQUIRY INTO OBESITY AND TYPE TWO DIABETES IN NEW ZEALAND

### INTRODUCTION

1. This submission is from the Group Against Liquor Advertising(GALA)
2. We wish to appear before the Committee

### GENERAL SUMMARY

3. We support the intent of this Bill as obesity and diabetes are major health problems in New Zealand.

We wish to make the following comments

- The causative factors driving an increase in the frequency of diabetes are complex and multi-factorial. A high calorie intake is the leading modifiable risk factor.
- Alcohol contains 7 Calories per gram, almost as much as butter and animal fat. New Zealanders have a high alcohol intake..
- Anecdotal evidence from the personal experience of individuals shows clearly that alcohol intake is a factor leading to increased body weight. For those wishing to lose weight, cessation of alcohol intake commonly results in a loss of weight, even when other factors do not alter (food intake exercise etc).
- Anecdotal evidence also suggests that weight conscious young women deliberately do not eat before or during a drinking session because they suspect the calorie value of alcohol. Not eating while drinking contributes to alcohol poisoning and intoxication with the consequent social and health risks.
- Alcoholic drinks are the only food or drink item excluded from the requirement to have Nutritional Information Panels (NIPs) on the container .
- This means that most consumers have no idea of the calorie content of alcoholic drinks
- Consumers cannot make an informed choice as to whether they wish to consume alcoholic drinks that contain a substantial calorie load.
- This is irresponsible, does not enhance personal choice, and for the majority of the population keeps them ignorant as to the calorie load that they consume.
- In turn , this is an additive factor for the development of obesity and its consequent health problems.

- It is our contention that NIPs should be present on all alcoholic beverages as this will improve the education of many consumers and permit them to calculate more accurately their calorie intake.

#### SPECIFIC COMMENTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the Terms of reference of the inquiry Clauses 4 and 5, we would propose that NIPS be placed on all containers of alcoholic drinks. The NZ Food Safety Authority should be advised to so recommend and that all manufacturers be required to include such labels as soon as possible.

This will not have an immediate effect on obesity but over time, especially if combined with public health education, may well make some impact on the problem of obesity and diabetes.

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