

## GROUP AGAINST LIQUOR ADVERTISING

Media Release

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### REPORT FROM STEERING GROUP REVIEWING ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

The recommendations in the report are little better than the present situation of industry self-regulation of alcohol advertising, said Dr Viola Palmer, Chairperson of the Group Against Liquor Advertising. The changes recommended are cosmetic. There is no recognition of the seriousness of the youth drinking culture.

The report's huge defect is that it ignores the possibility of a ban on advertising and sponsorship. Half of the individual and half of the health sector submissions advocated this. The report is based on the premise that advertising is acceptable and finds no need to justify this.

The composition of the Steering Group, which included an advertising person, pre-empted the discussion of the possibility of a total ban on alcohol promotion. By excluding those who would challenge the assumption that advertising is necessary, such as GALA's nominees, the "do little" outcome was a foregone conclusion. How far would we have got with enforced self-regulation of the tobacco industry?

The changes are so minor that the influence on excessive drinking will be nil. Even if Government approves all these timid recommendations, the liquor and advertising industries will still be running rings round it. Experience with tobacco indicates that a total ban is needed to reduce the harmful effects of a drug.

The Review illustrates the old political ploy of setting up an inquiry to provide the results politicians want. This Government, while acknowledging the problems from alcohol, is unwilling to legislate boldly to reduce the damage.

Nothing will change in our youth drinking culture. Alcohol-fuelled crime, road crashes and other tragedies reported almost daily in our newspapers will continue.

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The full report from the Steering Group Reviewing Alcohol Advertising is available at [www.ndp.govt.nz](http://www.ndp.govt.nz)