



Newsletter No 74 of GALA New Zealand Inc. (Group Against Liquor Advertising)

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What GALA stands for: GALA is promoting a community free from liquor advertising and sponsorship. We recognise that liquor is a permanent part of New Zealand society; we are not prohibitionists. We are seeking a phased reduction and eventual ban on alcohol advertising, promotion and sponsorship. We support health warnings on liquor containers and standard drinks labelling.

Commentary

Well, we are all back to work again. And what a year it is likely to be. We sense some movement in the alcohol area is likely to take place especially after the release of the Law Commission report in March. Then it will be up to the politicians to take definite actions and they will no doubt need public encouragement to ensure they do what is best for the country. John Key in his newsletter, lists “reform liquor licensing laws” as one of the objectives of the National Party. Let us hope he places his weight behind this move.

We still think that few authorities have grasped the concept how much social engineering on alcohol matters has taken place in NZ over many years, led by the continual and clever promotional campaigns of the alcohol industry. We have all been subtly conned to believe that alcohol ingestion is an integral part of our society and that life without alcohol is inconceivable. It has become part of the NZ psyche. And how has this come about? Clearly, the commercial advantages in selling alcohol have required massive advertising and promotion to target populations to ensure profits are maximised.. There is little social responsibility about this. It is all about money and more of it, to the benefit of a relatively small number of people, regardless of the harm the drug causes. It is all legal, sanctioned by the State, and we honour our chief brewers by bestowing knighthoods on them. We wonder about our thinking processes in NZ, which are far from logical, often hypocritical and contradictory probably brought about by woolly thinking, maybe partly under the influence of social doses of alcohol. Any conscience about alcohol problems has been ablated. Advertising has a lot to answer for.

We are not alone in this in NZ. All the Western World appears to be in the same situation. Some people have too much disposable income, Others cannot resist social pressures, may have lack of job satisfaction, an excess of leisure time, a decrease of real challenges, a paucity of belief and morality structures, and a lack of self-control, have made our Western Society one that cannot always be admired and all these factors have led to a high ingestion of alcohol. Many of our best young educated people are recruited by the alcohol advertising industry and paid megabucks to subvert our thinking about alcohol. Using humour, enticing pictures, sophistication and every trick of the book, they sell a life style. Non-thinking people are recruited to buy more of the one item that is a potent cause of personal problems. Until alcohol promotion is curbed in its many protean ways, as for tobacco, we stand little chance of ever coming to real grips with the situation we find ourselves in.

Which all means that GALA still has fight on its hands. We need to keep reminding ourselves and others that the propaganda of the alcohol industry is an evil that needs to be demolished. We need to see it as it is i.e. a drug-pushing industry, immoral, unscrupulous,

and preying on the weaknesses of human nature. It needs tight control and that can only come about by Government action as the social attitudes to alcohol are so embedded.

What are we doing about it? We have started conversations with ALAC (Alcohol Advisory Council) to see where we can work together. ALAC has taken a stand on alcohol promotion not too distant from our own and our views are not now seen as unreasonable or extreme. Although we would like a complete ban on all alcohol promotion, we are realistic to appreciate that this would need to be done over time, in a phased sequence. Again the tobacco model is an excellent precedent .

Now we have much more support from organisations like the British Medical Association, and to a lesser extent, the World Health Organisation. An emerging number of carefully carried out scientific investigations demonstrate the effect of alcohol advertising particularly on young people. The tide is turning to some degree in our favour but we need to keep up the momentum of activity. Please continue to be part of it by supporting GALA

An opinion of a judge

Judge Sharon McAuslan in sentencing an offender, was quoted in the NZ Herald that the offending was an example of the problems that some people had with alcohol. "If you took out alcohol you would fix half of the world's problems."

In NZ we recently gave a knighthood to a leader of our alcohol industry which perhaps underlines how our authorities regard the alcohol business and downplay its effects on society.

HAITI

Anheuser-Busch IN Bev, the largest beer producer in the USA has been sending cans of water to Haiti, labelled with their company logo and a press release. They never miss a trick to advertise.

AUSTRALIA

Australians were challenged by FebFast, and Australian group, to give up drinking for one month in February. The survey of more than 1000 Australian drinkers confirms just how deeply ingrained drinking and alcohol is in Australian culture.

When put to the test, the survey found:

One in five Australian drinkers would rather give up sex for a month than give up the grog

12 per cent would rather not see their friends for a whole month than have to stop drinking, and the same number would also go without their car

Almost 30 per cent of Australian drinkers would rather toss their mobile phones than give booze the flick

A quarter would rather turn the TV off for a whole month

Almost one in five would prefer to give up using the internet and more than 60 per cent would prefer to leave Facebook for an entire month

43 per cent would stop coffee before they'd stop drinking alcohol, and

the same amount would not eat chocolate

One in 20 Australians even said they would rather go without sleep than go without alcohol.

It's incredible that many Australians would rather give up their cars, mobile phones and even sex and sleep rather than alcohol. FebFast isn't anti-alcohol, but these results show that many Australians place far too much importance on the role alcohol plays in their lives.

To see the Australian "Grogwatch" communication contact CAAN@adf.org. or visit <http://caan.adf.org.au/grogwatch/> and ask to be placed on their mailing list.

Advertising with children

A Xmas parade at Kerikeri, included a New World supermarket float with children surrounded by TUI signs. A protest has been made about this but apart from the organiser apologising there is little that can be done to prevent this type of blatant advertising using children. No regulations, no penalties. Look for all the details at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/northland/local-news/bay-chronicle/3288329/Christmas-float-leaves-bad-taste>.

NCEA Examination question

A question on alcohol economics appears in this year's exam questions on economics. The matter was picked up by TVNZ who felt it was inappropriate. They filmed some pictures and an interview but did not broadcast the final version. GALA has made a complaint to the examination board which replied by wishing us well in trying to decrease the promotion of alcohol but avoided any answer as to why they included such a question in their examination paper.

Alcohol on the Campus of Universities

Otago has taken the lead by banning alcohol advertising or sponsorship on the University campus.

GALA wrote to the other Universities to ascertain their policy.

Massey University (Manawatu, Albany and Wellington Campuses): "Has not permitted advertising or promoted its use for fund-raising purposes and has not sought sponsorship from companies promoting alcohol."

Auckland University (Vice Chancellor) "Not necessary for the University to ban alcohol promotions...as we do not have the kinds of alcohol abuse that seem to plague the University of Otago" GALA is disputing this in a reply.

Lincoln University (Finance Director) "Has not allowed alcohol advertising in its precincts for some years. The Students Association, at our request, has also recently ceased allowing advertising in its publications.",

Victoria University (Vice- chancellor) "We have a formal procedure in place since Nov 2008which excludes promotions and advertising on campus.."

Canterbury University. No reply. (being followed up).

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- 1. Keep up writing letters or approaching your MP. These actions are still most important.**
- 2. Write a letter to your newspaper or magazine on alcohol promotion and do not be upset if it is not printed. Just try again.**
- 3. Look carefully at all advertisements to see if there are grounds for a complaint. Keep a copy of the ASA handbook available (available free from the ASA). We can help in any complaints you think worthwhile writing in about.**
- 4. Support any other groups with similar aims to our own such as www.alcoholaction.co.nz .**
- 5. Keep up your financial support to GALA.**
- 6. Approach your Hospital Board or town council and ask them to control alcohol promotions along with their liquor bans.**
- 7. Protest to your supermarket re the blatant displays and advertising of alcohol. Support firms that do not sell alcohol.**
- 8. Advise us of any matter that you think we should pay attention to.**

Thank you for your help in the last year. We have received numerous supportive letters and emails and we are grateful for this feedback as we struggle with the paperwork and limited finances to be come up with creditable responses to the challenges confronting us. We will win , but it is going to take time!

GALA membership Donations

March 2010

Dear GALA supporter,

We intend in future to send out our membership donation requests in March or April of each financial year. We were late last year, so this note is to ask your assistance in helping us prepare for the inevitable costs that will occur in 2010 as we work towards increasing public awareness of the need for a curb on alcohol promotion.

Membership of GALA is not expensive at \$15 although we are always grateful for the many members who give more, over and above the standard donation rate. Donations are all tax deductible.

Your donation will help us in providing the GALA newsletter, secretarial support, publicity requirements, lobbying costs and the 101 other expenses in keeping GALA running effectively. In return you will be kept up to date with what is happening in the alcohol advertising scene by email or posted mail.

I enclose my donation to keep GALA going. My contribution will entitle me to keep receiving GALA News for a further year.

\$15 \$30 \$50 \$100 Other _____

Name. _____

Address _____

email _____

Make cheques payable to GALA (NZ) Inc

Credit Cards: Please debit my Bankcard/ Visa/ Amex/ Diners/ Other _____

Card number

Signature _____ Expiry date _____

I need a receipt YES/NO

Please post to GALA Treasurer, P.O. Box 67-023 Auckland 1344

