



Gala News

Newsletter No 75 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.

Editorial

BIG CRUNCH COMING

With Sir Geoffrey Palmer's Law Commission Report recommendations now announced, New Zealand arrives at its once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make decisions which will make a difference to our worrying alcohol culture. Young people are surrounded by clever influence and indoctrination, through print media, television, and electronic cell-phone methods. New types of drinks, targeting them, are released.

Very many public submissions surprised Sir Geoffrey by their strong insistence that advertising and sponsorship strongly encouraged our drinking culture, especially among the young. The report recommends they be eventually banned, and MPs will need strong encouragement to do this, since there will be huge resistance.

Two things are worth noting:

First, the sponsorship of sport in Europe is often not by the alcohol industry, but by large institutions like banks. That should happen here.

Second, the fact that sports clubs are so influenced by, and dictated to by the liquor industry should be exposed, and prevented. Sports writer Richard Boock has courageously described this in his Sunday Star-Times columns. We have heard about threats of withdrawal of financial support to a club, when alcohol-free social activities were planned. These are heavy-handed stand-over tactics. A sports coach described alcohol as being "endemic in sport." Sponsors like banks get due publicity and gratitude for their efforts as they should, but alcohol sponsorship differs entirely, in that it involves pushing a mind-bending drug as inherent in the deal.

We allow \$60M (minimum) yearly to be spent on alcohol advertising and sponsorship, and are then surprised that it works. Now is your chance to lobby MPs to stop it. With 87% of submitters to the Commission suggesting that changes to the advertising of alcohol were needed, the Government clearly has a mandate to rein in the present system of alcohol promotion.

LAW COMMISSION REPORT



John Key, Peter Dunne,
Please note!

Some of you may not have been able to access the full report. It is on the web (<http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/ProjectReport.aspx?ProjectID=154>) or full copies can be purchased for \$30 (publications@lawcom.govt.nz). We recommend reading as much of it as you can, as although GALA has its particular interest in advertising, marketing and promotion of alcohol, there are many aspects of the total report that will be of interest to anybody who wants to understand the extent of the total package that the Law Commission is advocating.

Chapter 19 is of particular interest to GALA and the summary of its recommendations are reproduced below. But the whole chapter is well worth reading as it clearly shows the evolution of the thinking in the Commission on alcohol promotion. The recommendations are denoted by R and a number.

R109 proposes measures within 5 years as close to a ban on alcohol advertising as we are likely to get at the present time. But it is a shame we have to wait so long on such an important matter. In the mean time, thousands of young people will be indoctrinated by the very active alcohol advertisers.

Recommendations (Chapter 19)

R104 An interdepartmental committee, overseen by the Ministers of Health and Justice, should plan and implement the management of a phased programme to limit exposure to alcohol promotion and restrict the content of alcohol promotion messages, including alcohol-related sponsorship.

R105 A new regime should be in place within five years.

R106 Stage 1 of the programme, comprising a new offence relating to the irresponsible promotion of the consumption and supply of alcohol (replacing section 154A of the Sale of Liquor Act 1989), should be implemented immediately.

R107 The new provision should make it an offence to:

- .. in the course of carrying on a business, encourage the consumption of an excessive amount of alcohol, whether on licensed premises or at any other place;*
- .. promote or advertise alcohol in a manner that has special appeal to people under the age of 20;*
- .. promote or advertise alcohol, except in store or on premises, in a manner that leads the public to believe the price is 25% or more below the price at which the alcohol is ordinarily sold;*
- .. promote alcohol that is free or*
- .. offer any goods or services on the condition that alcohol is purchased.*

R108 The interdepartmental committee should consider legislative measures to be introduced at stage 2 of the programme. These measures are aimed at reducing exposure to advertising, particularly for young people.

R109 The interdepartmental committee should consider stage 3 measures with the aim of restricting the promotion of alcohol, including sponsorship, in all media.

No alcohol advertising should be allowed in any media other than advertising that communicates objective product information, including the characteristics of the beverage, the manner of its production and its price.

The other chapter(23) of great interest to GALA is related to alcohol labeling. They eventually recommend that the present procedures for determining the labelling of alcohol be left to the FSANZ(Food Standards Australia and New Zealand).

This is disappointing as this organization seems to move at a glacial pace and it seems impossible to move them more rapidly. Given the problems of the FASD (Foetal alcohol Spectrum Disorder) , to name only one of the dangers of alcohol, and the real need to prevent this, it is sad to not see a stronger recommendation.

R145 is unlikely to achieve much as such education has been shown to be largely ineffective in the face of the strength of the advertising industry

Chapter 23 Education, including labelling of alcohol

R144 The national marketing role of the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand should continue.

R145 The Ministry of Education should encourage school boards of trustees to organise drug and alcohol education programmes that meet the needs of their communities.

R146 The multiple processes under way for considering the labelling of alcohol products should continue.



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BOUQUETS

- To Campbell Live TV3 for some good programmes on the problems of alcohol.
- To Prof Doug Sellman for taking the time out from his sabbatical and touring around NZ speaking to many audiences on his 5 point plan to help control the alcohol problems in NZ.

- To numerous GALA members who have written to us providing encouragement in our role as a “flea in the blanket.”
- NZ HERALD cartoonist for some very telling cartoons on alcohol matters

BRICKBATS

- To the Vice Chancellor of Auckland University who does not believe Auckland students have an alcohol problem
- To the women Editors of numerous Women’s magazines who still allow alcohol advertising in their journals, despite the evidence that alcohol can affect the unborn. They did not reply to our correspondence asking them not to accept alcohol advertisements without warnings about drinking during pregnancy.
- To the Food Safety Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) who after many years has not yet recommended safety warnings or calorie details on alcoholic drinks.

ITS OUR TURN TO SHOUT

To coincide with the report’s release, Alcohol Healthwatch and the New Zealand Drug Foundation launched *It’s our turn to shout* on 27 April. The aim is to encourage and support concerned groups and individuals to become engaged with the issues and send a clear message to our politicians that it’s time to take important steps towards alcohol law reform. This is the first significant opportunity in 20 years for individuals and communities to have their say about what sort of alcohol laws will better serve all our interests and reduce alcohol-related harm. We want to bring about a groundswell of public opinion in favour of effective and more sensible alcohol laws.

It’s our turn to shout will involve regular media releases, opinion pieces, emails to stakeholders and help with community activities. These emails will let you know what’s coming up in the *It’s our turn to shout* initiative and how you can get involved. We’ll also be updating the *Shout* Facebook and blog pages several times a week, and communicating daily through Twitter. Later in the year we’ll be holding workshops around the country for people wanting to be further involved.

The blog has a section of documents you can download at www.ourturn2shout.org.nz/p/documents.html. We added:

- Questions and Answers about *It’s our turn to shout*
- Alcohol myths and industry propaganda
- A short piece you can put in your next newsletter or on your website. Please download and use this document. You can also request it by email from ourturn@ourturn2shout.org.nz.

GETTING INVOLVED

We need your participation to make *It’s our turn to shout* as effective as possible. We’d also really appreciate your help to reach a wide audience with information about *Shout*.

Here are some things you can do.

1. Disseminate the information we send you through your newsletters, noticeboards etc to encourage your stakeholders and communities to have their say.
2. Contribute by writing opinion pieces in your area of expertise or short entries for the blog.
3. Help co-ordinate events held in your area. These events will be designed to raise public awareness about alcohol issues.
4. Help us locate personalities in your area we could profile in local papers to emphasise positive messages about alcohol law reform (e.g. stories from youth alcohol workers, publicans in favour of stricter licensing etc).
5. Actively participate in our online activities by:
 - commenting on the blog (www.ourturn2shout.org.nz)

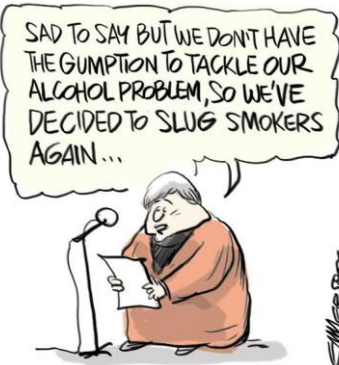
- following ourturn2shout on Twitter (www.twitter.com/ourturn2shout)
- becoming a fan and regularly contributing to our Facebook page: [It's our turn to shout](#) (either by posting comments or by starting/joining discussions)
- Informing your networks and stakeholders about these online activities and encouraging them to participate.

NEW MAILING LIST SIGN UP FORM

People can sign up to the *It's our turn to shout* mailing list at www.surveymonkey.com/s/almailinglist. At the sign up page there is also an option for you to tell us how you would like to get involved. If you've already joined you may want to go back and sign up again to tell us more about you. Thanks for getting involved and for helping make a positive difference.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Now it is up to Parliament. The ink was hardly dry on the Commission's report before John Key announces there will be no increase in the excise cost of alcohol. Then it is announced that a similar tax on tobacco is to be immediately introduced. One hardly needs to comment on the hypocrisy of this move. The letters to the newspapers indicate that many people have quickly seen through this government action and view it with dismay how an effective tool against the abuse of alcohol has been so quickly discarded.



Maybe the Maori Party will be able to do the same for alcohol as has been done for tobacco?

Our job now is to ensure each member of Parliament knows the issues, reads the report and votes in a way that reflects the major swell of opinion "That something substantial must be done to control the alcohol problems of our community." The Law Commission's report outlines a basket of measures that would greatly help and only a weak government can afford to ignore the challenges of the recommendations. So we need to keep on lobbying our own MP's, by writing or seeing them; also please send your letters to newspapers and magazines. Express your views NOW.

H

The "Henry" report recently released recommended an increase in the tax on alcohol. The Federal Government quickly scotched that proposal, so BIG ALCOHOL wins again. But like NZ, Australia increased the tax on Tobacco. Collusion?

GALA DONATIONS

Thanks so much for the numerous donations received. The total donation is tax deductible as we have no set subscription although a minimum of \$15 yearly covers the cost of newsletters and other communications.

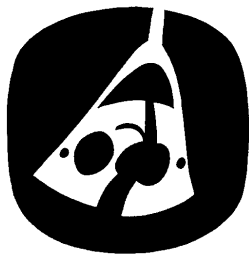
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF GALA

Will be held Thursday May 27th at the Mt Eden Friends Centre (115 Mt Eden Road) at 3.00pm. Speaker will be our past Chairperson **Dr Viola Palmer** who will outline the “History of GALA.” This should be most interesting, particularly for those who are relatively new to the organisation. All supporters of GALA are invited to attend. Nominations for the positions on the Executive are welcomed and can be sent to the GALA email or postal address.

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GALA

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