

Keep the alcohol industry out of policy-making for alcohol harm reduction

Tēnā koutou, Right Honorable Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, Honorable Minister of Health Simeon Brown, Honorable Minister of Justice Paul Goldsmith, Honorable Minister for Mental Health Matt Doocey, and Honorable Nicole McKee,

Like many people, we want to live, work, and raise our tamariki and mokopuna in healthy, safe communities led by leaders who make decisions for our wellbeing based on the best available evidence and our collective interest. When community wellbeing is prioritised, we give ourselves and our families and whānau the best chance to thrive and enjoy the things most important to us.

We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned about [the involvement of the alcohol industry in developing key policies aimed at addressing alcohol harm](#). Alcohol is the most harmful drug in Aotearoa New Zealand, and a third of preventable deaths globally each year have been attributed to harmful products such as alcohol. Harms are not fairly distributed with Māori experiencing greater exposure to risk factors for alcohol harm.

The alcohol industry has a fundamental conflict of interest with developing effective and equitable harm minimising policy. Reducing alcohol-related harm will only happen with a reduction in the sale of alcohol, an outcome the industry actively seeks to prevent. The core business of the alcohol industry is to make money by maximising the sale of alcohol products.

There are [many examples of the industry's efforts](#) to undermine and take legal action against effective, evidence-based policy to prevent alcohol harm here and globally. For these reasons, industry influence and interference in policy development and implementation has been recognised by the World Health Organization as a major challenge to establishing and maintaining strong alcohol controls in its [Global Alcohol Action Plan](#). Industry influence shifts attention from population focused solutions that reduce harm broadly (like cost effective safeguards on marketing, prices and supply) to expensive and often less effective solutions that focus on a narrow group of heavy drinkers. This misdirects attention from the true scope of the problem; for example, low and moderate alcohol use causes harm such as cancer, which accounts for 42% of all alcohol related deaths in New Zealand.

Most New Zealanders agree the alcohol industry should have no role in alcohol policy development

A recent survey found that [71% of New Zealanders agree that the alcohol industry should not be involved in developing Government policies concerning alcohol](#). The survey also found strong public support for a range of alcohol harm reduction policies including alcohol availability, marketing and price. This provides an overwhelming mandate to implement the [World Health Organization's advice to governments](#): to ensure public policy to reduce alcohol harms is protected from commercial and other vested interests that undermine health.



**Health Coalition
Aotearoa**

Health Coalition Aotearoa Inc
c/o School Population Health
22 Park Avenue, Grafton, Auckland
www.healthcoalition.org.nz

Our ask: Establish adequate safeguards to protect public policy from alcohol industry interference

We, the undersigned, ask you to exclude the alcohol industry from involvement in creating public policy to reduce alcohol harm, in the same way the tobacco industry should be excluded from tobacco policy setting. The New Zealand Government is required to protect our tobacco control public health policies from the commercial interests of the tobacco industry – since 2005 we have been party to the [World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#). This agreement recognises the “irreconcilable conflict” between tobacco industry profits and public health. The same logic ought to apply to the most harmful drug of all - alcohol – yet no such protections exist.

The Government plays a key role in setting the direction of alcohol policy work undertaken by its Ministries. We call upon the Government to set clear expectations to ensure groups with vested interests in selling alcohol are not involved in the development of public policies aimed at addressing alcohol harm. This is necessary to protect policies aimed at addressing alcohol harm from industry interference.

We are asking you to:

1. Keep the alcohol industry out of the early development and decision stages of alcohol harm reduction policies.
2. Only allow the alcohol industry to submit views through public consultation processes on a level playing field with the public.
3. Enhance transparency of any interactions between the alcohol industry and the Government (including Ministers and officials) by keeping a public record of all communications and meetings, [like for the tobacco industry](#).

Reducing alcohol harm in Aotearoa New Zealand means better physical and mental health, improved child wellbeing, reduced family harm, less pressure on our health system, less pressure on police and emergency services, and improved productivity and economic growth.

Your leadership can create safer, healthier and fairer communities.

Alcohol Healthwatch · Asia Pacific Alcohol Policy Alliance · Association of Salaried · Medical Specialists (ASMS) · Auckland Women's Centre/Te Wāhine Wāhine o Tāmaki Makaurau · Auckland Women's Health Council · BloomCo · Brainwave Trust · Cancer Society New Zealand · Cardiac Society NZ · CAYAD Tāmaki Makaurau · Champion Builders Ltd · Clinical Nutritionists Aotearoa · Communities Against Alcohol Harm Inc · Comprehensive Care · Consumer NZ · DAPAANZ · Department of Public Health, University of Otago · Digital Indigenous · Duffus Trust · FASD-CAN · Federation of Women's Health Council Aotearoa · Gut Cancer Foundation · Health Action Trust · Health Promotion Forum of NZ · Healthy Families South Auckland · Kainga Aroha · Lifestyle Medicine Australia & NZ · Living Sober · Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand · Moana Connect · New Zealand College of Midwives · New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD) · New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists – Ngā Ringa Tuawhira o Aotearoa · New Zealand Society of Endocrinology · New Zealand Women in Medicine · NZ Breastfeeding Alliance/Baby Friendly Aotearoa · NZ College of Public Health Medicine · NZ Council of Trade Unions · NZ Medical Students Association · Plunket · ProCare · Public Health Association of NZ Kāhui Hauora Tūmatanui · Pukenga Consultancy Ltd · Royal Australasian College of Physicians · Safeguarding Children · Safety Collective Tāmaki Makaurau · Students for Sensible Drug Policy Aotearoa · Sweet Louise - Support for Incurable Breast Cancer · Te Awakairangi Health Network (TAHN) · Te Wakahuia Manawatu Trust · The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit · Toi Tangata · Turanga Health · Vape Free Kids NZ · Waitohu School · Whare Tukutuku · Wise Group · Women's Health Action

Bernard O'Shaughnessy · Dr James Kriechbaum · Dr JM van Schalkwyk · Dr Rose Crossin · Dr. Kelly Garton · Mike Tuala · Monique Bahizi · Professor Antonia Lyons · Professor Terryann Clark · Professor Trecia Wouldes · Professor James Sneyd · Rhys Jones · Richard Hoskins · Sarah Oliver · Shanthi Ameratunga · The Chair & Committee of DRIM (Drink Responsibility In Moderation)



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Te Ope Whakaora



Te Tari Hauora Tūmanui
Department of Public Health
Pōneke - Wellington Campus



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