

18 October 2023

Ashburton District Council
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Tēnā koutou,

Submission on the Ashburton District Council Local Alcohol Policy Review 2023

1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the re-consultation of the Local Alcohol Policy (LAP) review. This submission has been compiled by Te Mana Ora (Community and Public Health) on behalf of the National Public Health Service (NPHS) and Te Whatu Ora Waitaha. Te Mana Ora recognises its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities of Aotearoa New Zealand under the Pae Ora Act 2022 and the Health Act 1956. The Medical Officer of Health also has a statutory reporting role under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 (the Act).
2. This submission does not replace the original recommendations and evidence provided in our submission dated 10 July 2023 but addresses the two new changes proposed in the re-consultation.

General Comments

3. Alcohol is the most harmful drug in Aotearoa New Zealand.¹ Its consumption continues to cause significant harms to people, whānau and communities and is a key driver of health and social inequities in Aotearoa.² Te Mana Ora would like to thank Ashburton Council for the opportunity to present information on this at the previous LAP review hearings.
4. Te Mana Ora supports Ashburton District Council continuing to have a LAP and note that Council have now proposed to make changes to the policy. However, Te Mana Ora submits that the proposed changes do not go far enough to strengthen the current LAP in ways which are consistent with national and international evidence on reducing harm from alcohol. Te Mana Ora supports *Option Three – Make further/other changes to the Policy*.

¹ Crossin R, Cleland L, Wilkins C, et al. The New Zealand drug harms ranking study: A multi-criteria decision analysis. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02698811231182012>

² New Zealand Law Commission. Alcohol in our lives: curbing the harm. NZLC R114. Wellington: New Zealand Law Commission, 2010. <https://www.lawcom.govt.nz/sites/default/files/projectAvailableFormats/NZLC%20R114.pdf>

Specific Comments

One-way door restriction in all areas

5. Te Mana Ora supports extending the one-way door restriction to apply to all licensed premises in the district. If applied in conjunction with other measures one-way door policies can work to reduce alcohol-related harm³, however, evidence shows that stopping the sale of alcohol earlier is a more effective harm reduction measure.⁴

Extending footpath trading hours

6. Te Mana Ora does not support extending footpath trading hours. This change may not meet the policy purpose of minimising alcohol-related harm.
7. Current problems with closing the trading hours for licensed footpath areas may indicate there are issues with managing licensed premises. Licence criteria under the Act requires effective systems and staff training to identify and establish ways of dealing with situations that could breach licence conditions and lead to an increase in alcohol-related harm. These systems should be in place under current LAP conditions. This proposed change does not align with evidence showing reducing trading hours is effective at reducing alcohol-related harm.

Further recommendations

8. As per our previous submission and appearance to Council, Te Mana Ora continues to recommend the following changes to the draft LAP in line with evidence of measures that reduce alcohol harm in our communities:
 - a. Reducing trading hours of licensed premises, specifically amending the opening of trading for on-licenses and off-licenses to 8:00 am from 7:00 am. A start time of 8:00 am would bring the LAP in line with default maximum trading hours for on-licences set out in the Act.
 - b. Reducing outlet density through the introduction of a cap on the number of licensed premises in the District.
 - c. Introducing proximity controls (through setbacks or buffer zones) around sensitive sites for any new licensed premises.

³ Cameron M, Brown J, Cochrane W, Robertson N. (2018). An evaluation of the Whangarei one-way door policy. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency. <https://www.hpa.org.nz/sites/default/files/Final-Report-Whangarei-One-Way-Door-Policy-Evaluation-UoW-May2018.pdf>

⁴ Nepal S, Kypri K, Pursey K, Attia J, Chikritzhs T, Miller P (2018). Effectiveness of lockouts in reducing alcohol-related harm: Systematic review. *Drug and Alcohol Review*; 37(4):527-536.

- d. Adding a discretionary condition under Section 3.2 of the LAP that prohibits the use of 'buy now, pay later' (BNPL) services at off-licences.
- e. Amending the first discretionary condition under Section 6.2.3 (Restriction on the number of drinks that can be ordered after a specified time, and time of last orders) by removing "after a specified time" to read "Restriction on the number of drinks that can be ordered and time of last orders".
- f. Adding a discretionary condition under Section 6.2 of the LAP that restricts the size or alcohol percentage of the drinks, such as prohibiting the sale of wine by the bottle at special licensed events.

Conclusion

9. Te Mana Ora supports the retention of a Local Alcohol Policy in the Ashburton District, but recommends changes to the policy as outlined above (Option 3). These measures would contribute to reducing the accessibility and availability of alcohol and offer protection for vulnerable people from the risk of exposure to alcohol promotion.
10. Te Mana Ora does not wish to speak in support of our submission if there is a further hearing.

Ngā mihi,



Tanya McCall

Acting Regional Director Public Health Te Waipounamu
National Public Health Service