

19 August 2015

Justice and Electoral Committee  
Select Committee Services  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON 6160

### **Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Extended licensing hours during Rugby World Cup) Bill**

The New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) wishes to make a submission on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Extended licensing hours during Rugby World Cup) Bill.

1. The NZMA is New Zealand's largest medical organisation and has a pan professional membership. We have more than 5,500 members who come from all areas of medicine. The NZMA aims to provide leadership of the medical profession, and promote professional unity and values, and the health of New Zealanders. The NZMA takes a strong interest in alcohol legislation and policy, and we draw the Committee's attention to our recent comprehensive policy briefing '*Reducing alcohol-related harm*' (attached).<sup>1</sup>

2. Doctors regularly witness the negative impacts of the use of alcohol. We believe that policy responses to addressing the harms from alcohol should draw on the best available evidence, without undue influence or interference from commercial interests or ideology. Where there are conflicts of interests between the public health of New Zealanders and the profits of private commercial entities, it is our view that public health considerations should prevail.

3. We note that the Bill provides for extended licensing hours for the sale and supply of alcohol during the period of the 2015 Rugby World Cup. We understand that these extensions will override the default nationwide trading hours prescribed in the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012, as well as the modified trading hours specified in various Local Alcohol Policies. The NZMA is concerned that this Bill will exacerbate alcohol-related harms. These harms are well documented in our policy briefing.

4. Restricting trading hours is an important and effective measure to reduce alcohol-related harms.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there is no robust evidence (as is sometimes claimed) that on-licensed

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<sup>1</sup> Available from [http://www.nzma.org.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/42542/Alcohol-Briefing18.may.FINAL.pdf](http://www.nzma.org.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/42542/Alcohol-Briefing18.may.FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Popova S, et al. Hours and days of sale and density of alcohol outlets: impacts on alcohol consumption and damage: a systematic review. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 2009; Miller P, et al. Dealing with alcohol-related harm and the night-time economy. December 2012. Monograph Series No. 43; Wicki M, Gmel G. Hospital admission

premises provide a lower-risk drinking environment. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that a considerable proportion of alcohol-related harms, particularly violent crime, occur in and around on-licensed premises.<sup>3</sup>

5. We are also seriously concerned at the rationale being used to justify this Bill, as well as the extremely short timeframes to progress it into legislation. Given that the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 already enables licensed premises to apply for Special Licences in order to open outside the hours specified in the terms of their liquor licence, we consider this Bill to be unnecessary. It is our understanding that Cabinet explicitly considered scenarios such as the upcoming Rugby World Cup when establishing the current system for Special Licence applications.

6. We believe that the Bill is contradictory to the Purpose and Object of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012, and therefore undermines it. It also sets a precedent for licensed hours to be increased outside the current legislation and the considered decisions of the District Licensing Committee/Alcohol Regulatory and Licensing Authority. If passed, this Bill will raise expectations that other similar sporting events will benefit from similar exceptional provisions in the future. Furthermore, by linking alcohol so overtly with our national sporting icons, we consider the Bill to be contrary to the clearly identified need to change New Zealand's drinking culture.

7. Finally, we suggest that conditions described in the Bill for licensees to obtain extended licensing hours are open to misuse. For example, the licensee is required to "implement a system to ensure that the primary purpose of persons who enter the licensed premises is that of watching the game or games". It is difficult to envisage how licensees could reliably make this determination.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a written submission on this Bill.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stephen Child  
NZMA Chair

### **Attachment**

Reducing alcohol-related harm. 2015. NZMA Policy Briefing.

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rates for alcoholic intoxication after policy changes in the canton of Geneva, Switzerland. *Drug Alcohol Depend.* 2011 Nov 1;118(2-3):209–15

<sup>3</sup> Casswell S & Zhang JF. Access to alcohol from licensed premises during adolescence: a longitudinal study. *Addiction.* 1997 Jun;92(6):737–45; Teece M & Williams P. Alcohol-related assault: Time and place. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* 2000;169:1–6; Borges G, et al. Risk of injury after alcohol consumption: a case-crossover study in the emergency department. *Soc Sci Med.* 2004 Mar;58(6):1191–200; Wiggers J, et al. Strategies and outcomes in translating alcohol harm reduction research into practice: the Alcohol Linking Program. *Drug Alcohol Rev.* 2004 Sep;23(3):355–64