



## National Council of Women of New Zealand

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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6 November 2006

S06.47

### **Submission to the Ministry Of Health on the The Review of the Regulations of Alcohol Advertising**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organization representing 42 Nationally Organized Societies and national members. It has 32 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies as well as some 150 other societies, and many individual members. The Councils function is to work for the well-being of women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research study, discussion and action. NCWNZ welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on behalf of our members.

#### **Introduction**

For many years NCWNZ have held very strong views against the advertising of Alcohol. The 1975 National Executive passed a resolution which reads: "That in the view of the increasing cost in human lives and happiness and the huge national economic wastage caused by immoderate use of alcohol, NCWNZ recommends to the Government that a ban be placed on the promotional advertising of alcohol."

This was affirmed at the 1984 National Conference.

NCWNZ welcomes the opportunity to comment on the questions in this Consultation Document.

#### **Specific Comments**

1. *In your view, what is the role of alcohol advertising in New Zealand?*

NCWNZ sees a great difference in what the role should be and what it is. The role should be to inform, e.g.: the price, the nature of the product and where to buy.

Members would also like to see a health warning included. One of the objectives of the present regulatory framework states that it should "minimise overall exposure of alcohol advertising to children and young people under the minimum legal purchasing age", and yet alcohol advertising is allowed to commence at 8:30PM which would be the time when most 14 - 17year olds would be watching.

2. *Is this role changing?*

Yes, NCWNZ does see that this role is changing as there are now the internet pop-ups, phone texting advertising and other forms of electronic media being used to advertise alcohol. Sadly there appears to be no restriction on these at all.

The National Youth Alcohol Survey 2004 showed that 77% of 12-17year olds had a favourite alcohol brand. One has to ask the question - how do 12yr olds establish a favourite brand and why would they want too? This has to be the effect of exposure to alcohol advertising and marketing





3. *What role do you consider alcohol advertising plays in shaping attitudes towards drinking in New Zealand?*

Alcohol advertising plays a significant role in shaping attitudes towards drinking for the worst. For example Auckland student publication, Craccum, over four recent weekly issues, advertised the Sambuca-styled liqueur, Opal Nera, with the promotion by Lion Nathan through competitions for best party moment poems, ultimate cocktails, and fun photos related to the product.

Alcohol advertising is not supposed to be aimed at the young and vulnerable. In the 2006 rugby season in Dunedin, university students were targeted with a bargain price rugby package which included a cheap rugby ticket, a six-pack of Speight's beer, and chips. Not only is this an example of establishing brand loyalty, it is again promoted to young people and it is connected to a sport, a practice not condoned by NCWNZ.

4. *Are there aspects of alcohol advertising that you are concerned about?*

Billboards and signage around sports fields cause concern. Often at cricket grounds patrons are faced with advertising all day. Thus having been implicitly encouraged in beer drinking, why is it surprising that some young people drink the product to excess and start causing trouble for other patrons and players alike?

In their Action Plan March 200, Para 5.47 the NZ Police are looking at ways to engage young offenders in educational interventions. They are looking at using a programme which uses independent drug and alcohol professionals to help with information sessions, and early the age group for whom the framework says the advertising must limit exposure. It does not seem to be working and nothing seems to be being done about the rule breakers.

5. *Are there aspects of alcohol advertising that are currently not regulated or are, in your view, not adequately regulated? Can you suggest how these might be regulated effectively?*

New electronic media such as texting and the pop-ups on the internet, and many other possibilities as yet unknown, need to come under regulation as well. It is well known that much of the material which comes through the internet comes in from overseas which makes it harder to monitor, but with all the technology available there must be ways to do this. There must be strict regulation on these forms because there is no way of knowing who is going to be on the receiving end, and those generating this form of advertising seem not to care.

Televised broadcasts of sporting events often show advertising during the day, as on SKY Sport 1 during the summer of 2005/2006, when DB Export Gold logo was shown together with phrases "thirst for cricket" and "official beer of the Black Caps". This meant that it was advertising outside the curfew hours and it was connecting sporting stars with consuming alcohol. Again it seems nothing is being done to stop this. NCWNZ would like to see this changed.

6. *The overarching principle of the Code for Advertising Liquor (and all advertising in New Zealand) is the principle of social responsibility that states, "all advertisements should be prepared with due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society". What do you think "social responsibility" means in the context of alcohol advertising?*

The wording of this is very weak as it says that "all advertisement should be prepared..." when NCWNZ feels strongly that as far as alcohol advertising is concerned this should read "all advertisements must be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility."

Social responsibility must ensure the inclusion of health warnings about the damage 'binge drinking' and excess consumption can have on the brain, liver and kidneys, and the damage foetal alcohol syndrome can have on the unborn child, with effects carried right through life.

The industry should set targets to reduce underage drinking - and stop advertising that glamorises and normalises the drinking of alcohol. It is associated with life styles attractive to teenagers."



A quote from 'Drinks Biz', a liquor industry magazine, says "Advertising is the key element in the sale of beer, wine and spirits...it feeds our core desire to make informed choices that suit our lifestyles and aspirations".

NCWNZ does not recall any alcohol advertising giving anything like an informed choice; that tells of the dangers of a life of addiction or other health problems. The only choices given currently are which brand to buy. Young women are also being targeted by alcohol advertising especially in regard to 'Ready-To-Drink' alcohol known as Alco-pops. Statistics show the amount being consumed by an individual is rising sharply.

None of this sounds like "socially responsible" advertising, and so NCWNZ sees this as an area which needs urgent attention.

7. *What do you think about the placement of alcohol advertising in the New Zealand environment?*

Billboards with any type of advertising do nothing for the environment for New Zealand, so this is not just a problem with alcohol advertisements. This has proven to be a very successful way to advertise the "brand" as seen by the Tui advertisements.

Research into how young people respond to alcohol advertisements shows that their levels of advertising recall and their liking for the advertisements themselves influence young people's views of drinking alcohol. This can influence how much they drink now and will drink in the future.

8. *What do you think about the current level and nature of alcohol sponsorship in New Zealand?*

NCWNZ thinks that the level of sponsorship is too high within high profile sports. It pushes the image of the muscular, macho beer swilling male that the liquor companies want to perpetuate. NCWNZ would like to see the removal of all alcohol makers' and suppliers' sponsorships, after all the Silver Ferns have done it. There was an outcry when banning of all sponsorships by tobacco companies came into law but now it is not missed.

9. *Do you think there are problems with alcohol sponsorship? If so, what solutions do you suggest?*

The Code of Advertising Liquor has standards relating to sponsorship credits and advertising of sporting fixtures. One of the standards states that in these advertisements shall not contain a sales message. This is obviously difficult to enforce as in just one of many examples is the Dominion Post 06/10/06 advertisement for a game of rugby. It included the Tui logo together with the words "Shouting for the boys since 1889". This breach of rules is seen many times and backs our call for banning alcohol sponsorship of sports teams.

10. *What do you think about the naming, packaging and merchandising of alcohol and point-of-sale material?*

Packaging that encourages the purchase of lots of one product in order to collect coupons is a practice that causes NCWNZ concern. This is naturally going to cause consumers to buy more than they intended of the product in order to be able to compete with friends over the number of coupons collected. Also promotions like one held recently by New World Supermarkets where shoppers were encouraged to buy Tui Beer or Stoneleigh wine in order to qualify for a chance to win a million Fly Buys points. Again consumers are going to purchase more of these products to give them a better chance of winning. Both of these practices should be stopped, as they are not seen as promoting any "social responsibility".



11. *Do you think particular problems are associated with newer forms of advertising (e.g. texting, the internet, competitions), or the regulation of them? If so, what solutions do you suggest?*

It was suggested earlier that for these electronically generated means of advertising that come often from overseas, people that work in this field must be employed to work on ways to minimise this. It is clearly young people who are up to the minute with this technology so again it is young people who are being targeted.

12. *Are you familiar with the process for making complaints about advertisements?*

NCWNZ keeps its membership informed as to the procedures needed and many of our members have used the process with varying degrees of success.

13. *Do you see any problems with the complaints system and/or the complaints based nature of the regulatory system? If so, what do you suggest?*

Our members feel that the complaints system is very cumbersome and time-consuming. The system needs to be streamlined and also better publicised so that the public can use it more readily. Advertisements on TV such as for the Broadcasting Standards Authority would be helpful. Also NCWNA questions the viability of a self regulatory system which is controlled by those who benefit from the profits of the advertising. No part of the alcohol industry should have any role in monitoring for compliance with the new advertising rules.

14. *Anything else?*

In summary please note the following:

- \* Restrictions on print media to control brand advertising to facts about the product;
- \* The phasing out of alcohol company sponsorships of sports and other events
- \* The Government needs to monitor the new policy for compliance .
- \* Penalties for infringements should be severe enough to have a deterrent effect;
- \* Alcohol is one of the leading causes of preventable death, therefore there is a need to address seriously, ways to reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising.
- \* NCWNZ would like to see the regulations those of tobacco advertising, ban it now so that some control can be initiated against young people's binge drinking that is out of hand;
- \* Members acknowledge that these differences would not have an immediate effect, but it could mean that young children today and in the future would not be lulled into thinking that drinking is glamorous and macho.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document.

Christine Low  
National President Convener,

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Social Issues Standing Committee