
REPORT 4
(1215/52/IM)

REPORT BACK ON THE ALCOHOL ADVISORY COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE 2009

1. Purpose of Report

To report back to Councillors on the 2009 Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand Conference held in Wellington.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*

3. Discussion

The Conference was opened by Kerry Prendergast, as Mayor of the host city, Wellington. She was followed by the Honourable Peter Dunne, Associate Minister of Health, with responsibility for the National Drug Policy, which includes alcohol.

The minister, in his address pointed out that the majority of New Zealanders who use alcohol have minimal issues. However, he presents some interesting findings from a joint Ministry of Health and Accident Compensation Corporation study on New Zealand drinking habits. This found that harmful alcohol use in New Zealand in 2005/06 was estimated to cost \$4.8 billion, with an additional \$0.6 billion attributed to joint alcohol and other drugs use. Of this figure, \$500 million was from crime costs, reflecting the costs to victims, the use of Police resources, court related costs and prison costs. A further \$1.6 billion was attributed to the cost of injuries. What was of particular interest was that the report estimated that half of all alcohol is consumed in a harmful manner, emphasising the tendency of some New Zealanders to binge drink. Police have recently released statistics indicating at least 31% of reported offences in 2007/08 were committed where the offender had consumed alcohol. He noted that, what is particularly worrying is the relationship between alcohol and violent offending. Approximately half of the homicides recorded over a ten year period involved either a suspect or victim being under the influence of alcohol at the time. In cases of serious family violence, 34% of alleged offenders were identified as having alcohol present. He went on to discuss the Government's Alcohol Action plan and the importance of a collaborative

approach between Government and industry to reduce alcohol related harm in society.

The highlight of day one was the Keynote Address from Dr Peter Rice, a Consultant Psychiatrist for the National Health Service Tayside, Scotland. His presentation was entitled “The Scottish Experience – Alcohol Policy Developments from Scotland”. Dr Rice put forward the proposition that there are no “problem drinks”. Rather, that consumers move from brand to brand, holding little brand loyalty. Marketing within the sector focuses on the recruitment of new drinkers.

He drew together commonalities of drinking culture that New Zealand and Scotland hold, believing that the liberalised environments of our two countries have created an environment that encourages drunkenness and irresponsibility.

He finished his presentation encouraging policy makers to look at regulatory frameworks from countries like Italy and Spain, whose young people drink approximately 50% less alcohol than their parents did at the same age. Copies of his slides can be found at <http://www.alac.co.nz/Documents/Presentations/KeynotesDayOne/Dr.PeterRice.ppt>.

The afternoon sessions included a series of panel discussions, and Councillor Best attended the discussion on:

What Makes Effective Community Action, which highlighted that:

- Leadership is the key to making change.
- The local community (including young people) are a key stakeholder that should be utilised to develop strategies to address issues with alcohol in their community.
- Implementation and evaluation need to take place at a community level.
- Community Action Workers need to be paid to ensure medium to long term continuity and energy.

The highlights of day two included Keynote addresses from Mayor Clive Geddes – Mayor of Queenstown Lakes District and Sir Geoffrey Palmer – President of the Law Commission.

Mayor Geddes spoke of the challenges that the Queenstown community has had in planning for alcohol in their community. He described the community’s issues dealing with Party time in Paradise, a small resident population, a high numbers of visitors, an unsustainable workforce, principally young and on a work visa resulting in a high level worker turnover. He described the clear linkage between on-licence entertainment venues and alcohol related crime within the small core that makes up the central area of Queenstown. Queenstown District Council has undertaken a number of programmes to reduce the impact of alcohol in their community including:

- 1994 Project Prevention – CCTV
- 1995 District Plan Change (Liquor retailing became a controlled activity)
- 1996 Community Safety Profile Alcohol Accord

1996 Lakes District Safer Communities
2003 Safe Streets (assessing alcohol related crime)
2006 MALES (Multi Agency Liquor Enforcement Study)
2006 Project CARV (Curbing Alcohol Related Violence)

From here they are working toward developing a sustainable district wide policy framework to reduce alcohol related violence working toward halting the growth in alcohol related crime in Queenstown Lakes. This is being achieved by generating 'Pride in Place' through the establishment of Community Guides and a Liquor Liaison group, comprising of Licensees, Licence inspectors, Police, Health Promotion Agencies, Young People and Councillors.

Sir Geoffrey Palmer, President of the Law Commission, presented a brief overview of the Sale of Liquor Act 1989, which he described as a new approach to the Sale of Liquor, to provide for a thriving bar and café industry. He was of the view that most of the 1989 Act is still sound, but that there are problems with it and therefore reform is necessary. Of particular concern are the high impacts that alcohol is having over a lifetime from foetal alcohol syndrome and the long term burden on the family, health system, education system through to chronic diseases caused by alcohol from rare cancers through to heart and liver disease later in life. He stressed the lifelong burden on society that alcohol causes.

At the time of the presentation the first report of the Commission had recently been released and he went on to discuss this latest report the Review of Regulatory Framework for the Sale and Supply of Liquor: Part 1: Alcohol Legislation and the Conscience Vote and how it examines the use of the conscience vote in the New Zealand House of Representatives. He went on to examine why conscience voting has historically been so popular for Bills dealing with the sale and supply of alcohol. He now recommends that in future it would be preferable for alcohol Bills to be subject to standard party-based voting given the risks conscience voting poses to the clarity and effectiveness of the laws passed by Parliament.

Attached is the link to a full copy of his presentation to the conference. It is a 12 page report which provides a full overview of the review that he is charged with undertaking and provides readers with a perspective on the myths that exist within New Zealand society from drinking during pregnancy through to the real impact of mortality and morbidity caused by alcohol consumption in today's New Zealand society.

<http://www.alac.co.nz/Documents/Presentations/KeynotesDayTwo/PDFofGPSpeecheALAC150509.pdf>.

The final keynote speaker of the conference was Dave Hadfield, a consultant with MindPlus, a company he formed which offers mentoring and coaching for elite sports coaches and business executives in areas such as developing team culture, structures, systems and stress management. His presentation was entertaining, exhilarating and encouraging. His recipe for team success is largely dependent on the ingredients of clear vision and lived values, making sure that everyone knows and embraces their role, efficient systems of performance accountability, and of course top-class coaching and leadership.

Of particular note were his comments surrounding the culture that has been created around the rugby Super 14 teams. The breath testing of players prior to training and the promotion of a non booze culture were major reasons for the success of the Canterbury side. David had spent 6 seasons with them and time with most of the Super 14 sides.

Councillor Goulden attended the following stream sessions:

1. Alcohol and family violence.
2. Normalising Depression. A presentation from two former sufferers.
3. Challenging Attitudes – Parenting tools for the Teenage Years
4. Alcohol and Family Violence
5. Density of Alcohol outlets and Teenage Drinking.
6. Nelson City and Tasman District Hospitality Protocol.
7. Tackling Drink Driving.
8. SADD – Today, SADD Tomorrow.

4. Material for Circulation

The presentations from the conference are available on the Alcohol Advisory Council website. <http://www.alac.co.nz/Presentations.aspx>.

5. Attendance

The Conference was attended by both Councillor Ngaire Best and Councillor Rob Goulden. Due to a Council hearing Councillor Best was unable to attend a part of the conference.

The shooting death of Constable Len Snee, a former colleague of Councillor Goulden's, meant that he was unable to attend the conference on the first day as planned as he was away at a Police funeral in Napier. Ironically the offender was under the influence of alcohol and drugs when he shot the three men in Napier.

6. Benefit to Council/Elected Members

This was a very interesting and educational conference that brought together different sectors involved in the sale of alcohol. The conference included health providers, regulators and enforcement, industry and Non Governmental Organisations. It enabled networking at a local, regional, national and international level for politicians, policy advisors and enforcement along with the industry to enable a greater understanding of the issues facing the general public and these sectors resulting from the sale and consumption of alcohol.

The Law Commission is currently speaking to many New Zealanders about Alcohol Law Reform and is due to report back to Parliament shortly.

Report prepared by:

Councillors Ngaire Best and Rob Goulden