

Let's get  
it right

# What you need to know about the Alcohol Reform Bill

This is your chance to help reduce alcohol-related harm in New Zealand by changing our liquor law. Let's get it right.

## Where did it come from?

The Alcohol Reform Bill arose from the concerns ordinary New Zealanders have about alcohol-related harm in Aotearoa.

In 2007, the Government asked the Law Commission to review our liquor laws. For the next three years, they conducted a community-oriented and evidence-based review. They consulted all over New Zealand and received over 3,000 submissions.

In May 2010, the Law Commission gave the Government their final advice: 153 evidence-based recommendations that were intended to work together as a mutually reinforcing package to reduce alcohol-related harm. Many, but not all, of these recommendations are in the current bill.

The Justice and Electoral Select Committee received 8,822 submissions of which 352 presented orally to the committee. That was so many, the committee held hearings in Auckland and Dunedin and was split in two so it could hear them all.

Currently, the Alcohol Reform Bill is awaiting a final reading. There is still time to get it right.

## Does current liquor law get it right?

No. Alcohol is our most popular recreational drug. It is also a potentially dangerous and addictive substance that does a lot of harm in New Zealand communities. Each year, about 1,000 people die due to alcohol.

- Alcohol is estimated to cost New Zealand around \$4.4 billion per year.
- Over 300 alcohol-related offences are committed every day.

- Between 18 and 35 percent of injury-based emergency department presentations are estimated to be alcohol-related, rising to between 60 and 70 percent during the weekend.

## Is New Zealand getting it right?

Over the last 20 years we have liberalised our laws relating to alcohol. This has created an environment that promotes binge-drinking culture and increases alcohol-related harm.

- The alcohol industry spends \$150,000,000 on advertising and marketing every year.
- Since 1992, advertising alcohol has been self-regulated.
- The number of outlets licensed to sell alcohol has more than doubled since 1990.
- In many parts of New Zealand, alcohol is available 24/7.
- In the last decade, alcohol has become much more affordable relative to income.
- Total alcohol consumption rose by 9 percent between 1998 and 2008.

## How are we drinking?

New Zealanders are drinking more often and in greater amounts, and they're starting younger. This, in turn, is causing more alcohol-related harm.

- 275,000 adults set out to get drunk on their last drinking occasion.
- 450,000 adults were binge drinking on their last drinking occasion.
- 700,000 New Zealanders have been categorised as binge drinkers (consuming seven or more standard drinks per session).
- 1.2 million adult drinkers are okay with bingeing or accepting of bingeing and regularly do so.

## Does the Alcohol Reform Bill get it right?

No. Although the Alcohol Reform Bill will make some important changes, it currently fails to adequately address:

- the dangerously low price of alcohol
- widespread availability of alcohol
- the saturation marketing and promotion of alcohol
- the high blood alcohol content for drink driving.

## Let's get it right

To be successful in reducing alcohol-related harm, the Alcohol Reform Bill needs to include strategies that are internationally recognised as having the greatest effect on alcohol consumption and related harm. This means:

- raising the price of alcohol
- further reducing the hours alcohol is available for sale
- decreasing the density of liquor outlets
- greater restrictions on the marketing and promotion of alcohol
- lowering the blood alcohol content limit for adult drivers.

Māori Party MP Te Ururoa Flavell and Labour MP Ian Lees Galloway have put up supplementary order papers which address some of these issues. These amendments will help the bill to get it right.

## FACTSHEETS

1	What you need to know
2	Alcohol pricing
3	Alcohol advertising
4	Alcohol availability
5	Drink driving
6	Mythbusting the alcohol industry
→	<a href="http://drugfoundation.org.nz/alcohol-reform">drugfoundation.org.nz/alcohol-reform</a>

# Let's get it right

“ Unless a comprehensive approach is taken to addressing the problems that alcohol poses for New Zealand society, those problems will not be solved. ”

Sir Geoffrey Palmer

## FAST FACTS



# 20

THE NUMBER OF YEARS WE HAVE BEEN RELAXING LIQUOR LAWS



# 1,000

NEW ZEALANDERS DIE DUE TO ALCOHOL EVERY YEAR



# 785,000

NEW ZEALANDERS WHO ARE CATEGORISED AS BINGE DRINKERS



# \$150 million

THE AMOUNT THE LIQUOR INDUSTRY SPENDS ON MARKETING AND ADVERTISING EVERY YEAR IN NEW ZEALAND



# \$4.4 billion

THE COST OF ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM TO NEW ZEALAND EVERY YEAR

## ABOUT US



The New Zealand Drug Foundation has long been interested in how the law governing the sale and supply of alcohol could be strengthened to reduce alcohol-related harm and create a healthier drinking culture in New Zealand.

We provide leadership and representation of our nationwide membership of organisations and individuals working on alcohol and other drug issues.

This factsheet is one of a number we have developed as part of a toolkit to support Members of Parliament, the media, communities and individuals to engage in evidence-based discussion on the Alcohol Reform Bill.

## Let's get it right

## CONTACT

**E** [info@drugfoundation.org.nz](mailto:info@drugfoundation.org.nz)

**P** +64 4 801 6303

**F** [facebook.com/NZDrugFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/NZDrugFoundation)

**T** [twitter.com/nzdrug](https://twitter.com/nzdrug)