

**Supplementary
Submission
No 4a**

PROVISION OF ALCOHOL TO MINORS

Organisation: Broken Hill Community Drug Action Team & Barrier Liquor
Accord

Name: Dr Margaret Lesjak

Date Received: 4/07/2013

The Committee Manager
Social Policy committee
Parliament House
Sydney

Broken Hill Community Drug Action Team &
Barrier Liquor Accord

4 July 2013

Provision of alcohol to minors: Discussion paper

The Broken Hill CDAT and Barrier Liquor Accord have considered the discussion paper on the provision of alcohol to minors. The two groups wondered why there is a difference in the laws between supplying tobacco/ cigarettes to a minor and supplying alcohol to a minor? Both are legal, freely available drugs for adults with known long term negative outcomes from (over) use, abuse. Alcohol also can have acute negative outcomes.

The CDAT and BLA members think it appropriate to compare and model the law dealing with supply of alcohol to minors with the law for selling to or purchasing tobacco for minors. That is sections 22 and 23 of Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008.

Therefore both groups still believe that the Liquor Act be amended so that supply to those under 18 years is not allowed. By making it illegal to supply alcohol to minors including their children it empowers parents and gives them an out as it's against the law.

In addition police still have discretion as to whether they would proceed with any further action/ charges as they do at present. This would probably mean that the cultural factors and parents' choice to allow their children responsible alcohol consumption (as per NHMRC guidelines) would still be possible.

If on the other hand it is felt that supply by parents or guardians should still be permissible then the amended Act should clearly define what is and isn't allowed. The advertisement states 'Supply means Supply' not except for this, that and the other circumstance. So the law should be as clear as and reflect the ad.

At what age might a parent supply? CDAT and BLA think that this should follow on from NHMRC guidelines and only those aged over 15 can legally be supplied with alcohol. As two drinks is the recommended amount for adults this should apply for minors.

The rural experience is that most parents aren't drunk when supplying alcohol as they give it to their child to take to a party in the hope they won't drink more than, or something other than, what they supply. However this means that controlling what your child actually drinks is limited. Requiring the responsible supervision by the adult will probably not suit either teenager or adult in many cases and lead to more covert drinking.

As well rural teenage friendships can involve a greater age range than in cities, so it is common for a 16 year old to be friends with a 21 year old, especially through sport. So education must focus not only on parents/ guardians but on all those who may supply a minor with alcohol because they themselves are adults.

The last consideration that CDAT and BLA feel has not been addressed is how the present and proposed changes to Liquor Act align with the Child Protection Act?

Margaret Lesjak on behalf of the Broken Hill CDAT and the Barrier Liquor Accord.