

**Submission  
No 30**

**INQUIRY INTO STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL  
ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW**

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**Date received:** 1/03/2013

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22 February 2012

The Chair  
Mr Niall Blair MLC  
Social Issues Committee

Dear Sir

#### ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

I ask that your Committee consider some points that I would like to put forward.

The granting of liquor licences has become too easy. In earlier times, the Licensing Reduction Board was the authority that considered an application for a new licence.

Consideration should be given to using breath analysis as the basis for testing for the illegal consumption of alcohol rather than possession. Sanctions that are acceptable to the broader community should be adopted so that it is clear to our young that underage drinking is illegal and not tolerated. At the same time, this would support the position of the parents who are making the effort to protect their children.

- a. Advertising of alcohol is to increase consumption of grams of alcohol and in particular to induct our young to alcohol use. That is a section of society where market growth can be achieved.

It is obvious, I believe, that the increased problems of alcohol and our young needs to be addressed.

Currently, alcohol advertising is tax deductible. I suggest that the Committee give consideration to asking the relevant governments to cease to grant that concession. The current concession effectively subsidises degrading the health of the state and nation.

Price advertising should not be allowed.

Advertising associated with sport should not be allowed.

- b. I have attended a Drug and Alcohol Lecture delivered by Paul Dillon under a Federal Grant given in a NSW school. Nowhere in that lecture did I hear anything that told the young that there was any sanction against them for possessing alcohol. However, they were told it was wrong for someone (other than parents) to supply them with alcohol. Therefore, the advice centred on drinking with friends, getting Mum or Dad to pick them if in trouble. Hardly HARM MINIMISATION; certainly not HARM PREVENTION. I would suggest that current policy is too humble in its aim. The policy should be HARM PREVENTION backed by Compliance and Enforcement.

- c. Consumption of alcohol or arriving at work under the influence is out of place and workplace testing should be available to both the employer and employees.
- d. The Parliament of NSW deserves great credit for the current breath-testing programme in NSW. I was driving in the years before the programme was introduced. I believe there are positions where tests are not performed. Perhaps it is time to revisit that policy.
- e. The old DRUNK AND DISORDERLY charge should be re-instated with provision of a BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL as evidence of an offence. This level could be set by Parliament after community consideration. This would give clear guidance to the police and the courts, and, I would suggest, clear the streets and licensed venues of the major offenders.
- f. People who have compromised health, because of alcohol abuse, could have to face a court hearing with the support of a Best Friend, and consideration given to them having to attend compulsory detox and long-term aftercare.
- g. Hours of trading need to be considered. Years ago we had six o'clock closing; today 5 am licences are common. When you consider that the half-life of alcohol is 4-6 hours, there is room to propose that 12 o'clock would be ample for our society.  
Pre-loading is a problem. Perhaps a licence should be required to satisfy himself that a person seeking admission is not incompetent. A breath test limit could be set to quantify the situation.  
A person who becomes drunk whilst in a licensed premise should become the responsibility of the licensee, not the police or the public. Such a person should be given shelter till sober. I think the licensee would have a great incentive to see that his staff applied responsible serving of alcohol guidelines.  
The police should sweep hotels etc on a regular basis to catch drug users and dealers.

I would be pleased to evidence to the Committee.

Yours faithfully

Phil O'Grady