

Engaging communities in local alcohol policy development

An example of community action in
Auckland, New Zealand

Angela Culpin, Auckland Regional Public Health Service
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Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Haurora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Waitemata and Counties Manukau

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New Zealand's drinking culture

3 in 5 drinkers consumed more than recommended guidelines for a single occasion in the past 12 months (Ministry of Health, 2013)

Hazardous drinking: 1 in 5 adults (Ministry of Health, 2013)

Risky drinking: Māori, Pacific and youth

67% of Aucklanders perceive alcohol and drugs to be a problem (ACNielsen, 2013)



Local alcohol policies



Recent changes to New Zealand's alcohol legislation have brought about the ability for local governments to make decisions with communities about the sale and supply of alcohol.

Through local alcohol policies communities may be able to:

- Introduce buffer zones
- Restrict outlet density
- Restrict opening hours
- Impose conditions eg one-way door policy



Why community mobilisation on local alcohol policies?

Strongest evidence for reducing harm

- Reduce accessibility of alcohol
 - Restrict opening hours
 - Reduce outlet density

(Babor et al, 2010).

Community mobilisation projects improve community

- Discussion
- Cohesion
- Capacity

(Greenway & Witten, 2005).



Community characteristics

Strengths

Strong relationships and
community networks
Committed organisations
Key community champions
Local alcohol strategies
High level of concern
Knowledge of local issues

Barriers

Lack of capacity
Lack of time
Accepted culture of excessive
drinking
Other social issues perceived to
have a greater impact
No community coalition
Licensing Trust

(Auckland Regional Public Health Service, 2012)



Partnership building

Development of the Waitakere Community Action on Alcohol Policy coalition

Consisting of a wide range of organisations and community leaders including Police, transport, treatment services, youth organisations, Māori and Pacific leaders , anti-violence services, injury prevention and business associations



Community action on alcohol policy

Goal: To reduce alcohol-related harm through the creation of supportive environments, focusing on communities with the greatest needs

Objectives:

- Raise community support and awareness for a healthy alcohol policy
- Increase community capacity to actively participate in consultation and submissions
- Support collaborative partnerships to address alcohol harm
- Build evidence based practice

Community views

High public support for:

A regional cap or sinking lid

No more alcohol outlets within 200m of treatment services

Restricting alcohol advertising

2am maximum closing time

One-way door policy



Awareness raising

- Media advocacy
(local newspapers, radio)
- Attendance at community events
(interactive surveys, video interviews,
distribution of resources)
- Regional and local forums
- Visiting existing community networks



Capacity building

- Training community leaders on evidence based policy
- Media advocacy training
- Submission writing workshops
- Presentations to Councillors





Gathering the evidence

Concern over insufficient alcohol-related harm data at the local level

Sharing data sets between key agencies

Exploring opportunities to gather more local data

However, these issues also need to be addressed at regional and national levels





Outcomes so far

- Participants have increased knowledge and awareness of healthy alcohol policy
- Relationships strengthened between organisations and communities
- Stakeholders have a united voice regarding policy recommendations
- Coalition members consulted directly with policy-makers

Fun Police Strike at Wellington City Council

Saturday, 22 June 2013, 11:33 am

Press Release: [Affordable Wellington](#)

Fun Police Strike at Wellington City Council

Ineffective, punitive, anti-business and anti-fun. That's how Affordable Wellington Onslow-Western ward candidate Phil Howison describes the draft Local Alcohol Policy and draft Alcohol Management Strategy, which are set to force off-licenses to close at 9 pm, while also forcing bars outside a designated inner-city area to close earlier. "This policy will hurt local businesses and restrict the development of vibrant new entertainment areas outside the Courtenay-Cuba precinct, harming Wellington's reputation as a vibrant and colourful destination".

Phil Howison says that Council regulation is unlikely to bring about a change in drinking culture. "The focus should be on individuals setting their own positive social standards and people looking out for their mates. I urge residents and business owners who are concerned about the proposed changes to make their views known to the Council".



Learning

- Takes time to build relationships in the community
- Difficulty in keeping up momentum and enthusiasm
- Misperceptions around the impact of education
- Complexity of gathering local alcohol harm data
- Strong interest from the alcohol industry
- A passionate community development facilitator required
- Importance of key community champions

The impact of community mobilisation is far reaching and wider than just policy change.



Community mobilisation contributes to community wellbeing through empowering communities and enhancing self-determination.

References

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