

Make your submission

In a democracy, Government often seeks public submissions on proposed law changes. **Parliament is currently receiving submissions on the Alcohol Law Reform Bill until 1 Feb 2011.**

If you're concerned about the harm that alcohol is causing in our communities, The Salvation Army encourages you to make a submission on this Bill. A copy of the Bill is available on Parliament's website, www.parliament.net.nz

1 **Submissions need to be in written form.** There is no set format for submissions, but you should state as clearly and briefly as possible each of the parts of the Bill you wish to comment on, what you wish to see changed or not changed, and why you either want these changes or why you support that part of the Bill.

2 **Submissions should be headed 'Alcohol Law Reform' and addressed to the Justice and Electoral Committee, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.** You can send your submission electronically through Parliament's website or through the post to Parliament Buildings, Wellington. No stamp is necessary for mail to Parliament.

3 **You can also ask to make a verbal submission to reinforce your written submission.** This will involve travelling (at your own expense) to meet with the committee. Normally, Parliament's committees only sit in Wellington, but if enough people want to be heard then the committee may travel to main cities to hold hearings.

- The Salvation Army encourages people to make a verbal submission, or to indicate that they want such an opportunity.

4 **You may like to consider making the following points in your submission:**

- maintaining the closure of liquor outlets on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day and ANZAC Day until 1 pm
- prohibiting the sale of alcohol through dairies and small grocery stores and continuing the prohibition of the sale of spirit-based drinks from supermarkets
- dropping the legal blood alcohol limit for drivers from 80 to 50 mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood
- imposing maximum trading hours of 9 am to 10 pm for off-licence premises and 9 am to 4 am for on-licence premises
- banning all promotion and marketing of alcohol except for printed material that objectively describes the product
- raising the price of alcohol through increases in excise taxes
- increasing funding for drug and alcohol addiction treatment programmes to offer more opportunities for people to deal with their drinking problems

5 **Submissions close on 1 February 2011, so have your say before then.**

For further help or advice, contact the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit, p: (04) 802 6261 or e: social_policy@nzf.salvationarmy.org.

The pamphlet has been produced by **The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit**, PO Box 76075, Manukau City. It is authorised by Commissioner Donald C. Bell, Territorial Commander of the New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory.

www.salvationarmy.org.nz/socialpolicy

Have your say on alcohol law reform



A guide to **understanding and making a submission** to the Government's proposed Alcohol Law Reform Bill

Changing laws and changing our drinking culture

New Zealand's alcohol laws are put in terms of individual rights and responsibilities. The idea is that people should have broad opportunities to purchase alcohol and that business and the market should largely determine how and where liquor is sold; with the damage done by harmful drinking a matter of personal choice.

But the damage done by harmful drinking is not just a personal matter. Drinking harms families and communities through violence, road accidents and crime. Over 70,000 alcohol-related physical and sexual assaults each year and a third of all police apprehensions involve alcohol.

A further problem is that tougher laws, designed to increase the penalties for people who drink irresponsibly and go on to commit violence and other crime, are simply not working.

The Salvation Army believes that the laws regulating the supply and sale of liquor should not be focused purely on individual rights and responsibilities, but that they should also be about social rights and responsibilities.

Communities should be able to stop and even turn back the scourge of neighbourhood liquor stores and late-night bars where these are likely to cause harm. We should also be able to see greater controls over how alcohol is marketed, because the liquor and retail industries have shown that they cannot be socially responsible.

But law changes are not enough. Reducing the harm alcohol abuse and dependency is causing is not just a matter of minor law changes; it is an issue of **cultural change**. The opportunity to promote such cultural change is being largely ignored in the changes proposed in the Alcohol Law Reform Bill.

New Zealand has a pervasive culture of drinking to excess. Around 25% of drinkers (700,000 New Zealanders) typically drink large quantities when they drink. Such high rates of drinking cause harm to drinkers and the people their actions impact. Any new laws must help to reduce the incidence of intoxication and binge drinking in our society.

Parliament is now receiving public submissions on this Bill. The deadline for submissions is 1 February 2011.

By making a submission, you can remind MPs that significant cultural change is required and help reshape the laws and policies to support that change. This brochure will help you to make your submission.

What the Alcohol Reform Bill does and doesn't do

WHAT IS IN THE BILL

The Bill aims to:

- ♦ stop the off-licence sale of alcohol from dairies and small grocery stores with a floor area of less than 1000m²
- ♦ provide stronger grounds for refusing to issue or to renew a licence to sell liquor, especially where there is evidence of potential harm to the local community

- ♦ split the alcohol-buying age by increasing the age at which people can purchase alcohol at an off-licence (such as a supermarket or bottle store) to 20, but leaving the purchase age at 18 for on-licence premises such as bars and clubs
- ♦ set maximum trading hours for liquor businesses which are 8 am to 4 am for on-licence premises and 7 am until 11 pm for off-licence premises; closure of most outlets on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas and until 1pm on ANZAC Day continues
- ♦ maintain the present restrictions that allow supermarkets to sell only beer and wine
- ♦ allow for local councils to create a local alcohol policy that might be influential in future licensing decisions around the location and trading hours of liquor outlets
- ♦ provide for harsher penalties for irresponsible promotion of alcohol and for supplying alcohol to minors without their parents'/guardians' consent

While The Salvation Army believes that the Government could do a great deal more to reduce alcohol related harm, we support all these positive changes in the Bill and encourage people to offer their support for them.

WHAT IS NOT IN THE BILL

Either through this Bill or through other law changes, the Government has failed to address the following recommendations of the Law Commission, which are fully supported by The Salvation Army:

- ♦ reducing the legal blood alcohol limit from 80 to 50 mg of alcohol to 100ml of blood
- ♦ increased availability of alcohol treatment programmes
- ♦ greater enforcement of the law so that it acts as a deterrent
- ♦ severe limitations to how alcohol is marketed and promoted
- ♦ setting minimum prices and raising alcohol excise taxes
- ♦ shorter trading hours: 9 am to 10 pm for off-licence premises and 9 am to 4 am for on-licence premises

More Information: Helpful Websites

Alcohol Healthwatch provides a valuable set of resources and links: www.ahw.org.nz

The Alcohol Advisory Council provides resources and copies of the 'ALAC Alcohol Monitor: Drinking Behaviours Report': www.alac.org.nz

The Law Commission's report 'Alcohol in Our Lives: Curbing the Harm' and recommendations: www.lawcom.govt.nz

The Alcohol Law Reform Bill can be read at Parliament's website: www.parliament.nz

The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit has produced material outlining the main issues at stake in the Alcohol Law Reform Bill. This material and the Army's full submission to the Bill are online at www.salvationarmy.org.nz/socialpolicy. We can email or post info on request.