

Tax Working Group Public Submissions Information Release

Release Document

September 2018

taxworkinggroup.govt.nz/key-documents

Key to sections of the Official Information Act 1982 under which information has been withheld.

Certain information in this document has been withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- [1] 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people;
- [2] 9(2)(k) - to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.

Where information has been withheld, a numbered reference to the applicable section of the Official Information Act has been made, as listed above. For example, a [1] appearing where information has been withheld in a release document refers to section 9(2)(a).

In preparing this Information Release, the Treasury has considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

Submission to the
TAX WORKING GROUP

30th Apr 2018

Tania Scott
Health Promoter
Ashburton Alcohol and Drug Service (ACADS)

[1]

ACADS is a community based NGO established in 1998 by a group of local community members concerned about the lack of Alcohol & Drug Services in the Ashburton district. ACADS is governed by a voluntary community board of directors who are elected at the ACADS AGM.

ACADS purpose is to provide services that empower individuals and groups in our community to increase their knowledge and control over the quality of their physical health, mental health and social well-being by reducing the harms caused by alcohol consumption. We achieve this by being responsive to both individual and community needs, and by providing quality, current, and evidence-based health interventions. Our services include clinical support to individuals as well as health promotion, with both a regulatory officer and a cultural change officer. My role within ACADS is to promote healthy drinking cultures through community action and networking strategies.

I do not wish to speak to my submission before the committee

We support the Tax Working Group's review seeking to identify a fair tax system that positively impacts on the well-being of all New Zealanders. We appreciate that such interventions have a significant impact on lifestyle choices and can only be undertaken at a national level.

We believe that the current approach to alcohol excise tax in New Zealand is not fair for the majority of New Zealanders and does not reflect the efforts being made at a community level.

We strongly believe that increasing the price of alcohol will lead to a reduction in consumption and that the increase in revenue should be used to offset the social and personal harm that alcohol causes. The most effective way to do this would be to increase the excise tax and increase the amount of funding for prevention and treatment services.

Our community puts significant effort into reducing and controlling the amount of harm alcohol causes; we fund and run community action campaigns focused on reducing alcohol harm for individuals, we have a Local Alcohol Policy and we have bylaws restricting the use of alcohol in public places. Historically, the Ashburton community has supported policies that reduce the consumption of alcohol. We had a forty five year ban on the sale of alcohol in our district and then fought for fifteen years to keep alcohol out of our local supermarkets. The Ashburton District Council *Residents Survey* consistently shows that the over accessibility of alcohol is a concern to the people who live in our community. Our local health and wellbeing service providers continue to highlight hazardous drinking as an underlying cause of harm for individuals and their families. National and International research is emerging on the causative link between alcohol consumption and the chronic preventable illnesses that are such a cost for our nation.

We recommend that the tax working group support New Zealand community efforts to control the over consumption of alcohol by increasing alcohol excise rates by at least 50% across all alcohol products. In addition, we recommend that the alcohol excise levy to the Health Promotion Agency be increased to allow for more local alcohol research to be undertaken. This will lead to better informed policy decisions and more consistent public health interventions.

Yours Sincerely
Tania Scott
Health Promoter
ASHBURTON Alcohol and Drug Service