

LAUNCH

A national series of public meetings on the topic "Ten things the alcohol industry won't tell you about alcohol" will be undertaken by Doug Sellman, Professor of Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, during September, October and November 2009. The first of these presentations will be given at the annual national addiction treatment conference, "Cutting Edge", to be held this year at Te Papa, Wellington, September 10-11, 2009.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

1. Support the launch by attending the Ten Things lecture closest to you and encourage friends, neighbours, colleagues and family to attend as well
2. Sign up to be part of the national group
3. Promote the website, www.alcoholaction.co.nz
4. Promote discussion of the 5 + Solution to friends, neighbours, colleagues and family
5. Think of ways to support Alcohol Action through groups you belong to such as meetings, public statements, invited speakers, submissions, lobbying, giving money etc
6. Together with friends and colleagues, form a local Alcohol Action group to promote "the 5 + solution to a national alcohol crisis" in your area
7. Contact us and offer your own special skills and/or time
8. Write a personal submission to the Law Commission's review of the liquor laws based on the 5 + Solution as well as other submission opportunities such as Parliamentary Select Committees, local and national politicians. Contact us if you need help
9. Submit some clever, informative Letters to the Editor of your local newspaper or other publications
10. Suggest other ideas, contacts or resources that would help promote Alcohol Action.

MEDIA SPOKESPEOPLE

Dr Geoffrey Robinson, Wellington
Professor Doug Sellman, Christchurch
Dr Jennie Connor, Dunedin
Professor Rod Jackson, Auckland

HOW TO CONTACT US

We are keen to hear from you.
Email us: contact@alcoholaction.co.nz
Write to us: PO Box 443, Christchurch 8140

WWW.ALCOHOLACTION.CO.NZ

www.alcoholaction.co.nz is the website where you will find everything about the campaign, including the full itinerary of the national lecture series and the 32 references in this pamphlet.

TEN THINGS THE ALCOHOL INDUSTRY WON'T TELL YOU ABOUT ALCOHOL

www.alcoholaction.co.nz

ALCOHOL ACTION NZ

This is a national group of people in New Zealand responding to the excessive presence of alcohol and the enormous social, medical and personal damage alcohol misuse is inflicting on our society.

The initiative began with a small working group in the field of addiction treatment but soon involved public health experts and has quickly grown to include colleagues in health and medical services, social services, councils, churches, iwi, schools and other groups who are dealing with the negative impacts of alcohol on a daily basis. The national group is now being joined by increasing numbers of concerned New Zealanders who want a change in the way alcohol is supplied, marketed, sold and consumed in New Zealand.

The majority of us enjoy drinking alcohol but all are alarmed about the way alcohol dominates many social situations and the scale of unhealthy and dangerous drinking in contemporary New Zealand - a crisis that enriches the liquor industry while causing immense harm to individuals and society as a whole.

NATIONAL CRISIS

A national alcohol crisis is under-recognised because we have become numb by the unrelenting presence of alcohol-related problems. This crisis has become our way of life:

- 25% of New Zealand drinkers are heavy drinkers [1]
- A third of all police apprehensions involve alcohol [2]
- Half of serious violent crimes relate to alcohol [2]
- 60 different medical conditions caused by heavy drinking [3]
- Up to 75% of adult presentations at Emergency Departments on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights are alcohol-related [4]
- Over 300 alcohol-related offences every day [2]
- Over 500 serious and fatal injury traffic crashes every year [5]
- At least 600 children born each year with FASD [6]
- Over 1000 alcohol deaths every year [7]
- More than 17,000 years of life per year lost through alcohol [7]

But figures and statistics such as these do not adequately capture the misery, pain and loss that many New Zealand families suffer as a result of excessive alcohol use. However, they go some way in describing the awkward truth - alcohol is causing immense damage to our society.

WHAT IS CAUSING THE CRISIS?

Excessive commercialisation, including aggressive marketing by large multinational liquor companies, is a key driver of the national alcohol crisis in New Zealand. However, information about alcohol that consumers have the right to know and that the Government would factor into its responses to the national alcohol crisis is being kept very quiet by the alcohol industry [8].

TEN THINGS THE ALCOHOL INDUSTRY WON'T TELL YOU ABOUT ALCOHOL

1. Alcohol is a highly intoxicating drug which is fairly easy to overdose on [9, 10, 11]
2. Alcohol can cause brain damage [12, 13, 14]
3. Alcohol causes aggression [15, 16]
4. Alcohol is fattening in moderate drinkers [17, 18, 19]
5. Alcohol can cause cancer [20, 21, 22, 23]
6. Alcohol cardio-protection has been talked up [24, 25]
7. The alcohol industry actively markets alcohol to young people [26]
8. Low risk drinking means drinking low amounts of alcohol [27]
9. A lot of the alcohol industry's profit comes from heavy drinking [28, 29, 30]
10. There is a solution to the national alcohol crisis: "The 5+ Solution".

THE 5+ SOLUTION

Unfortunately, education campaigns alone and the hope that individuals will spontaneously begin to act with more self-responsibility have not been shown to be effective strategies. Effective regulation is needed to turn the tide of New Zealand's harmful drinking culture. The 5+ Solution is a set of policy directives which are a real solution to the national alcohol crisis:

1. Raise alcohol prices
2. Raise the purchase age
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility
4. Reduce marketing and advertising
5. Increase drink-driving counter-measures

PLUS: Increase treatment opportunities for heavy drinkers.

These are based on the internationally acclaimed, World Health Organisation sponsored, publication "Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity" written by fifteen of the top alcohol and public health scientists in the world [31]. It has recently been further endorsed by a paper in the leading medical journal The Lancet [32].

The crisis will be over when alcohol is positioned in the middle-ground between excessive commercialisation of alcohol that exists at present and the equally extreme position of prohibition of alcohol. New Zealand will then be a safer and healthier society.

