

Press Release From Doug Sellman

Law Commission Report on Alcohol

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A brighter future for ordinary New Zealanders

The final report of the Law Commission released today sets the scene for a truly brighter future for ordinary New Zealanders.

Professor Doug Sellman, Director of the National Addiction Centre, described the final report as a “tour de force”, which is likely to guide major change to the way alcohol is supplied, marketed and sold over the next few years. The heavy drinking culture is going to be brought under much greater control and gradually dismantled.

The brighter future consists of improved physical and mental health for the 700,000 heavy drinking New Zealanders whose drinking will reduce, but even more importantly, it consists of greater safety for everyone from alcohol collateral damage.

“The Law Commission is to be congratulated for such a courageous stand for rationality and evidence against some of the fiercest lobbying in the country – the lobbying of the alcohol industry including the alcohol advertising industry” said Professor Sellman.

The starting point for the appropriate evidence-based recommendations in the report is recognition that alcohol is a drug which has the potential for great harm.

The cost of heavy drinking in New Zealand runs into the billions of dollars the majority of which is picked up by ordinary taxpaying New Zealanders. The brighter future this report will usher in also consists of a reduction in the economic burden of alcohol-related damage on ordinary New Zealanders.

Of particular importance in the report is the move against the deceptive marketing and advertising of alcohol. Like tobacco smoking, heavy drinking does not make people cool, glamorous and successful. Heavy drinking makes people ugly.