



Newtown Residents' Association

PO Box 7316 Newtown Wellington 6242

newtownwellington@gmail.com

30 July 2013

SUBMISSION ON LOCAL ALCOHOL POLICY

The Newtown Resident's Association has previously made a very full submission at an earlier stage in the consultation process. As a result this submission simply focuses briefly on the 3 key issues in the proposed policy that relate to our suburb.

Off Licence Trading Hours

The proposal in the draft policy is consistent with our earlier submission and is strongly supported. Shorter hours of supply will also have health benefits for moderate drinkers.

Trigger for Hearings on Licence Applications

We are a community with strong views on the harm caused by over promotion and over supply of alcohol to vulnerable members of society. Newtown has a history of activism in relation to liquor licence applications in our part of town. We are very pleased with the proposal for a lower threshold for the holding of hearings on applications in the Southern suburbs.

Midnight Closing for Suburban Bars

We note that while several local bars currently have licences allowing later than midnight opening they tend to not do so regularly. This proposal attracted mixed reactions at our most recent meeting. While some members were comfortable with the proposal, others were not.

Those who were not expressed two different sorts of concerns. The first was along the lines that if our young people were going to be drinking past midnight they were going to be safer doing locally than downtown. Related to this was the thought that the midnight closing might lead to a midnight migration of people who had already been drinking on to the

central city, when left where they are, if they could have stayed later, they would have completed their night out locally and simply gone home.

The second group of concerns is more focused on the possible effect on the emergence of our local performance and entertainment scene. Several Newtown Bars have started hosting live shows and in addition there are performance events at non-licensed venues such as the Newtown Community and Cultural Centre and Dom Polski which often have an “after match” gathering at a local bar.

The occasions when local bars open past midnight are often in association with performance events. Locals value the emergence of our local entertainment and performance scene and some are concerned that the loss of the ability of local bars to open past midnight will limit this. The concern has been expressed that the introduction of midnight closing for suburban bars looks suspiciously like a move to protect the proprietor of the Courtney place booze barns from the threat of competition from the emergence of a more civilised suburban entertainment scene.

In partnership with WCC Community Services and WCC City Events our Residents’ Association has invested thousands of hours over many years fostering local talent and developing a creative performance culture in our suburb. We believe Newtown’s licensed premises have a responsible role to play in hosting aspects of this.

The Local Alcohol Policy is an important initiative, and contains points our Newtown Residents’ Association strongly supports. We have strong views on the over promotion and over supply of alcohol to vulnerable members of society. Our comments here are summarised from a wide range of members’ experiences and concerns.

We would like to be heard in support of this succinct submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me at martin.hanley@vuw.ac.nz, or on 389 7316 if you would like our Association to provide more detail on our grass roots local experience of this important social issue.

Yours sincerely



Martin Hanley
President
Newtown Residents’ Association