



14 May 2026

## Submission on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill

The Newtown Residents' Association has been an Incorporated Society since July 1963. We are concerned with maintaining and improving our area's liveability, connectedness and sustainability and working to make our community a thriving, diverse, great place to live. We regularly consult on a range of issues affecting the people who live, work and play in Newtown.

There are some proposals in this Amendment Bill that we would like to comment on.

### Ensuring that objections come from local communities

The current legislation says

*Any person may object to an application for the grant of a licence, whether as an individual or as a representative of a group or an organisation.*

And the amendments say

*A person may object to an application for the grant of a license only if the person certifies to the licensing committee, in the prescribed form and manner, that the person resides or has an office or a place of business –*

- (a) in the district of the licensing committee to which the application is made; or*
- (b) within 1kilometre of the premises to which the application relates.*

In principle we support the requirement for objections to come from the local community. However we query why the reference to objections coming from 'a representative of a group or an organisation' has been dropped? **We would like to see the reference to groups and organisations reinstated.**

Newtown is a diverse community with a vibrant hospitality sector. We generally support these local businesses. However occasionally there have been applications for licences to sell alcohol in our area which the local residents have objected to on the grounds that "the amenity and good order of the locality would be likely to be reduced, to more than a minor extent, by the effects of the issue of the licence" – as specified in the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 S105 (1) (h). On these occasions we have supported the local residents by formally objecting to the application.

We assume that we can continue to do this, and that as we are only likely to be responding to license applications in our local community we won't be disadvantaged by the amendment and we will still be able to make objections when we consider this is justified.

However there are other organisations active in our community who aren't necessarily based here. **We recommend that when an organisation is working to promote the well being of members of a community they should be able to object to license applications in that community regardless of the location of their registered office.**

### The right to respond to objections

We agree with inserting these additions to the legislation, the right to reply is appropriate. We agree that the reply should be in writing. There is no explicit provision made for sharing the reply with the objector and we recommend that this be added.

## **Requirements to supply low-alcohol or similar drinks**

The summary of the Bill's proposals says that it will allow club and on-licensed premises to stock zero-alcohol drinks instead of, or in addition to, low-alcohol drinks and licensed supermarkets and grocery stores to display and promote an area for zero-alcohol alternatives. The current legislation already requires the provision of low alcohol drinks, and this extends this to include the zero alcohol drinks that are now available, which is a practical and positive proposal.

The amendment to Section 51 also clarifies that there must be non-alcoholic drinks available on licensed premises in addition to the low or no alcohol drinks that are also required. We support this requirement. We would definitely not support any suggestion that zero alcohol drinks could be sold instead of other non-alcoholic soft drinks.

## **Hairdressing shops permitted to supply alcohol in certain circumstances**

We object to this proposal, which normalises consuming alcohol in non-hospitality settings. If this amendment was passed it could lead to pressure for all hairdressers to provide this service. This could impact providers and customers who want to stay away from alcohol, either because of religious restrictions or because of personal views and possible vulnerability. In addition it would undermine broader public health goals to reduce alcohol visibility and availability.

## **Certain restaurants permitted to hold off-licence**

We agree that restaurants that have an on license and also sell food and beverages to take away should also be allowed an off license. We have local examples demonstrating that the current arrangements that businesses have to make in order to separate the two parts of the business to hold two licences are unnecessarily onerous.

## **Clarifying responsibilities for rapid delivery services to reduce the risk of delivery to intoxicated and under-age people**

We definitely support ensuring that no alcohol is delivered or received by a person who is under age or intoxicated. The mechanisms for monitoring this probably need more work.

**Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.**

**Merio Marsters**

**President**

**Newtown Residents' Association**