

19 March 2021

Re: Salvation Army response to Minister Fa’aoi’s comments in the media (Newsroom article)

Tena koe and Taloha ni Minister Fa’aoi

The Salvation Army wishes to acknowledge and support your comments on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act noted in a **Newsroom article on 08 March 2021ⁱ**. We fully and **strongly support your intention to review this Act** and ensure that it is fit for purpose and operates effectively, particularly for our communities. In our view, this Act is not working effectively, especially in terms of minimising harm and hazardous drinking behaviour in families and our local communities.

Alcohol advocacy and reform has been a critical part of our mission to **care for people, transform lives and reform society by God’s power**. For example, in our 14th State of the Nation report released in February, ***Disturbed Present. Better Future?*** we highlighted the following alcohol trends:

- Increases in hazardous drinking behaviour in the total population, men, Māori, and Pasifika.
- Estimated that one in five adults, or 838,000 New Zealanders, drink alcohol hazardously.
- Young people aged 15 to 17 years drinking hazardously increased from 6.3 percent in 2018/19, to 11.6 percent in 2019/20.
- Highest prevalence of hazardous drinking was among those aged 18 to 24 years, at 32.4%
- Māori were 1.8 times as likely to be hazardous drinkers as non-Māori.

Furthermore, through our national network of **Bridge alcohol treatment services and Recovery Churches**, we see daily the damaging impacts and harms of alcohol in families and communities. Harm from alcohol is directly interlinked with many of the other social issues we see amongst whanau using our services, particularly financial hardship, food insecurity, family violence, other drug addictions and others. The object of the Act is focussed on minimising harm and enforcing safe and responsible consumption. In our view based on the national statistics outlined above *and* the realities of those people using our various alcohol and drug support services around the country every day, these objectives are not being met, particularly around alcohol advertising, Local Alcohol Plans, tax excise and other key aspects.

In that context Minister, we **urge you to establish this formal review of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act as soon as possible. Urgent reforms are needed**. We also note that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission’s Interim Report, ***He Ara Oranga – Manuka takoto, kawea akeⁱⁱ***, highlighted alcohol reforms in their recommendations. Furthermore, The Salvation Army strongly supports the **5+ Solutionⁱⁱⁱ** proposed by Alcohol Action which Effective regulation is needed to turn the tide of New Zealand’s harmful drinking culture. We affirm that this 5+ Solution is a set of policy directives which are a real solution to the national alcohol crisis, focussed on marketing, price, accessibility, age of purchase and drink driving.

These reforms and policy ideas are aligned with many of the alcohol reforms The Salvation Army has advocated for over many years through our Bridge services, Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit advocacy, and numerous submissions and reports we have made to the government on these issues. **A comprehensive review of the Act, coupled with strong monitoring and enforcement, are the foundation steps to how government can fix these numerous problems**. The drinking culture we

have and actively promote creates serious harm for so many people and whanau. This culture is exacerbated through loose promotion and advertising at events and alcohol outlets. And then the harm from this culture is what we see daily through services and community ministry centres across the country.

Thank you for reading through this letter Minister Fa'aoi. We are happy to answer any questions you might have about these issues and we welcome any ongoing discussion with you and your ministry on these matters, particularly as you initiate the review process for the Act. We look forward to your response to this letter Minister.

Ma te Atua e manaaki and Fakafetai,

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ⁱ <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/targeting-irresponsible-alcohol-promos>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.mhwc.govt.nz/the-initial-commission/progress-reporting/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://alcoholaction.co.nz/the-5-solution/>