

Submission to the Social Services Committee on the Sale of Liquor (Objections to Applications) Amendment Bill (230)

1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 46 nationally organised societies and national members. It has 26 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of these societies and 150 other organisations and individual members. The function of NCWNZ is to work for the well-being of women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action.
2. Unfortunately, we did not have the time to fully canvas our members on this Bill because of the tight time frame. However, for over 112 years the National Council of Women of New Zealand has been very concerned at the availability of alcohol in the community. We have always argued for strong controls on those who are given licences to sell alcohol whether it be from on-licence or off-licence premises. As an example a resolution passed in 1898 (19.1.6.1) states: 'That the Council (NCWNZ) urge upon the Government the necessity for better legislation in regard to the enforcement of the Liquor Laws.' This is still very pertinent today and remains a mainstay for our submission on this Bill.

Part 1 On-licences

3. **Clause 4, new Section 9A of the Sale of Liquor Act. Application for an on-licence to include evaluation of benefits and costs.**
 - (1) NCWNZ supports this section which requires (a) the applicant to carry out an evaluation of the likely social impact, including monetary and non-monetary costs, and reasons, on the area to which the application relates, and (b) the reasons given for the costs and impact of liquor consumption.
 - (2) As this evaluation has to be published at the same time as the application is made it will give clarity to the process.
4. We do have some concern regarding the way this clause may be carried out. Is the applicant required to employ an independent evaluator, or, as the wording implies, can the applicant complete the evaluation, which could allow for a definite bias? We would want to see an evaluation such as this carried out by an independent person who is qualified in analysing this type of information.
5. **Clause 5, (2). Objections.**

NCWNZ agrees that 20 working days is needed so that the persons objecting have time to carry out their own inquiry before they submit their objection.

6. **Clause 6 Criteria for on-licenses. Amendment to Section 13 (1)**

NCWNZ supports this clause and agrees that the material from the evaluation, and any new material that has arisen from objections relating to the impact of alcohol consumption on the wider community, needs to be taken into full consideration before the granting of an on-licence.

7. **Clause 7, New section 13A inserted.
New section of the Act 13A (1) (a) and (b)**

NCWNZ agrees that it is very important that when an application is opposed, that the Licensing Authority take into account whether there are reasonable grounds to justify an objector's claim.

13A (2) We support the proposal that the Authority may request further information to establish whether the objector is an affected party.

13A (3) We agree that anyone who tries to submit an objection without foundation or is not an affected party should have the application rejected without further consultation.

Part 2 Off-licences

8. Where the clauses for off-licences are the same as for on-licences NCWNZ would reply to these in the same way.
9. In addition we would see an even greater importance in **clause 8 new section 31A of the Sale of Liquor Act**. The need for an extensive evaluation should not be restricted to the physical and location requirements, (such as schools, churches etc) but also include the proximity to other off-licence premises. This could reduce the proliferation of off-licence establishments in low socio-economic areas. Since these small, independent, establishments have recently seen an increase in criminal activity, becoming the victims of fatal armed hold-ups, it is of even greater importance that all applications for such a licence be considered very carefully.
10. The members of NCWNZ would also like to know if this Bill applies to both new and renewal applications.
11. NCWNZ sees these amendments as a positive step in the granting of licences. We have throughout our long history supported strong legislation to control the sale and use of alcohol and would hope that this Bill might be another step toward that aim.

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