December 8, 2016

The Hon Marlene Kairouz MP
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Level 26
121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Minister

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the review of the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Victoria). This Review provides a valuable opportunity for the Victorian Government to implement evidence-based reforms to reduce alcohol harm.

I would like to offer my support to the submission prepared by the Alcohol Policy Coalition (APC). APC is a collaboration of health and allied agencies who share a concern about the level of alcohol misuse and the associated health and social consequences for the community.

Too many people are affected by alcohol harm in Victoria through assault, domestic violence, road crashes, and child maltreatment. In 2012-13, there were 7,744 emergency department presentations in Victoria in which alcohol was identified as a contributing factor. The rate of such presentations have increased by 58.6 per cent since 2003-04, from 8.7 per 100,000 to 13.8 per 100,000.

My research (attached) has highlighted the impact of increasing densities of liquor licences on family violence, assault and chronic disease. This research is supported by broad international evidence that controlling the availability of alcohol is an important way to reduce alcohol-related harm in the community. The current system provides few opportunities to curb the density of alcohol outlets, with objections to new licences largely rejected. The policy options outlined in the APC submission represent important steps towards a more balanced licensing system that would facilitate reductions in alcohol-related harm in Victoria.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these important issues with you.

Yours sincerely

Michael Livingston
Centre for Alcohol Policy Research
La Trobe University

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