

Evaluation of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project



An evaluation prepared for the Community Engagement
with Alcohol Licensing Project
by the Information Team
Community & Public Health, Canterbury DHB

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Te Pōari Hauora o Waitaha

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Contents

Executive summary	1
Background	3
The Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project	6
Evaluation methods	7
Evaluation purpose	7
Evaluation objectives	7
Evaluation questions.....	7
Evaluation Design.....	8
Key findings – survey highlights	10
Key findings – interviews	12
Conclusion.....	22
References	23
Appendix 1: Evaluation of Community engagement with alcohol licensing project survey.....	25
Appendix 2: ‘Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community’ letter	29

Executive summary

Community and Public Health (CPH, the public health division of the Canterbury District Health Board) initiated a formal project to engage with local communities in Christchurch and surrounding districts around higher risk¹ alcohol licence applications in 2015. The objectives of this Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project (in accordance with the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act, 2012) were: to increase community knowledge of higher risk alcohol licence applications in local neighbourhoods; to increase community knowledge of the processes involved and supports available to have a say in local licensing decisions; and to increase community skills in preparation for District Licensing Committee (DLC) hearings. The partners with the Canterbury DHB in the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project are primarily Community Law and Community Action on Youth and Drugs (CAYAD).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data for this evaluation. These methods comprised stakeholder interviews and an online survey of community contacts. Of the 34 respondents to the online survey, two thirds reported that they had received a 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licensing application in my community' letter (66%, n=21) and over one fifth (22%, n=7) had participated in a community engagement workshop about preparing for a District Licensing Committee hearing. All respondents who indicated that they had received the 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter agreed that the letter increased their knowledge about how to write an effective submission on alcohol licence applications. All respondents who had attended a community engagement workshop agreed that the workshop increased their knowledge of how to give effective evidence about higher risk alcohol licensing applications at DLC hearings. Similarly, all survey respondents agreed that for them personally, learning and being involved in local alcohol decisions had been valuable; and that for the community as a whole, being involved in local alcohol licensing decisions is valuable.

A number of factors indicated that the project had been successful, including: increased community participation in objecting to higher risk alcohol licensing applications compared to prior to the project; increased community knowledge of alcohol licensing applications; increased community knowledge of how to successfully object to alcohol licensing applications; and success at hearings (for applications where there had been community engagement with the project) including both withdrawal of the applicant prior to the DLC hearing and applications being declined. Reactions to the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project included satisfaction that the project had resulted in success and a sense of relief that communities had power to influence alcohol licensing decisions, *'communities have been given power to give good evidence which means that the DLC*

¹ Criteria for 'higher risk' licence applications are: NZ Deprivation Index 7-10; within 1 km of 'sensitive sites' (for example schools, social services, alcohol treatment centres); and suitability of the applicant. Other factors taken into consideration include: density of licensed premises within 1 km; nature of proposed premises (for example, off-licence, supermarket, restaurant, tavern); proposed hours of trade; nature of the locality (for example, residential, commercial).

have been empowered to make even better decisions because they've been presented with everything that needs to be presented to them.'

Interviews with key stakeholders indicated the following success factors for the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project: having a central person bringing together the key stakeholders; partnerships between key stakeholders; notification of applications to key contacts in the affected communities (with consistent information on how to oppose the application); workshops held by CPH and Community Law Canterbury to inform and educate the community on the submission process; and a focus on equity.

At the time of the initial key stakeholder interviews undertaken for this evaluation (late 2018) the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project was in transition in terms of its process. While CPH continues to notify key community contacts of higher risk licence applications, Community Law is now responsible for the associated workshops. The reasons for this change included that the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) had allocated funding to Community Law to provide the community engagement workshops in six pilot areas across the country. Follow up key stakeholder interviews in early 2019 indicated that the project had continued to be successful. For example, a number of interviewees expressed the view that there is now increased awareness within communities that they can successfully voice opposition to alcohol licence applications. However, some concerns were raised about current workshop content and it was suggested that the key stakeholders work together to develop agreed content for the workshops.

On the basis of the evaluation findings it is recommended that the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project considers:

- A continuing role for the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter in bringing together the key stakeholders for meetings, at least biannually
- That CPH continues to notify key community contacts of higher risk alcohol licensing applications
- That HPA and key stakeholders, including Community Law, CPH and CAYAD work together to agree on workshop content
- That the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter works together with key stakeholders to develop further resources for communities, such as a database of community contacts
- That, with agreement from the project partners, CPH shares this report with regions, to inform work around community engagement with alcohol licensing.

Background

Alcohol harm

Alcohol consumption makes a significant contribution to the global burden of disease and to economic and social costs (Rehm et al., 2009). Alcohol consumption is associated with increased risk of injury, and in the longer-term, is associated with an increased risk of more than 60 types of diseases and conditions, including diabetes, gastro-intestinal conditions, heart and liver disease, a range of cancers, and mental and behavioural disorders.

Alcohol harm in New Zealand

An estimated 5.4% of all New Zealand deaths under 80 years of age were attributable to alcohol in 2007 (802 deaths) (Connor, Kydd, Shield, & Rehm, 2015). Overall, 43% of alcohol-related deaths were due to injuries, including unintentional injury deaths as well as intentional injury (predominantly suicide but also homicide). Thirty percent of alcohol-attributable deaths were from cancers, and 27% were from a variety of other chronic diseases and pneumonia. There were marked disparities in alcohol-attributable mortality by both sex and ethnicity.

Alcohol consumption was responsible for an estimated 4.2% of all cancer deaths under 80 years of age in 2007 in New Zealand (Connor, Kidd, MacLennan, Shield, & Rehm, 2017). This study concluded that alcohol is an important and modifiable cause of cancer, with the risk of cancer increasing with higher alcohol consumption, but no safe level of drinking.

The burden of alcohol on the health system is illustrated by a study across eight Emergency Departments in Australia and New Zealand, which found that almost one in ten (9.5%) presentations over a 7-day period were alcohol related (Egerton-Warburton et al., 2018). Similarly a point prevalence study across 106 Emergency Departments found that one in seven presentations (14.3%) at a high-alcohol time (2 a.m. on a Saturday) were alcohol related (Egerton-Warburton, Gosbell, Wadsworth, Fatovich, & Richardson, 2014).

Alcohol availability and harm reduction

The regulation of alcohol availability is a cost-effective policy option to reduce alcohol-related harm. Examples of evidence-based strategies to reduce the availability of alcohol include regulating the density of alcohol outlets (Campbell et al., 2009), and limiting the days and hours when alcohol sales are permitted (Hahn et al., 2010). The spatial distribution of alcohol outlets has been shown to be important in understanding the relationship between neighbourhood contexts and excessive alcohol consumption (Breetzke & Andresen, 2017).

An increase in alcohol outlet density is generally associated with a rise in a range of adverse outcomes in affected neighbourhoods including crime (Conrow, Aldstadt, & Mendoza, 2015), violence (Gruenewald & Remer, 2006), and suicide (Johnson, Gruenewald, & Remer, 2009). Conversely, a reduction in alcohol availability in neighbourhoods has been found to be associated with a significant reduction in exposure to violent crime (Zhang et al., 2015).

Equity

Where there is unequal access to treatment or other resources, the health and social consequences of a given level or pattern of drinking are likely to be more severe for those with fewer resources (Blas & Kurup, 2010). The literature suggests that the more vulnerabilities a person has, the more likely they are to develop alcohol problems (Schmidt, Mäkelä, Rehm, & Room, 2010). From a public health perspective, vulnerability indicates susceptibility to poor health or illness, which can be manifested through physical, mental and social outcomes, including alcohol-related problems. Vulnerable individuals are often at greater risk of having additional risk factors, for example, unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity and tobacco use (Blas & Kurup, 2010).

Surveys and mortality studies, particularly from the developed world, suggest that there are more drinkers, more drinking occasions and more drinkers with low-risk drinking patterns in higher socioeconomic groups, while abstainers are more common in the poorest social groups. However, people with lower socioeconomic status appear to be more vulnerable to tangible problems and consequences of alcohol consumption (Grittner, Kuntsche, Graham, & Bloomfield, 2012).

Findings in New Zealand are consistent with the international literature. For example, one study that analysed a national data set concluded that binge drinking varied by demographic and socioeconomic position in New Zealand (Jatrana, Carter, McKenzie, & Wilson, 2011). Binge drinking was defined as drinking more than eight (for men) or six (for women) standard drinks on one drinking occasion. Results of this study included: frequency of binge drinking generally increased as educational level declined and a clear gradient for increasing daily binge drinking frequency with each increment in area deprivation, as well as a similar pattern for individual-level deprivation.

There are differences in alcohol consumption patterns between Māori and non-Māori adults. The New Zealand Health Survey showed that Māori and non-Māori adults were equally likely to have consumed alcohol in the past year (RR 1.01, CI 0.98–1.04) (Ministry of Health, 2019). However, of those who had consumed alcohol in the past year, Māori were significantly more likely than non-Māori to have a hazardous alcohol drinking pattern (RR 1.62, CI 1.48–1.78) (Ministry of Health, 2019). Māori who were male and in younger age groups were more likely to be drinkers across a variety of time frames and more likely to be identified as risky drinkers (Muriwai, Huckle, & Romeo, 2018). Muriwai (2018) noted that measurements to be included in future Māori alcohol research should encompass values relevant to Māori. For example, some measurements related to potential protective factors against alcohol harm for Māori. Some of these may include aspects of cultural engagement and connection to whānau. Measurements relating to external influences such as experiences of racism could provide further insight behind the motivations of those identified as risky drinkers (Muriwai et al., 2018).

Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012

The Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 represents a shift from a liberal policy on licensing of liquor outlets to a stricter regime aimed to reduce the harm to the community from excessive consumption of alcohol, by young people in particular (Dormer & Sherriff, 2018). Local authorities are specifically empowered to adapt stronger local alcohol policies. The Act has five policy objectives, to:

- reduce excessive drinking by adults and young people;

- reduce the harm caused by alcohol use, including crime, disorder, public nuisance, and negative public health outcomes;
- support the sale and responsible sale, supply and consumption of alcohol;
- improve community input into local alcohol licensing decisions; and
- improve the operation of the alcohol licensing system.

The Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project

Community and Public Health (CPH) established a formal project to engage with local communities in Christchurch and surrounding districts around higher risk² alcohol licence applications in October 2015. The objectives (in accordance with the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012) of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project are:

1. to increase community knowledge of higher risk alcohol licence applications in local neighbourhoods;
2. to increase community knowledge of the processes involved and supports available to have a say in local licensing decisions; and
3. to increase community skills in preparation for District Licensing Committee hearings (e.g., to be cross examined, give evidence and ask questions).

Higher risk applications are identified by CPH alcohol licensing staff. Key local community contacts relevant to the application are then identified by CPH health promotion staff. Key contacts include: neighbourhood networks; residents associations; schools; early childhood centres; churches; social service organisations; alcohol and drug treatment services; Council Community Advisor staff; Councillors; Community Board Chairs and Deputies; Community Law; Community Action on Youth and Drugs (CAYAD). Any new list of the key contacts identified is sent through to the relevant Council's Community Advisors to determine any gaps. A letter is then sent to all identified key contacts by the CPH alcohol health promoter. The letter notifies of the application, the processes involved in making a submission, and sources of further information and supports.

The partners with Canterbury DHB in the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project are Community Law and CAYAD.

² Criteria for 'higher risk' licence applications are: NZ Deprivation Index 7-10; within 1 km of 'sensitive sites' (for example schools, social services, alcohol treatment centres); and suitability of the applicant. Other factors taken into consideration include: density of licensed premises within 1 km; nature of proposed premises (for example, off-licence, supermarket, restaurant, tavern); proposed hours of trade; nature of the locality (for example, residential, commercial).

Evaluation methods

Evaluation purpose

Information gathered in this evaluation will be used to inform and improve the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project. In addition this evaluation documents the process of developing and implementing the project.

Evaluation objectives

The objectives of this evaluation primarily focused on determining the impact of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project.

The objectives of the evaluation were:

1. To document the process of developing and implementing the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project.
2. To determine the impact of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project project, including:
 - a. the extent to which the project impacted on the level of community knowledge regarding higher risk alcohol licence applications;
 - b. the extent to which the project impacted on the level of community knowledge of processes involved and supports available for community submissions regarding applications, in accordance with the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act, 2012; and
 - c. the outcomes of applications that have had project involvement.

Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions were as follows:

For key stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project:

1. What was the process of implementing the project
 - a. What was the key stakeholder involvement in the development of the project?
 - b. Why was the project developed?
 - c. What was the timeline of project development?
2. What were the views of the key stakeholders of the success factors of implementing the project?
3. What were views of the key stakeholders of the impact of the project?
4. What did key stakeholders perceive as the challenges for the project?

Evaluation design

Mixed methods were used for data collection. These methods comprised qualitative interviews with key stakeholders (n=6) and community stakeholders (n=3) and an online survey of community contacts. Follow up interviews with key stakeholders (n=5) were also conducted. This evaluation was reviewed against the Health and Disability Ethics Committees' (HDEC) Scope of Review Form³. It was determined by the evaluation team that this evaluation was not within the scope of HDEC review.

Data from key stakeholders

Qualitative data collection methods were used to gather data from key stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they work well with an inductive approach when new and unknown information is being sought. Semi-structured interviews also make use of the flexibility of the qualitative research process as understandings that are developed early on can be carried forward into subsequent interviews, thereby drawing out more detail as new issues come to light (Green & Thorogood, 2014). The semi-structured interviews use open-ended questions based on areas of interest. Interviews also explore any other issues brought up by the interviewees. The data were coded and analysed using a systematic iterative thematic approach to identify recurring patterns (Green & Thorogood, 2014; Liamputtong, 2013; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000).

Key stakeholders and community participants were identified by the requestor of this evaluation. Interviews were conducted by the evaluator (a public health analyst from CPH).

Interviewees were as follows:

Key stakeholders, interviews conducted May – June 2018.

Anna Thorpe	Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health
Paula Williams	Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health
Helen Barbour	Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health
Simonette Boule	Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury
John Sullivan	Supervising Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury
Jen Ramsay	Licensing Inspector, Christchurch City Council

Community stakeholders (and workshop participants), interviews conducted September 2018

Diana McCoy	Spreydon Neighbourhood Network
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³ <https://ethics.health.govt.nz/applying-review/how-do-i-apply>

Sonya Hodder Spreydon Neighbourhood Network

Wayne Hawker Phillipstown Neighbourhood Network

The evaluator was informed in early 2019 that the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project had been in transition towards the end of 2018, with Community Law being granted funding to run workshops in six areas nationally, building on the process developed in Canterbury. To capture this transition, further interviews were conducted in February 2019 with five key stakeholders, some of whom had also been interviewed at the earlier time-point.

Follow up interviews with key stakeholders, interviews conducted February 2019

Anna Thorpe Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health

Paula Williams Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health

Helen Barbour Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health

Liz Gordon Co-ordinator Community Alcohol Project, Community Law Canterbury

Paul McMahon Senior project worker, Community Action on Youth and Drugs (CAYAD)

Quantitative data

A questionnaire was developed (Appendix 1) to explore the impact of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project with key community contacts. An email invitation to complete an online survey was forwarded by the evaluator in August 2018 to all community contacts who had been emailed a 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter in the previous three months.

Results

Key findings – survey highlights

Thirty four people responded to the email invitation to complete the online survey. The survey link was open between 9 August 2018 and 15 October 2018.

The majority of survey respondents were female (71%), and less than a third (29%) were male. Half of respondents were aged 60 and over (50%), over a third aged between 45-59 years (36%), and over one tenth were aged between 30 and 44 years old (14%). No respondents were aged 15-29 years.

Of the 34 respondents, two thirds reported that they had received a ‘Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licensing application in my community’ letter (66%, n=21) and over one fifth (22%, n=7) had participated in a community engagement workshop about preparing for a DLC hearing.

Respondents were asked, ‘Referring to the ‘Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community’ letter, please indicate any information that you learned from the letter (select all that apply)?’ The information option most commonly identified was learning about the application to establish a new bottle store (50%, n=12); followed by learning about the process of providing community feedback on the application to establish a bottle store (38%, n=9); learning how to lodge a submission (38%, n=9); and learning how to access free legal help (25%, n=6).

Respondents were asked, ‘Referring to the ‘Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community’ letter, please indicate any ways that you followed up on the information provided in the letter (select all that apply)?’ The most commonly identified forms of follow up was ‘I wrote and lodged a submission’ (41%, n=9); followed by ‘I passed on information to others to learn about the application to establish a bottle store in my community’ (36%, n=8); ‘I passed on to others about how to provide community feedback’ (27%, n=6); and I contacted Community Law Canterbury (9%, n=2).

All respondents who indicated that they had received the ‘Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community’ letter agreed that the letter (which included details about the proposed alcohol licence, rights of local residents, how to object to the application and where to get further information, see Appendix 2) increased their knowledge about how to write an effective submission on alcohol licence applications.

All respondents who indicated that they had attended a community engagement workshop agreed that the workshop increased their knowledge of how to give effective evidence about higher risk alcohol licensing applications at DLC hearings.

Respondents were asked to indicate what activities they had done as a result of receiving the ‘Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community’ letter or attending the community participation workshop (tick all that apply). The activities identified, from most to least common, were:

- I encouraged someone else to write and lodge a submission (52%, n=11)
- I wrote and lodged a submission (43%, n=9)
- I attended a DLC hearing (38%, n=8)
- I encouraged someone else to give evidence at a hearing (33%, n=7)
- I attended a community workshop (29%, n=6), and
- I gave evidence at a DLC hearing (19%, n=4).

All respondents agreed that for them personally, learning about and being involved in local alcohol decisions had been valuable. All respondents agreed that for the community as a whole, being involved in local alcohol licensing decisions was valuable.

Respondents were asked to comment in free text on what they liked most about receiving the letter 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community'. There were 16 responses to this question. Things that respondents liked about the letter included (with the most common response first) that it: empowered the community to be involved in the application process; kept the community informed; and educated the community about the process of lodging a submission. Some examples of comments follow.

'I like to know that I can have a say.'

'Empowering people to be involved.'

'The letter is excellent and gives all the relevant information in a nutshell. It also provides timely notice of an application.'

'It can keep us informed and up to date with something that is happening in our community that we may not be aware of otherwise.'

Respondents were asked to provide any suggestions for improving the 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter. There were 12 free text responses. Suggestions for improvement to the letter included:

- Develop a pamphlet that is easy to read for older people (such as making the type size 14 and font type Times New Roman) and deliver to all homes in the affected area
- Provide examples of submissions
- Provide a flowchart of the steps to lodging a submission and giving evidence, so that people know what to expect
- Provide a link to other groups who have already been through the process.

Key findings – interviews

Qualitative data were collected from five key stakeholders and three community participants. Key stakeholders and community participants were identified by the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project lead. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews between May and September 2018.

Motivation for developing and participating in the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project

Key stakeholders discussed their motivation for developing the community participation in alcohol licensing project, in particular the notification of alcohol licences and the workshop. Motivating factors included:

- wanting to engage communities in response to the 2012 Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act
- the belief that many factors are tilted against the Submitters, including the timeframe of the notification of the alcohol licensing application
- awareness that people are prepared to submit against alcohol licensing in their community but do not necessarily have the necessary skills to do so. It was noted that if the submission is not completed correctly then it will not be heard at the hearing.

Stakeholders referred to the 2012 Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act as one motivation for the community engagement with alcohol licensing project.

...we were looking at how we can engage communities and in response to the 2012 Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act, because that's one of the purposes of the Act. So the question was raised, how are we are doing that?... I said it is an Alcohol Health Promoter job to do that and I will initiate that because I believe it's obviously not a licensing role, but I thought there was a space for an Alcohol Health Promotion role there... (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

... we realised that we were having a lot of off-licence premises getting into Christchurch... so the idea came up that we needed to help the community become more engaged with what was going on, so I think [the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter] came up with this idea of doing this letter and taking responsibility... I thought it was great because the purpose this sounds right out of the Act... this opportunity to have the community voice heard, and we'd been to so many hearings and done lots of oppositions to applications ourselves, and the Licensing Committees were just granting them, even when the community was present they were still granting them. So this project was an opportunity for us to guide these people in a direction where they were more powerful. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

A number of stakeholders commented on their belief that there are many factors tilted against the submitters, including a lack of effective notification of alcohol licensing applications.

...I realised how many things were actually tilted against the submitter and the timeframe in terms of notification, so I thought we need to do something here. (Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

It was also noted that public notification of licensing applications was not necessarily working, especially in the post-disaster context.

...we were in the area and someone would come up and say, I can't believe this is going to be a bottle store, we didn't know about it, it's not fair. And that to me was, well this obviously isn't working and I think being fairly new to Christchurch I was aware there was a lot of derelict buildings with posters in the window which you wouldn't, unless you inspected them, know if it had been there since the earthquake or if it was something new. And that's one way of public notification. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Stakeholders reported that people in the community are prepared to submit against alcohol licensing applications but that they do not necessarily have the skills to do this.

It was extremely educational to go [to my first District Licensing Committee hearing] and just to see how it was completely weighted for the applicant and there was no effective voice of the community at all. (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

The number of people who are passionate about not wanting these elements in their community and who are actually prepared to make submissions and put their head above the parapet and be cross-examined, it's quite a big thing... it's a question of when people make their first submissions to make them so that submission can then be carried on, because sometimes people make a submission that's not valid and that they won't be heard any more at the actual hearing... (Supervising Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

Stakeholders all perceived a need to educate members of the public who wished to object to an application to effectively express their views at a hearing. It was believed that a workshop was an appropriate forum to provide information to those people in the community who were considering providing submissions and/or evidence at a hearing.

...for a long time we've been trying to educate communities prior to going into a hearing but it's been a little bit ad hoc about who's been involved... We needed a forum where people could be educated. It's not about what their views are at that time, it's about educating them as to how to express those views... (Licensing Inspector, Christchurch City Council)

.. [objectors] need some direction, they really need to be helped, led, who can do that... I was really saddened and disappointed that the purpose of the Act is for community to be represented and for the community to benefit as a whole, and yet there didn't seem a clear way of that happening for them. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Interviews with community participants explored their motivation to participate in the workshops. Interviewees discussed how their experience of a hearing was challenging, for example because they did not have the necessary knowledge of the hearing process. They described the value of having the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project workshop, which supported those submitting to have the knowledge and confidence to speak successfully at a hearing.

I think [the workshop] was very valuable because, when I went to that first hearing... what they really threw at me... the lawyer for the applicant really took me to task because I had basically copied another person... we had one day to put something in... so this time we knew

and with the help of some of the local businesses... we contacted everybody and got them involved... and invited them to this workshop, so it was great... (Community participants)

Success factors for the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project

The findings of the semi structured interviews indicate the following success factors for the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project included:

- having a central person bringing together the stakeholders (including the community)
- partnerships between key stakeholders, such as CPH, Community Law and Christchurch City Council
- the passion of community stakeholders
- the letter notifying the community of alcohol licence application, with consistent information on how to oppose the application
- workshops to inform and educate community on submission process, and
- an equity focus.

Each of these success factors is elaborated on below.

Having a central person bringing together the stakeholders

Stakeholders identified the linking role played by the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter as a success factor for the project.

Once [CPH Alcohol Health Promoter] roped me in... I knew Community Law had a role to play and [she] provided the vehicle, she was the conduit, she gave us forums... she really created the platform to play the role that we knew we had to offer, but we don't have time or the resources to do what [the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter] did. (Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

...you do need that one person that pulls them together. We're all busy, we're too busy, the Police, Health Inspector, we can do it but it doesn't get to the top of our list and that was [CPH Alcohol Health Promoter's] function really is that she got it together but also facilitated the workshops so that people felt that it was good balance... So she carried through at all levels right from the go to whoa, and you really need the one person that has the time and the resources do that. (Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

We wouldn't have got anywhere without [CPH Alcohol Health Promoter] plugging away in the community field with the numerous contacts that she's got. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Stakeholders reported that the project was beginning to have successful results, for example three recent applications had been declined by the District Licensing Committee.

...it was certainly [the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter] that pulled together a whole lot of, probably disparate stakeholders from the community, pulled them together, communicated, shaped it into much more force and it started to show, because the last three applications have been declined by the District Licensing Committee, so all that work is now really bearing fruit. (Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

Partnerships between key stakeholders

A further project success factor apparent from stakeholder interviews was the partnerships established between the key stakeholders.

I think it's essential... why wouldn't you [work in partnership] when you've got assistance from other agencies as well and you could work together? (Licensing Inspector, Christchurch City Council)

..we got the venue and invited the community people along to the workshop, and [the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter] and the team also working with the Community Law Centre, put everything together and provided all the information and... people were asking questions and they were able to give us all the right answers. (Community participant)

Passion of community stakeholders

The community motivation to drive opposition to alcohol licensing applications was an additional success factor.

...it's been a very worthwhile project because we could have battered away for years just opposing things and either getting to hearing, not getting to hearing and nothing happens, and there's no community driving things along. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Community stakeholders interviewed were passionate about not having more outlets for alcohol in their communities. Reasons for this included that they associated the alcohol outlets with increased domestic violence.

...we're stubborn and we have a passion that our suburb should not be pushed into having more liquor outlets... There are too many in our suburb... Ridiculous... We've got one of the areas where there's the most call-outs to the Police, the domestic violence. (Community participants)

...I know this community very well and it's regarded as a low socio-economic area, I know the sort of things that this community wants and what this community needs and what it doesn't need. And this isn't the first time that I've set about stopping a liquor store opening up in Phillipstown. (Community participant)

Community participant interviewees believed that the passion of community stakeholders had been a success factor in the project, this included networking within their community to increase the level of support to oppose alcohol licence applications.

...we did a lot of walking... We went to the local schools, we went to the local churches, we put flyers in shop windows. (Community participants)

I think the more communities are involved the more success I believe over time we will have. (Community participant)

Notification of community of application, with consistent information on how to oppose the application

Stakeholders reported that they believed that notifying key contacts in the community was a success factor for the project.

That was my battle cry really is the notification and that has started running here now, that as soon as the application is in you get notified because... two or three years ago that was atrocious, it really was. It was unfair, unjust, the notification process and it still is not probably as good as it could be...so having a good notification right at the start and having somebody who straight away puts out the base information... (Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

Workshop to inform and educate community on submission process

Workshops to inform community participants about the submission process were viewed as a success factor, as they enabled submitters to provide stronger evidence.

...there's a gap between giving information and people actually being prepared for the process and particularly for the hearing process, so then the workshops were an effort to address that gap, to help prepare people for the hearing... (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

...the workshops are good because... for many communities especially in our situation where we're coming up against one of the giants of the liquor industry... it's very good to have people with all the knowledge and information already that they can share with us to make us aware of what's likely to happen and what the pitfalls are, and what we should be looking out for to make sure that any objections that we put in, we get a good hearing and we weren't wasting our day. (Community participant)

...by educating communities as to how the hearing's going to be held and the process and what their role is in it. People go in and provide much stronger evidence because they're not worried about what's happening, they're not worried about the process, they know what's going to happen, so their evidence is much stronger. (Licensing Inspector, Christchurch City Council)

As well as increasing participants' knowledge of the hearing process, interviewees reported that workshops gave them increased confidence to provide evidence.

I didn't know everything there was to know about lodging objections... having these workshops gives you insight, but I think it also gives you the confidence to know that you're doing the right thing. (Community participant)

The workshops gave us... more confidence... confidence is a big thing. (Community participants)

Stakeholders reported that the increased knowledge and confidence of the community members objecting to alcohol licences is making a difference and leading to success, including improved quality of community objectors' evidence.

...these workshops... preparation and help with preparation that the community's getting. It's actually making a difference, so they're better at actually addressing the key legal points that are relevant, that are going to win them the case. Instead of saying we don't want it,

we don't want it and having petitions. I think the community is just a lot better prepared and therefore their chances are better. (Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

...they're a lot more prepared, and that preparation is fantastic because they speak to what they know. They give good evidence and we've seen some fantastic, really good information come out from someone who is measured and prepared... So they come out with their genuine experiences and the DLC listen... The DLC are a lot more thoughtful in how they deal with the community because there's a lot more turning up as well. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Focus on equity

Stakeholders discussed allocating more resources to high deprivation areas, partly on the basis of high alcohol outlet density in these areas.

...because density of off-licences is high in deprived communities, and those are our most vulnerable people so those are the places where we absolutely need to focus our effort... (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

...I talked to this model in a recent conference we had in Auckland... there was a lot that were quite surprised that we got public objectors from the lower decile areas whereas they get it from the [higher decile] areas... so they never hear from the other end of the spectrum. So they were quite interested. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

...Stanmore Road was probably a needs index [NZDep] nine, so those communities we put a lot more resources in than [NZDep] seven or six... (Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

Examples of project success

Stakeholders reported examples of success of the project, which included: increased community participation in objecting to alcohol licensing applications; affected communities having increased knowledge of alcohol licensing applications and affected communities having increased knowledge of how to object to alcohol licensing applications.

Success at hearings included applications being withdrawn before the DLC hearing or declined by the DLC. Stakeholders reported that between September 2015 and December 2018 there had been 27 higher risk alcohol licensing applications. Of these 27 applications: 13 applications had been withdrawn; 4 applications had been declined; and 10 applications had been granted.

...the Liquorland Ferry Road decision that I just heard this morning, right on the corner of Ferry Road and Aldwins Road, 50 metres away from another off-licence, we just heard today the application was denied... So that is ground-breaking really. (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

... we've won the last two appeals, the Spreydon one and the Phillipstown one, and there's one coming up in Lincoln in June, so I expect we'll be doing our workshop out there soon... we were involved with the Spreydon one and the Phillipstown one, we went to community meetings and liaised with the community groups and liaised with the DHB and the Health Protection Agency and the Licensing Inspectors and we were there doing the workshop and

we made ourselves available for follow-up, and we're expecting to do that into the future.
(Supervising Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

Yeah, well there's been three recent ones [examples of success]. There's that one in Trafford Street, there's one in Spreydon and then there is our one in Phillipstown, but I think the big difference with our one at Phillipstown compared to the other two is, we took on the giants of the liquor industry. (Community participant)

Stakeholders also viewed the withdrawal of alcohol licence applications as a success.

... there have been quite a number of withdrawal decisions so the applicant has withdrawn their application. That is not a decline but it is actually a win because it means there's no current move for a bottle store to be opened there. So they've withdrawn their application and it's usually in response... when there're a lot of submissions from the community and opposition. So they think it's just going to be too hard... So I see that as a win... So we've had maybe something like nine withdrawals... (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

Stakeholders discussed their reaction to the success of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project. Reactions included a sense of both satisfaction and of relief that communities had power to influence alcohol licensing decisions.

...was delighted that we'd won through and very satisfied because people often think all they need to do is say that they object and that's going to be counted but it's not. You have to have reasons that fall within the Act's requirements for it to be about a point that might sway the Committee, and so getting that across to people, that they do have to provide some kind of evidence with their solutions. It's a really big thing. (Supervising Solicitor, Community Law Canterbury)

They took about 6 weeks before they actually sent us an email saying that it [the alcohol licence] had been declined. How did we feel? Vindicated I think is the word I would use. Common sense prevailed. Satisfaction... (Community participants)

Well I think it gives the community hope and it gives us a sense of relief because we all know... what harm alcohol can do in communities and to be able to stop another one coming into our community, it gives you belief in the community knowing that you've made another giant step in helping to have a more safe, family friendly community available. (Community participant)

Replication of project

Stakeholders reported interest from other areas in replicating aspects of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project. Stakeholders believed that the project could be replicated in other parts of New Zealand.

...other areas have indicated that they are keen to know what's happening, so if tools and resources could be provided to them that they can just run with... I think people would go for that quite easily... because we're all overrun with work, if somebody developed something other areas will take that on board very quickly because the work's been done. They know that there's a need for it but they just don't have the capacity to work on it. (Licensing Inspector, Christchurch City Council)

Challenges to the project

An initial challenge to the project identified was that although a number of people within CPH work with a focus on alcohol, there was a need to break down some barriers to work together.

...initially it was breaking down barriers in the organisation. Even though we're alcohol it's like we didn't have a way to work in together... we've got complementary roles so I do really like working [together]. (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

The challenge of informing and educating affected communities within the 15 working day time frame was also noted.

...trying to redress the power imbalance in the whole process of communities hearing about and writing submissions in a short 15 working day time frame and very real challenges faced when being cross examined in hearings by an experienced legal counsel. (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

Follow up interviews

The evaluator was informed in early 2019 that the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project had undergone some changes towards the end of 2018, with the Health Promotion Agency granting Community Law Aotearoa, the national organisation, substantial funding over three years for six pilot projects based on the Canterbury project. This meant that CPH no longer participated in the workshops, although continued to provide communities with notice of applications. At the same time, CPH Licensing staff had decided to step away from providing/participating in the workshops due, in part, to the workshops creating some confusion for community members about the role of CPH alcohol licensing staff. CAYAD had also become increasingly involved in the project, providing community outreach on the ground, once CPH had notified key community contacts of applications.

To capture the impacts of these changes, further interviews were conducted in February 2019 with five key stakeholders.

All stakeholders interviewed agreed that it was valuable that CPH continued to provide notification of alcohol licence applications. It was noted that it would be difficult otherwise for communities to be aware of notifications, and that such notification was not necessarily provided in other regions.

I think it's good that we inform the community, not everywhere does, and I think it's good that we do have that role... (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

The Act requires the community to know about these [alcohol applications]. How can they know unless somebody tells them?... it's a real issue. Communities don't spend their time scanning the newspapers or the websites for an adverse opening of an alcohol outlet in their area and so... it's not perfect but we're fortunate that the resources [CPH Alcohol Health Promoter] has, the resources that I have and one or two others... are able to then begin to alert the community and the communities can choose to object. (Co-ordinator Community Alcohol Project, Community Law Canterbury)

CPH's decision to step away from providing/participating in the workshops was in part due to the workshops creating some confusion for community members about the role of CPH alcohol licensing staff.

... I loved being able to engage with the community, however during one hearing particularly... I don't think that the DLC were confused... but I felt that the community were, particularly understanding that we can be [at the workshop] in one role but we can have a difference of opinion at the hearing... So even that we prepared them and said that in the workshop, because they physically see you at the workshop and then see you at the hearing, it blurred lines. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

One stakeholder noted that as alcohol licensing inspectors are independent of each other, they can have differing views of the extent that they should be involved in informing the community.

... we have a duty to collaborate... to look at taking steps to minimise alcohol related harm... there is a belief that that does extend to informing the community and having the community better informed... The problem is the Inspectors are independent so they have different perspectives on whether they should be doing anything in this realm or not... (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Different views regarding the changes around delivery of the workshops were evident. Concerns raised included that the original workshop content was no longer being followed and that communities may be less well prepared for hearings. It was noted that the workshops were in transition and that Community Law had leadership over workshop content.

... when you hand over, when things get bigger and you let go a bit, then things do change and people have to step up and there's a learning process isn't there. So it feels like we're in a stage where that's happening. (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

I've developed it in a slightly different way but it was pretty well spot on really and I really liked lots of things about the presentation. I think that different people have different styles. I think it's just the style thing really. (Co-ordinator Community Alcohol Project, Community Law Canterbury)

...that concerns me because then communities aren't prepared, they feel like they're going into a very fighty scenario but it's not that kind of procedure. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Possible solutions to identified challenges

Possible solutions to gaining consensus on workshop content included the HPA providing a stronger guiding hand, for example by developing a workshop presentation where all agencies agreed on the material presented to the communities. It was suggested that this would be a useful combination of the expertise of Community Law and experience of CPH.

Probably a stronger guiding hand by HPA... For them to be leading it, but because we're in that awkward handover stage... HPA could get a guide from us about the things that we find are really useful in hearings when communities do x, y and z, or this doesn't work for us... so that HPA and Community Law put together a package to any workshop... that has those points that will mean hearings run smoothly and successfully. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

...so I think it would be a way of bridging the gap between maybe what Community Law and their expertise versus our experience, and hopefully changing a few mind-sets to be able to create something that's useful for the community, 'cos that's what it's about... (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

In addition to developing an agreed guide to workshop content, it was suggested that developing other shared resources would be valuable for the project, such as a database of key community contacts.

... it would be good to have a repository so that the next time someone wants to open a bottle store in that particular area we can go back... having a database of key stakeholders in every kind of locality and then for objectors having more information easily available... I think the natural co-ordinators, in terms of resourcing and institutional continuity, it's probably CPH because turnover in NGOs is pretty high and the resources in terms of infrastructure available to provide that stuff is low... (Senior Project Worker, CAYAD)

It was noted that council and CPH staff may now be unlikely to attend workshops and that it would be of value for the parties involved in the project to meet and reflect.

[Continued success of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project](#)

Although the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project has gone through a transition period, a number of success factors continued to be reported by stakeholders at follow up. A shift in culture was noted by stakeholders, including greater community awareness that they can object to an alcohol licensing application.

I do think that the landscape of community engagement around licensing is changing and that the applicants know that now... so that's a shift, so it's got a lot more open. (Alcohol Health Promoter, Community and Public Health)

I think that it's raised the profile of licence applications right across the board. More and more people are becoming aware that they can actually say something if they don't like what's coming. So it's good. (Alcohol Licensing Officer, Community and Public Health)

Conclusion

The findings of this evaluation indicate that the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project has had some success in increasing community participation in objecting to alcohol licensing applications. Since the inception of the project there has been a number of examples of success at hearings (for applications where there had been engagement with the project) including applications being withdrawn before DLC hearings and applications being declined.

Success factors for the project included: having a central person bringing together the stakeholders; partnerships between key stakeholders; the passion of community stakeholders; notification of community members of alcohol licensing application (with consistent information on how to oppose the application); the provision of workshops to inform and educate community on submission process; and a focus on equity.

Since late 2018, the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project has had a change of process, with workshops being led and delivered by Community Law, rather than being delivered jointly with CPH. CPH continues to notify key community contacts of higher risk licence applications.

There was agreement amongst stakeholders that there would be value in stakeholders continuing to meet and a suggestion that it would be beneficial for stakeholders to agree a common approach to the workshops.

On the basis of the evaluation findings it is recommended that the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project considers:

- A continuing role for the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter in bringing together the key stakeholders for meetings, at least biannually
- That CPH continues to notify key community contacts of higher risk alcohol licensing applications
- That HPA and key stakeholders, including Community Law, CPH and CAYAD work together to agree on workshop content
- That the CPH Alcohol Health Promoter works together with key stakeholders to develop further resources for communities, such as a database of community contacts
- That, with agreement from the project partners, CPH shares this report with regions, to inform work around community engagement with alcohol licensing.

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Appendix 1: Evaluation of Community engagement with alcohol licensing project survey

The Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project would love to hear what you think about our project. Your views will help with future planning of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project.

You may of received a letter from the Canterbury District Health Board, **HAVING YOUR SAY ON THE GRANTING OF AN ALCOHOL LICENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY**, this letter and the subsequent workshops are part of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project.

All questions are voluntary and you can stop the survey at any time. You will not be identified and identifying information is not included other than for those that indicate they are willing to participate in a follow-up interview. That information will only be used for that purpose.

1. Below is a list of activities of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project. Which are you aware of (select all that apply)?

- I received a 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter by email informing me of alcohol licensing application in my community
- I participated in a community engagement workshop about preparing for the District Licensing Committee (DLC) hearing
- Other (please specify)

2. Referring to the 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol license in your community' letter, please indicate any information that you learned from the letter (select all that apply)?

- I learned about the application to establish a new bottle store in our community
- I learned about the process of providing community feedback on the application to establish a bottle store in my community
- I learned how to lodge a submission
- I learned how to access free legal help
- Not applicable as I don't recall receiving the letter
- Other (please specify)

3. Referring to the 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter, please indicate any ways that you followed up on the information provided in the letter (select all that apply)

- I passed this information on to others to learn about the application to establish a bottle store in my community
- I passed on to others about how to provide community feedback
- I wrote and lodged a submission
- I contacted Community Law Canterbury
- Not applicable as I don't recall receiving the letter
- Other (please specify)



Below are a series of statements, we would appreciate you providing the response that best matches your experience of the Community Engagement with Alcohol Licensing Project

4. The 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol license in your community' letter (including the links provided in the letter) increased my knowledge about how to write an effective submission on alcohol license applications

- Agree strongly
- Agree slightly
- Disagree slightly
- Disagree strongly
- Not applicable as I didn't receive the letter

5. Attending the community engagement workshop increased my knowledge of how to give effective evidence about higher risk alcohol licensing applications at DLC hearings

- Agree strongly
- Agree slightly
- Disagree slightly
- Disagree strongly
- Not applicable as I did not attend the workshop



6. What activities have you done as a result of receiving the 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter or attending the community participation workshop (please tick all that apply)

- Wrote and lodged a submission
- Encouraged someone else to write a submission
- Attended the community workshop
- Attended the DLC hearing
- Given evidence at the DLC hearing
- Encouraged someone else to give evidence in the hearing
- Not applicable as I did not receive the letter and/or attend the workshop
- Other (please specify)

7. For me personally, learning and being involved in local alcohol licensing decisions has been valuable

- Agree strongly
- Agree slightly
- Disagree slightly
- Disagree strongly
- Not applicable

8. For the community as a whole, being involved in local alcohol licensing decisions is valuable

- Agree strongly
- Agree slightly
- Disagree slightly
- Disagree strongly

Please comment

9. What did you like most about receiving the letter 'having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community'?

10. Do you have any suggestions for improving the letter 'having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter?

Some details about you...

11. What gender are you?

- Female
- Male
- Gender diverse

12. In which of the following age groups do you belong?

- 15-29 years old
- 30-44 years old
- 45-59 years old
- 60 and over

13. Which ethnic group do you belong to? Mark the space or spaces which apply to you?

- New Zealand European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Māori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Other (please specify)

Appendix 2: 'Having your say on the granting of an alcohol licence in your community' letter

Date

To whom it may concern

RE: HAVING YOUR SAY ON THE GRANTING OF AN ALCOHOL LICENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

We wish to bring to your attention a proposal to establish a bottle store at Christchurch.

The first public notice was published in, so anyone wishing to provide feedback on the possible granting of a licence needs to do so by.

Your rights

As a local resident, you have an opportunity to have your community voice heard about this proposal and contribute to decisions about the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol in your community.

If you have a particular interest in the area of the proposed premises (e.g. you live or work in the area) you can make a submission to the Committee about whether you support or object to the application.

Your feedback to licence applications is extremely important, as community feedback helps the District Licensing Committee make appropriate decisions as to whether a licence should or should not be granted, and if it is granted whether any conditions should be put in place.

Alcohol licence application grounds

The Committee is required to consider several grounds based on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 (Sections 105 and 106). These include

- The suitability of the applicant;
- The days and hours of sale;
- The design and layout of premises;
- Whether amenity and good order of the area would be substantially reduced;
- The undesirability of further licences where amenity and good order have already been reduced;
- Current, and possible future, levels of noise, nuisance and vandalism;
- The number of other licensed premises in the area; and
- Compatibility with the current and future use of surrounding properties.

Submissions from the public help the Committee in considering these matters.

Submissions can be lodged

- By post - Alcohol Licensing, 77 Hereford Street, PO Box 73049, Christchurch 8154;
- By email - alcohollicensing@ccc.govt.nz; or
- In person - Civic Offices, Ground floor reception, 53 Hereford Street, Christchurch.

Licensed premises within 1 kilometre

Licensed premises within 1 kilometre

Free legal help

- Community Law Canterbury is available for free advice and support on submissions to the Christchurch District Licensing Committee. They can also provide some coaching for people wanting to make verbal submissions at the District Licensing Committee hearing.
- For communities with high social and economic needs, Community Law Canterbury will go a step further and offer free assistance with submissions and, if need be, representation.
- Please contact Simonette Boele, Community Law Canterbury, 198 Montreal Street, phone 03 366 6870 or email simonette@canlaw.org.nz.

Further information

- The Alcohol Licensing Team at Community and Public Health, phone 03 378 6812
- The Licensing Inspector Team at the Christchurch City Council, phone 03 941 8999
- Community Action on Youth and Drugs (CAYAD) are available to support communities make submissions on licencing applications, phone 03 386 2159 ext 701
paul.mcmahon@sjog.org.nz
- The application file can be viewed at the Christchurch District Licensing Committee offices, Christchurch City Council, 77 Hereford Street, Christchurch
- Information about making community submissions on licence applications, including sample letter templates and links to useful resources, are at <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/consents-and-licences/business-licences-and-consents/alcohol/objecting-to-a-grant-for-a-licence/>
- Further information on making a written submission on licensing decisions is available at <http://www.alcohol.org.nz/in-your-community/take-action/object-to-an-alcohol-licence>

Kind regards,

Community and Public Health, Canterbury District Health Board