

Submission on Auckland Council's Review of all existing Alcohol Bans

15 July 2015

Submission re Review of Alcohol Ban Areas
Attention: Planning Technician
Auckland Council
Private Bag 92300
AUCKLAND 1142

This submission is made by **Sisters of Mercy Wiri**.

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We wish to speak in support of the submission.

Sisters of Mercy Wiri is a small community based agency whose mission is to work with the poor, especially women and children, to build positive relationships that strengthen families and communities and to work with others for a just and compassionate society. Our ministry includes advocacy, housing and tenancy concerns, responding to immediate need, supporting family/whanau and children, home visits and visiting those in prison and providing information and referral.

We promote community led engagement around local issues and concerns and encourage neighbourhood and community participation to identify and consider the options available to resolve issues and/or to engage in processes both locally and nationally to promote social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

Introduction

The recent changes in the national legislation requiring documented evidence of high levels of alcohol-related crime or disorder to ensure existing alcohol bans remain on all parks, reserves and children's playground areas is extremely disappointing.

Removing existing alcohol bans from public places and spaces is not in the public interest and does little to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and families in local communities and neighbourhoods.

Within the Manurewa Local Board area there are **34 ALCOHOL BAN AREAS** that are proposed to lapse. These areas include children's playgrounds, public reserve carparks and roads adjoining car parks. This is a no-brainer. Lifting such bans signals it is okay to drink alcohol where it was once prohibited. If the above areas are no

longer alcohol free places it leaves the door wide open for people to congregate to consume alcohol which more often than not results in anti-social and disorderly behavior, violent related incidents and community and neighbourhood disturbances. The decrease in the incidents of such behavior related to children's playgrounds, parks, reserves and related car parks since the introduction of alcohol bans speaks for itself.

If the above 34 alcohol bans lapse the NZ Police will have less power to manage an alcohol related incident. Currently where an alcohol ban of 24 hours a day seven days a week exists the NZ Police have the power to search bags if a person is in, or entering, an area with an alcohol ban. If a person is found drinking in an alcohol ban area Police can confiscate all the alcohol and search the person and the person's vehicle. In addition, it is an offence to breach a local alcohol ban and the maximum penalty is a fine of \$250.

Where Police are called to an alcohol related incident to a children's playground or a public reserve car park and there is no alcohol ban in place the Police are restricted to deal to the matter and nip in the bud the potential for further alcohol related incidents to occur. Surely, a waste of Police time and money. Manurewa communities and neighbourhoods deserve better.

The alcohol ban signage and its visibility to the community sends a clear message to everyone that **ALL** our children's playgrounds, parks and reserves are open spaces that are for the enjoyment of acceptable recreational activity. We urge Auckland Council to uphold and protect a solution to an anti-social problem that has proven to be effective in Manurewa.

A Local Story

Sisters of Mercy Wiri know first-hand of the harmful effects that alcohol has had on our community. These effects have been evident since 1988 when we began living and working in Wiri. Two more recent interventions we have been involved in which have reduced alcohol related harm in our community and which have resulted from community action are the stopping of alcohol sales from the Rata Vine superette in 2008 and the introduction of 24 hour Liquor Bans applied to recreation areas, parks and reserves in 2011.

Groups of young people congregating and drinking in our parks and reserves has declined significantly. In addition, alcohol related incidents of anti-social behavior, violence, vandalism and graffiti has decreased. As well, the parks and reserves are not as heavily littered with broken bottles, discarded cans and rubbish.

It is evident from these two local examples that legislation or bylaws to reduce alcohol related harm contribute significantly to ensuring neighbourhoods and public spaces, day and night, are safe and non-threatening places for people, children and adults.

Review of Alcohol Bans

Sisters of Mercy Wiri welcomes the opportunity to affirm the proposed retaining of Alcohol Bans in Wiri, a suburb of Manurewa within the jurisdiction of the Manurewa Local Board. These relate to:

Map 4	Azalea Park
Map 9	David Park and Rata Vine Stream Reserve
Map 11	Druces Road Reserve and Trevor Hosken Drive Reserve
Map 18	Inverell Park Reserve and Kerrs Road
Map 27	Rata Vine Stream Reserve and Great South Road
Map 30	Islay Walkways
Map 32	Trevor Hosken Drive, Druces Road Reserve and Wiri Stream Reserve
Map 35	Wiri Stream Reserve

We note that **Felicia Park (Map 27)** which is the park adjacent to the Rata Vine superette is not included in the alcohol bans to be retained. Is this an oversight?

Sisters of Mercy Wiri recommend

- that Felicia Park be included as a 24/7 alcohol ban area. This park, prior to being an alcohol ban area, frequently was a place of alcohol-related crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour. Police call outs will support this.
- that the alcohol bans proposed to lapse for 20 children's playgrounds and 14 public reserve car parks and public roads adjoining car parks throughout the communities of Manurewa be retained.

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