

Tax Working Group Public Submissions Information Release

Release Document

September 2018

taxworkinggroup.govt.nz/key-documents

Key to sections of the Official Information Act 1982 under which information has been withheld.

Certain information in this document has been withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Official Information Act, as applicable:

- [1] 9(2)(a) - to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people;
- [2] 9(2)(k) - to prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or improper advantage.

Where information has been withheld, a numbered reference to the applicable section of the Official Information Act has been made, as listed above. For example, a [1] appearing where information has been withheld in a release document refers to section 9(2)(a).

In preparing this Information Release, the Treasury has considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

Submission to the Tax Working Group on Tax Reform

Dr Michael John Fredrickson, MBChB, FANZCA, MD, PhD

Specialist Anaesthetist, Auckland (private practice)

[1]

I am aware that my submission will be released on this website, with my email address withheld, and have noted the Official Information Act and privacy considerations that apply

I would like to speak to this submission if the opportunity arises

I urge the government to increase tax on all forms of alcohol. There will no doubt be similar arguments put forward by other agencies, but the position taken by both the World Health Organisation ¹ and the New Zealand Medical Association ² cannot be ignored. Their summary statements give compelling evidence for the effectiveness of taxation, and minimum pricing, in reducing alcohol related harm. There is no longer a “safe” level of consumption. The latest evidence indicates that every drink causes harm through increasing the risk of cancer. I have personally had to deal with the consequences of breast cancer in my immediate family, and the distress and suffering it has caused. Alcohol is also contributor to domestic violence, suboptimal parenting, motor vehicle crashes, and accident and emergency visits. Heavy drinking also causes many other diseases. While we have seen a surge in methamphetamine related crime and harm in the media, alcohol still causes more harm than any other drug.

During a discussion about alcohol consumption in our wider family, I always remember my octogenarian aunty recount the reason they didn’t drink when younger (during the 1960s and 70s). She said it was simply too expensive and “they couldn’t afford it”.

Again, I urge the government to increase taxes on all forms of alcohol and to consider minimum pricing by way of taxation.

1. http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/tax_book/en/
2. https://www.nzma.org.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/42542/Alcohol-Briefing18.may.FINAL.pdf