



SocialLink – Tūhono Pāpori¹ is the umbrella peak body for the social and community sector and represents over 1500 organisations and individuals working in the Western Bay of Plenty

SocialLink supports social service providers, community and Māori organisations to strengthen their capability as they deliver services to their communities, as well as advocates for the sectors interests, social justice and equity of opportunity for all people living in the WBOP.

www.sociallink.org.nz

Submission on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Improving Alcohol Regulation) Amendment Bill

April 2026

SocialLink opposes intended measures in the Bill which are very likely to contribute to social and health related harm and have a negative effect on efforts to improve equity of health, social and economic outcomes for Māori who are disproportionately impacted.

There is strong international evidence that increased availability contributes to increased alcohol related problems.² This includes through increased and extended opening hours, more places able to sell alcohol to the public on and off the premises and limited requirements and regulation to monitor sales to intoxicated or under age people. Increased access to alcohol contributes to increased health and social harm and has a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged areas because of higher densities of alcohol outlets. The increase in off-licences increases competition and may lead to more discounting of prices to attract customers.

¹ Legal name is Social Sector Innovation Western Bay of Plenty Charitable Trust: Charities registration number CC50192.

² Dimova ED et al (2023) Exploring the influence of local alcohol availability on drinking norms and practices: a qualitative scoping review. Drug and Alcohol Review 19;42(3):691-703.

We therefore recommend the Bill does not include

- **Section 17 Amending Section 29 of the Act to allow clubs without a club licence to hold an on licence.** This broadens the scope of club activities from selling to club members and guests to the broader public as in a tavern.
- **Section 40: Amending Section 32** (Kinds of premises for which off-licences may be issued) The criteria are the sale of food or non-alcoholic drinks prepared on-site, which is fundamental to the business of a restaurant so this means any restaurant could apply to be an off-licence. Again this will increase off licence sales.

Rights of objection Sections 4 Section 102 Amended (Objections to applications) and 6 (Section 128 amended Objections to renewal)

We also oppose the intended restrictions on the right to object to a licence application or the renewal of a licence.

The Bill proposes only persons residing, or who has an office or a place of business, within the local licencing committee district or one kilometre of a premise can put in an objection.

This is unduly restrictive and for example, excludes people with whakapapa links to a papakainga or marae that may be in the vicinity of a proposed licence; people with second or holiday homes in an affected area, or organisations working with or affected by local alcohol-related concerns in some way (eg alcohol related crime, safety from violence, family harm, alcohol treatment services).

The proposal **removes entirely the right of a person to object as a representative of an organisation.** We consider this is a very short sighted move in decreasing local knowledge and concerns being heard.

- Local community organisations, eg community patrols, neighbourhood watch, voluntary service groups, social service and health providers, schools, retail; shops and others get to know how local licenced outlets operate, the favourable and unfavourable, and the impact on local communities.
- Local licensing committees are entitled to have access to such knowledge to assist their deliberations.

Recommendation

Retain current rights of objection.

We support Section 20 to amend Section 52 (Low-alcohol drinks to be available).

