SOCIAL PERMISSION CAMPAIGN

What is the new campaign about?

The new campaign developed by the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) builds on the success of the former Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC) award-winning ‘Ease up on the drink’ campaign. The HPA has taken over the functions of ALAC. This phase of the campaign is about giving New Zealanders the social permission and language to be able to ‘Ease up’. We know from research that many Kiwis feel they cannot exercise their right to choose not to drink or to refuse a drink because of our pervasive drinking culture.

The fear of being socially excluded or being accused of ‘piking’ can lead to people continuing to drink or taking other steps – such as pretending to continue drinking – to avoid ridicule or causing offence.

The campaign will give New Zealanders:

- A verbal shorthand they can use to say no to a drink
- Social permission to refuse a drink
- Encouragement to ‘back’ their mates who are trying to ease up
- Make it unacceptable to pressure someone or give them a hard time because they refuse a drink

The campaign launched with a nationwide television commercial on Sunday May 12. The media schedule includes placement on TV One, TV2, TV3, Four, Prime and Māori TV. Following the launch we will be working with communities to assist them to leverage off the national campaign with their own initiatives. The HPA is developing resources for communities to help provide tailored solutions for local issues.
What insights did you get from the research?

Research\(^1\) has told us that many Kiwis aren’t able to back each other up, to be a good mate, or exercise their freedom of choice when it comes to drinking. Our ‘binge-drinking’ culture is so pervasive, they say they feel intimidated and so they are hiding their attempts to moderate their drinking. People feel too scared to speak up and feel frustrated and powerless. This inaction goes against who they are as Kiwis - they want to be the proud Kiwi who backs their mates. The social pressure around drinking means that those who want to ease up, are faced with a difficult dilemma – how can they stick to their own personal limits and decline the next drink when most of those around them are likely to pressure them to keep drinking – How can they still fit in with a social occasion centred around drinking when they don’t want another drink?

Who is the target audience?

The primary target audience is New Zealanders aged 18 to 39 who binge drink (7 to 12 drinks) or drink at high risk levels (13 plus) who are open to change and friends and family of these drinkers including those who host drinking occasions. Other important audiences are people who choose not to drink (for whatever reason) and wider New Zealand.

What is the television commercial about?

The commercial follows two mates out drinking together. When one offers the other another drink, he responds ‘Yeah, Nah’ explaining that he’s up for a good night but he doesn’t want to drink any more. The first friend is thrown by this turn of events and is initially despondent. With the song “I will do anything for love” playing in the background, we watch the night unfold through the eyes of the first man as he imagines the night ahead. The friends have a great night despite his mate’s decision to ease up. 60 second and 30 second versions have been produced.

What are the other campaign elements?

The television advertising will be supported by a range of out-of-home advertising that will include street posters, bus shelter and other advertising in and around the entertainment areas in towns and cities. An independent but linked element of the campaign will specifically target problem drinkers through radio advertising encouraging them to phone the Alcohol Helpline. This advertising will use the ‘Yeah’ or ‘Nah’ concept inviting people to answer a few questions about their drinking to assess their drinking in their own minds. The radio ads will

\(^1\) Ipsos qualitative research undertaken for ALAC in May, June 2012
reinforce the message that if people answer ‘yeah’ too much and want to say ‘nah’ a bit more often about their drinking to call the helpline.

**What is the creative approach for the campaign?**

The creative style of the TVC is fun and entertaining directly engaging with our audiences. The campaign uses humour to tackle a serious issue and presents the message of respecting people’s choice not to drink in a positive way. By using colloquial language ‘Yeah, Nah’ it is non-confrontational fitting with our New Zealand down-to-earth culture. ‘Yeah, Nah’ is uniquely Kiwi and enables us to promote messages in a contemporary and easy-going way.

**What are the key messages?**

- ‘Yeah Nah’ is a great way to say you don’t want another drink
- ‘Yeah Nah’ gives you social permission to decline a drink
- Respect people’s choice not to drink
- Not drinking doesn’t mean you don’t want a good time or won’t have a good time
- Back your mates who are trying to ease up – show your support

**What help is offered to people who want to make a change to their drinking behaviour?**

The Alcohol and Drug Helpline service is a free calling nationwide service (0800 787 797) set up for all drinkers, including people who are concerned about someone else’s drinking. It is available 7 days a week from 10am to 10pm. It is a confidential and non-judgmental service provided by trained counsellors. It also provides a mobile phone text service. A help seekers radio advertising campaign is scheduled to promote the helpline.

**Media schedule**

The schedule covers placement of the new HPA alcohol advertisement – ‘Say Yeah Nah’ – due to launch on Sunday 12 May. It includes placement on TV One, TV2, TV3, Four, Prime and Māori TV. Our advertisement will also appear on SKY Sport associated with major sports events occurring during the campaign period. Spot placement will also occur on the youth music channels Juice TV and MTV. The TV media schedule has been designed to reach the 18-39 year-old demographic. Draft FCB is the agency that developed this campaign and also produced the earlier Ease up Campaign.
**But don’t the latest Ministry of Health survey figures show the situation is improving?**

The Ministry of Health latest survey\(^2\) of New Zealand’s drinking patterns reveals fewer people are drinking and younger people are drinking more responsibly.

The overall rate of hazardous drinking for the 18- to 24-year-old group has fallen from 49 per cent in 2006-07 to 36 per cent in 2011-12, though remains more common than in any other age group.

Amongst all past-year drinkers, one in five (19 per cent) had hazardous drinking patterns, down four percent from 2006-07. Hazardous drinking\(^3\) is defined as a drinking pattern that carries a risk of physical or mental harm, or having harmful social effects to the drinker or others.

The Ministry of Health found that among past-year drinkers, men aged 18 to 24 are at higher risk of hazardous drinking (44 per cent) than women in the same age group (26 per cent).

More people are choosing not to drink alcohol with the survey’s findings showing the percentage of adults who had consumed alcohol in the past 12 months dropped from 84 per cent in 2006-07 to 80 per cent in 2011-12.

However, a significant proportion of New Zealanders ranging from 20 to 25 percent engage in binge drinking resulting in significant costs to the individual, the people around them, the community and the country.

**Why are we doing it?**

New Zealand has a problem with alcohol in particular binge drinking. Even though New Zealand’s overall per capita consumption of alcohol is within World Health Organisation Guidelines, the levels of “acute” alcohol-related problems (that is, problems arising from single drinking occasions) remain stubbornly high, indeed higher than those incurred from dependent or prolonged drinking (“chronic” harm). Something has to be done to address the harm that happens from these single occasions.

**What is the harm of bingeing?**

There are a range of harms; from injury to crime, domestic violence to neglecting family responsibilities, lost productivity at work, to hospital admissions, to memory loss and embarrassment, and more.

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\(^2\) Ministry of Health Hazardous drinking in 2011/12: Findings from the New Zealand Health Survey

\(^3\) Ministry of Health New Zealand Health survey defines Hazardous drinking as a score of 8 points or more on the 10-question Alcohol use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) which includes questions about alcohol use, alcohol-related problems and abnormal drinking behavior.
Key health statistics

- In New Zealand estimates indicate between 600 and 1000 people die each year from alcohol related causes (Connor et al 2005).
- In 2011/12, there were 2700 hospital discharges (from publicly funded hospitals) for directly alcohol related diseases and conditions.

Key police crime statistics

Alcohol is also a major contributing factor in crime in New Zealand and has been identified by the NZ Police as one of the five drivers of crime.

Of all reported crime, the police say alcohol is a factor in:

- a third of all violence
- a third of all family violence
- half of all serious violence
- half of all drugs and anti-social offences
- at least 1 in 5 cases of sexual offending
- 1 in 4 traffic offences
- 1 in 5 traffic crashes
- 1 in 4 property offences.

Road safety

Alcohol in relation to accidents on New Zealand roads is also of serious concern. Information on motor vehicle crashes involving alcohol are:

- In 2011, a total of 76 people were killed on New Zealand roads, and 1852 injured (from Police reported motor vehicle crashes) where the at-fault driver in the crash had alcohol as a contributing factor. In terms of percentages, 26.8% of all deaths and 14.7% of all injuries in Police reported crashes in 2011 involved an at-fault driver with alcohol as a contributing factor.

Social Costs

The harm that alcohol causes for people in everyday situations cannot be underestimated either;

- In a year 147,500 take one or more days off work or school due to their alcohol use
- 84,000 adults experienced harmful effects on their work, study or employment

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4 Data provided by Ministry of Transport
5 The real story of Kiwis & Alcohol March 2012: Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand
6 The real story of Kiwis & Alcohol March 2012: Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand
There have been a number of studies that estimate the cost of alcohol harm in New Zealand. Most agree that the annual cost is in the billions, previous estimates have ranged from $735 million to $16.1 billion.

**Who is the Health Promotion Agency?**

The Health Promotion Agency is a Crown entity that was established by legislation on 1 July 2012 to lead and support national health promotion initiatives. Work includes Smokefree and Auahi Kore, assisting the Ministry of Health in its immunisation work, encouraging more heart and diabetes checks, and minimising gambling harm.

In addition to national health promotion initiatives, the HPA performs all functions previously undertaken by the Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC) and the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC).

For more information visit www.hpa.org.nz