

SAY 'YEAH NAH' CAMPAIGN – PERMISSION TO 'EASE UP ON THE DRINK'

PRESS RELEASE

12 MAY 2013

The next phase of the award winning 'Ease up on the drink' campaign is being launched today by the Health Promotion Agency (HPA). The HPA has taken over the functions of the former Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC) which developed the last Ease up campaign.

The campaign launches with a television commercial and will be followed up by local communities leveraging off the national campaign with their own initiatives.

This phase of the campaign uses the uniquely Kiwi expression 'Yeah Nah' to give New Zealanders a language or social permission 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," says HPA spokesperson Tane Cassidy.

"They feel pressured to drink or risk being seen as a 'piker'. This drinking culture not only limits choice but also reinforces a style of drinking that can result in high levels of alcohol-related harm."

Mr Cassidy said the phrase gives New Zealanders a language or "verbal shorthand" to allow them to refuse a drink in a way that is seen as more socially acceptable.

"It is a uniquely kiwi way of saying 'no' and affirms an individual's decision not to drink," he says. "It's a phrase that is already widely used and understood that we have adapted to the drinking environment."

The commercial shows two mates out drinking together, one offers the other another drink and he responds 'Yeah Nah' saying he's up for a good night but doesn't want to drink any more. At first the friend is a bit thrown by his mate not wanting another drink, but then he imagines the night ahead and sees it is possible to ease up and still have a good time.

"This campaign encourages people to accept their mate's decision not to drink and show their support," says Mr Cassidy. "It will also give people social permission to say 'no' and encourage their friends to accept their decision. Overall, we want to shift those attitudes that make it OK to give someone a hard time because they don't want a drink."

The campaign uses humour to tackle the issue of binge drinking and reinforces the message of respecting people's choice not to drink, in a positive way. The music 'I will do anything for love' plays in the background of the advert making it humorous and entertaining.

The main target audience for this campaign is New Zealanders aged 18- 39 who binge drink (7-12 drinks) or who drink at high-risk levels (13+ drinks) and are open to cutting back on their drinking. Friends and family members of these drinkers, including those who host drinking occasions are also important audiences. The campaign will also support the 15% to 20% of New Zealand adults who don't, for whatever reason, drink any alcohol at all along.

An important element of the campaign is community action on the ground. The HPA is developing resources for communities to be able to leverage off the national campaign and develop local solutions for local issues.

Other elements include bus shelter advertising, street posters, online and digital advertising which will be targeted at various points of the drinking journey and in different settings (home, out on the town and at events). Radio advertising that runs from late May will target people with drinking problems using 'Yeah' or 'Nah' to answer a few questions about their drinking, encouraging them to call the Alcohol Helpline.

This campaign sits alongside the policy, advice, research and community action work undertaken by the HPA to reduce the personal, social and economic costs the misuse of alcohol imposes on individuals, the community and the nation.

For further information or comment contact Lynne Walsh, HPA Corporate Communications Manager on 021 369 081

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