

2 Oct 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm rather confused (and most cases disgusted) about the Federal Government's proposed review and recommendation towards allowing supermarkets to stock alcohol on their shelves, especially in the Brisbane North Metro region where it was identified to be one of the worst affected areas of binge drinking according to the ABS. At a time when Australia has one of the worst (if not the worst) binge drinking culture among our adolescents, not to mention our state governments cracking down on these abusers through the 'zero tolerance' laws enacted in the last four or so years. I believe this recommendation totally goes against everything that our society and our system is trying to fight against... Which is aimed at curbing the level of binge drinking and subsequent potential alcohol fuelled violence and related crimes.

The last thing we need is more alcohol to be made readily accessible to our youths, let alone to the general adult population who are identified as frequent alcohol abusers. One of the main reasons why the sale of alcohol has, and is, currently restricted through the bottle-shops and taverns are because of the duty of care responsibility that these establishments are charged with. Obviously the taverns and associated licensed premises that actually serve alcohol legally have a much greater duty of care, but overall, the general accessibility and sale of alcohol is made inaccessible to those who are under the legal drinking age. Also too as Dr Shaun Rudd, President of the Australian Medical Assoc. of Qld highlighted, was that alcohol in easy access and view of small children would only serve further to 'normalise' the drinking culture as well. With a supermarket, the accessibility of alcohol is just made too easy. Not to mention the fact that a significant proportion of supermarket staff are generally underage themselves.

Considering the expense of some types and brands of alcohol, especially amongst under-age consumers and those that cannot afford to purchase these items, this could potentially create an increase in shoplifting crime. As opposed to bottle-shops and taverns, supermarkets don't have an under-age ban, they generally have a much larger floor space, less close in surveillance and very rarely have staff that checks bags through the ingress and egress points. Although certain higher priced items may be electronically tagged, not all items are or potentially will be.

Despite the success it has had in NSW, I don't believe we need to adopt the same measures up here in Queensland. As the so-called 'Smart-State', we should stand apart and identify the potential risks and negative repercussions that this could ultimately have, as opposed to chasing the typical money making venture that this creates for these retailers and other businesses.

Regards,

Breck Dodgshun