

17 November 2014

Competition Policy Review Secretariat
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600

To the Competition Policy Review Panel,

Re: Competition Policy Review Draft

On behalf of Maribyrnong City Council I am pleased to provide a submission to the Australian Government's Competition Policy Review Draft Report.

Maribyrnong City Council is located in Melbourne's west and includes the suburbs of Braybrook, Footscray, Kingsville, Maidstone, Maribyrnong, Seddon, Tottenham, West Footscray, and Yarraville. The City of Maribyrnong is an area of great diversity. Almost 40% of the population were born overseas, most in non-English speaking countries. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people account for a small but significant number of residents in our community and there is also a large student population.

Maribyrnong's Council Plan, which incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, highlights Council's commitment to the wellbeing of our residents. One of the Council's priorities is to reduce the health and social effects of alcohol within our community.

This Council is concerned with those recommendations in the Competition Policy Draft Review that have the ability to greatly increase the availability of alcohol within communities. Specifically these recommendations are:

1. Removing restrictions for planning and zoning for alcohol outlets;
2. Deregulating retail trading hours, and,
3. Reducing constraints on supermarkets being able to sell alcohol.

One of the guiding principles in the Competition Policy Review is to ensure competition laws are fit for purpose and improve the welfare of Australians. Council is of the opinion that the welfare of Australians will be disadvantaged by increasing availability of alcohol and therefore contrary to the Competition Policy Review's guiding principles.

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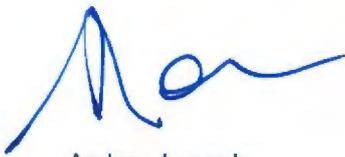


The recommended change in regulation around zoning, planning, trading hours and allowing supermarkets to sell alcohol will significantly increase the availability of alcohol in communities. Increases in the availability, affordability and promotion of alcohol has consistently been shown to increase alcohol related harms in both individuals and the communityⁱ. Heavy alcohol consumption is major causes of road accidents, domestic and public violence and crime and also strongly associated with chronic diseases including liver disease and brain damageⁱⁱ. This contributes to approximately \$15 billion dollars per year in costs to the Australian health care system. From an economic, health and social perspective decreasing the availability of alcohol within communities may help to reduce this toll.

Maribyrnong City Council is committed to enhancing the wellbeing of our community and notes the implementation of the recommendations made in the draft report will significantly affect local government's ability to manage and prevent alcohol related harms in the community. Maribyrnong City Council recommends the Australian Government consult with local governments with the intention to revise the abovementioned recommendations.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these matters further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Arden Joseph
Director Community Wellbeing