



Submission from the

**UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION**

Christchurch City Council's Draft Local Alcohol Policy

June 2013

SUBMISSION OUTLINE

This document covers the University of Canterbury Students' Association's (UCSA) written submission on the Christchurch City Council's (CCC) Draft Local Alcohol Policy, and incorporates multiple inputs from the student body.

It is prepared on behalf of the students, and includes opinion-based beliefs as well as evidential.

✓ ***The UCSA wishes to discuss the main points of our submission at the hearings, to be held in late July 2013.***

This submission has been completed on behalf of the UCSA, by Erin Jackson (President) and speaks for the membership of the organisation, which includes approximately 12,000 currently enrolled students of the University of Canterbury.

DETAILS:

Name: Erin Jackson

Organisation name: University of Canterbury Students' Association (UCSA)

Organisation Role: President

Contact Address: UCSA Offices
James Hight Building
University of Canterbury
Ilam, Christchurch

Postal Address: UCSA Offices
James Hight Building
PO Box 31311
Ilam, Christchurch, 8444

Phone Number (day): 021.253.7295 (evening): 03.364.2652

Email: president@ucsa.canterbury.ac.nz

Signature:

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	Page 4
2. Submission form	Page 6
3. Sample of collected opinions	Page 9
4. References / Notes	Page 12

INTRODUCTION

1. Context

- 1.1. The UCSA is greatly appreciative of the opportunity to comment on the Draft Local Alcohol Policy. We believe that there is a significant opportunity to address the question of alcohol-related harm within Christchurch, as the city looks to rebuild its infrastructure and offerings. We also believe that it is important to take into consideration a wide range of views and opinions from different stakeholders.
- 1.2. We seek to comment from the perspective of UC students; that is, a group of individuals that have committed to the city, who are seeking to gain a tertiary education, and who are looking for opportunities to meet new people and socialise whilst doing so. These 12,000 students, together with the other Tertiary Institutions in Christchurch, form a significant group of so-called “at-risk” patrons.
- 1.3. We have consulted widely on this policy; both formally and informally. Discussions have included conversations (as well as social media-led feedback and interaction) with students of the University of Canterbury (UC), as well as with prospective students, recent graduates and also with other tertiary students within Christchurch (notably also with the Lincoln Students’ Association, many of whose students reside within the city).
- 1.4. The presented submission is therefore a crystallisation and consolidation of the main themes that we, the UCSA, see as important when discussing the Draft Local Alcohol Policy.

2. The UCSA, as an organisation

- 2.1. The University of Canterbury Students’ Association exists to create belonging and ownership for student; and through a variety of means, we achieve this. We actively engage with over 80,000 students a year, which includes activities and events, media and communications and advocacy and welfare.
- 2.2.
- 2.3. Further context, as it relates specifically to Licencing matters:

Service	Number of students engaged with
“Phenomenal” Events (including Orientation-type events)	44,410
Smaller Events (including award ceremonies)	37,059
Foundry patronage	Approximately 2,500 per week, during the academic term

- 2.4. Since September 2010, our role in students’ lives has been somewhat altered. UC Students, the same individuals that collectively garnered so much public and community support through their altruistic actions following the disaster, are faced with different challenges to what existed previously. The creation, and the efforts, of the Student Volunteer Army has

achieved widespread recognition¹ However, some of the accompanying complications to being a student post-quake have not been well documented. These include shortages of accommodation and part-time employment, and extend to reduced socialising opportunities at established on-licence premises since the quakes.

- 2.5. It is because of this that we sought to create a “home” for students where one didn’t exist; by building an Events Centre (housing the much-loved institution, the Foundry).
- 2.6. One of the things that the UCSA is proud of is our systematic efforts to provide not only the best events (for example, by the end of 2013 we will have put on three of the biggest international musical acts in Christchurch) but also events that can complement and co-exist with our local community.
- 2.7. Through efforts such as our “Neighbourhood Vandalism Policy”²(which seeks to remedy harm created in the community and to ensure that the UCSA acts as a responsible neighbour), sustained, regular engagement in resident- and community- organisations, and through working closely with the local policing team, we have continued to improve our community engagement. Our objective is to ensure that our activities contribute to a positive experience for the community in which we operate.
- 2.8. It is due to our above efforts and experience that we believe we bring an important perspective to the stakeholder submissions; while we facilitate important social interaction between students, we also take our responsibilities and attitude towards alcohol consumption incredibly seriously. Our sustained commitment to this has been demonstrated by consistently good feedback within the immediate and wider community over the course of 2012 and 2013. This feedback has come through anecdotally and evidentially, and from a variety of stakeholders, who acknowledge our successful and competent management of two on-licenced premises.
- 2.9. It is because of the above experience that we believe that a vibrant city, and a safe city, are not mutually exclusive. That is we should strive for, and attain, both.

¹ Arguably, one of the highest honours that the Student Volunteer Army received was being named ANZAC of the Year in 2012. <http://www.rsa.org.nz/rsa-anzac-year-award>

² http://ucsa.org.nz/media/uploads/2011_09/neighbourhood-vandalism-policy-2011.pdf

SUBMISSION FORM

Due to the overwhelming amount of feedback on particular areas of the Draft Local Alcohol Policy, we have focussed on those key themes that attracted the most attention. Sections that we have not addressed have been deemed to fit within our “neither agree nor disagree” category.

Reflecting the majority of the feedback from students we heard from, we have included feedback on three main themes arising from the draft Local Alcohol Policy:

- Opening Hours of on-licenced premises;
- Proposed one-way door policy; and
- Off-licenced premises

3. Opening Hours of on-licenced premises

- 3.1. Students expressed substantial concern with the proposed maximum trading hours for on-licenced premises such as bars, taverns, clubs and nightclubs in the Central City (*Section 2.2.2 of the draft Local Alcohol Policy*).
- 3.2. Feedback included concerns regarding both perception and reality of whether Christchurch could claim to have a vibrant nightlife when compared to other cities around the country, in a post-quake environment. Many cited concerns over the ability to attract other students and young people to consider Christchurch as a destination. Concerns included “other cities with a better nightlife will be more appealing” and “no one will see this as a vibrant city to study in”.
- 3.3. We are concerned that the repercussions of this perception / reality (which will be shaped by the draft Local Alcohol Policy) may have a potential negative effect on other socialising options being utilised more; such as an increase in flat parties. The effect of this may be felt by local communities and policing teams; and while it should not shape policy consideration in its entirety, we believe is something that should be taken under advisement.
- 3.4. While some believe that the draft Local Alcohol Policy will not result in a significant shift from the status quo, we are concerned that the perception of Christchurch as a quiet, conservative and restrictive city, as compared to other university towns, will have an effect.

4. Proposed one-way door policy

- 4.1. This proposed restriction has generated negative feedback from students spoken to. The concern centered around the ability to move venues in the evening, in order to catch up with friends. This concern is real and legitimate, with many suggesting that if they were not able to move freely then they believed it would jeopardise their chances of patronising on-licence premises. The flow on effect of this is obvious, increased gathering on private premises, and therefore increase likelihood of neighbourhood disruption.
- 4.2. What appears ambiguous within the draft Local Alcohol Policy however is the application of the proposed one-way door policy. If a one-way door policy is to be implemented individually across each and every bar or night-club, then very real concern exists. If, however, the one-way door policy was to apply to a *precinct* (i.e. patrons would gain access

to the precinct before 1am, and then be able to move around *within* the precinct), a more positive response was received from students.

- 4.3. The UCSA appreciates the intention of the proposed one-way door policy, but would strongly urge that its application is to a precinct of venues.
- 4.4. We believe that in doing so, the following goals of the draft Local Alcohol Policy are achieved:
 - 4.4.1. By retaining the incentive to enter before the one-way door restriction, it will ensure that patrons are socialising within the precinct (consistent with the intention of Section 2.2.2). This will lead to the re-emphasise that the focus is the health and well-being of those patrons consuming alcohol on an on-licence premises. Moreover, we believe, the precinct approach, will heighten the opportunities to monitor the safety of patrons.
 - 4.4.2. If the proposed one-way door policy is implemented discretely across individual venues, we would suggest that the number of patrons being placed in potentially vulnerable situations by leaving and not being able to regain access will drastically increase. The UCSA, noting that the majority of our students do not live within an easy walking distance of the central city, are strongly opposed to any moves that may place our students in a more vulnerable position when leaving the central city.
 - 4.4.3. One of the key themes from our students is the desire for flexibility and options when making decisions about where to socialise, and which premises to patron for an evening. We believe that designating a precinct where all premises operate a one-way door policy will go further to recognising both the intention of the draft Local Alcohol Policy. In our opinion it will also go a significant way to address the concerns of the student community.
- 4.5. It is in this way that the *precinct* one-way door policy goes further to reflecting the needs, values and preferences of a significant group of stakeholders within the city.

5. Off-licence premises

- 5.1. The feedback regarding the proposed maximum trading hours for off-licence premises such as supermarkets [...] (Section 2.1.1 of the draft Local Alcohol Policy) was largely negative and critical, but often more for the perceived harshness of the measure than for a desire to purchase and consume alcohol. The question of control, restriction and self-autonomy was raised, which contributed to some of the questions regarding Christchurch's vibrancy (as discussed above).
- 5.2. However, the secondary piece of feedback that we received was that the measure of restricting the trading hours for off-licence premises may have another effect in that it incentivises bulk purchasing for "the off chance" occasion. The UCSA believes that the earlier on off-licence vendor is restricted from trading, the higher the risk of consumers (students and non-students alike) purchasing large amounts of alcohol, in order to account for the "off chance" occasion.. This directly contradicts with the intention of the draft Local Alcohol Policy, and should be taken under consideration. Moreover, the simple fact of having a larger than needed store of alcohol will increase the likelihood that the "off-chance" comes to fruition, thereby increasing consumption at private residences.
- 5.3. Furthermore, we are strongly in support of consistency across all areas when considering the trading hours for off-licenced premises; it would be incredibly detrimental were trading

hours in adjacent suburbs, townships, or regions different to those in Christchurch, as it would exponentially increase associated risks.

6. SAMPLE OF COLLECTED OPINIONS

- 6.1. The following are a snapshot of opinions collected across our Facebook page, in the last week of June. To visit the page, go to www.facebook.com/theUCSA.
- 6.2. Comments that have received a greater amount of support (i.e. multiple likes) have been highlighted.

I think that the 9am - 9pm selling of alcohol is not going to change much, like the culture and the way people drink. So am not for or against. However the first two points I do not agree with and think there are different ways of controlling the situation such as putting all the bar and nightclubs in one place making it easier for police to deal with drunk people and stop people wandering around the city drunk trying to get to another bar.
"No buildings, no nightlife, no reason to stop"
Good idea - also, everyone should check out http://chchlate.com/submission/ - it has a really easy submission process
Central City bars and nightclubs?? What bars and nightclubs????
Clearly we live in a very free society, where liberty is held above all else. Oh wait...
Confused. A closing time of 3am in the central city.....a closing time of 1am everywhere else in the central city. So where exactly is the 3am closing time and where is the 1am closing time? Does this include the Casino?
No, no and no.
I fail to see how this change would, in any way, motivate investors of new bars in Christchurch. For a city that lacks venues to limit the trading hours of bars to 1 am seems somewhat counter-productive to restoring Christchurch's night-life and economy. This change also does not alter the drinking-culture and only acts as a limitation to local businesses who are affected by the loss of revenue. In my opinion, if the Council decides to take this action the negative repercussions will greatly outweigh the benefits
This is a terrible proposal. Will just mean no bars are built and no-one can have a good time. This won't solve binge drinking as most people do that at home. This will just mean that by the time people are ready to go out, the bars will be closed. So they will just drink more at home.
Note also that while other cities already have bars with owners that have invested large amounts of money (so have to just live with these proposals and take the hit), Chch investors have the option of just pulling out of building new entertainment venues entirely so we could just end up with a very boring city. Not much good for UC especially, trying to bring students back to the city...
All stupid and pointless
I think they are all sh*t proposals! It will just lead to more house parties which will just end up giving the police and noise control more work to do. I think all the older people who will vote for it will soon get sick of it once it gets brought out and they will be the ones complaining about loud house parties etc next door or just down the road from them
A 1am closing time for outer bars means there will be lots of people on the street who won't be ready to go home cause quite frankly it's too early. It will mean - People won't be able to get home because public transport will be finished and taxi services won't be able to keep up - Inability to get home often causes frustration, violence etc.. (just have a look at

<p>major cities in Aus when there is insufficient transport available - frequently get fights over taxis)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It will actually promote people to drink faster because they want to get their "fill" and "money's worth" before the bar closes and will be under time pressure to do so - The early closing times leave little time to get from a restaurant after having a meal to a bar and enjoy a substantial evening out because the closing time is simply too early
<p>The 1am closing of outer bars coinciding with inner city bar lock out of 1am means it will be difficult to get from an early closing bar to a later closing one in time to beat the lock out this will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cause many people to arrive at later bars small amounts of time too late to get in because of competition for transport, this will result in many angry people on the streets because of the stupid policy - It may cause outer operators to lose out on a once profitable business (if I was them I'd be suing for compensation of loss of business) if patrons end up going to the city because it's just not worth going to venues shutting at 1am cause it's too early
<p>Forcing people into the city centre for a night out will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cause issues and competition for transport in and out of the city - may increase the amount of drink driving because of the larger amount of distances that would need to be covered for an evening out - may leave some people without transport on the streets and unable to get home leaving them vulnerable to predators - kill off development of suburban culturally diverse evening entertainment venues
<p>It really seems like the council is trying to take away our rights of freedom of association (basic human right) in the evening by indirectly trying to force us all to go home</p>
<p>9pm end of liquor sales is simply too early, a lot of people don't even get home from work till about 9pm or later, before they're even planned their evening, leaving them little chance to plan their evening purchases accordingly. Not that many people work a standard 9-5 work day anymore, the council and the city needs to be able to accommodate the growing amount of diverse work hours and life balances that a modern city and economy requires. In many major cities a large amount of people don't even consider going out till 11pm.</p>
<p>poor idea, short sighted and ignorant</p>
<p>Long overdue but may not help much in changing the drinking culture here but definitely a step in the right direction. Alcohol does not do much good to you so why spend so much money on it. Why not save for a better tomorrow?</p>
<p>Most of these points have already been made but 1 & 2 could cause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A decreased amount of young people in the city. Not just students but other young workers who have money to spend in the city. - An increased amount of house parties going into the early hours causing problems for the police. - A decrease in the amount of investment in bars in Christchurch at a time where we're trying to build up the city. - A decrease in the amount of time and money tourists spend in the city. <p>Point 3: I don't take as much issue with this as it will help people to plan their drinking</p>

better but as has been pointed out it could cause an inconvenience for those who don't work 9-5 type hours.
Let's just close Christchurch completely and all move overseas.
If Christchurch wants to be an attractive city for young people to work and study it needs a vibrant nightlife. One way doors and early closing times make Christchurch sound like an overgrown provincial town, rather than an internationally competitive city
Yeah, let's help out a university already struggling for numbers by giving students another reason not to study here. Seems legit...
Give new businesses looking at supporting and signing leases in the CBD the freedom to decide how they trade! It's a chain reaction, brave developers need tenants to recoup the millions they're spending, tenants need the ability to trade as needed to make money to pay rent, the public need to be enticed into town by a fun and buzzing CBD. The city needs life at all hours! I can see that everyone will end up in Victoria street at the casino leaving the CBD lifeless again!
Glad I'm not here for much longer.
Maximum trading hours for off-licences is a good idea but 9pm is too early. Midnight would be more sensible. The others are completely stupid. The city is struggling economically as it is with all the issues surrounding the earthquake.
Don't see how this offers a solution to any of the anti-social behaviour associated with drinking. There used to be 6am closing for bars in the city and then 3am and now a proposed 1am closure- are we regressing back to 6pm 'fill your boots and drive home' closing time??? Seems a though all it does is put the drinks out at a different time of night
I can't see how closing at 1am will reduce drinking. After all, it was the 6pm closing time that caused the binge drinking culture! some of us actually like to go out, dance and meet new people, its not all about the booze. the council should think about the fact that cities internationally have bars and clubs open much later than 3am... If any change should be made, it should be to let inner city bars open later not earlier! I've made a submission, everyone should make their views known via submissions.

REFERENCES / NOTES

2012 UCSA Annual Report, available from www.ucsa.org.nz

<http://www.rsa.org.nz/rsa-anzac-year-award>

http://ucsa.org.nz/media/uploads/2011_09/neighbourhood-vandalism-policy-2011.pdf