

02.03.20

Talofa Iava Environment Canterbury Councillors,

I recently heard the announcement of the successful applicants of the Greater Christchurch bus contracts. As a bus user, hearing there will be an increase in electric and low emissions buses is good. While that is good, I wanted to write to you specifically about bus advertising. I understand from phone advice from ECAN and Metro staff, each contract holder sets their own policy for bus advertising. I would like you as our ECAN Councillors to please negotiate a contract variation, and for future negotiations have an advertising exclusion policy that all organisations who wish to win the contracts must abide by.

Lately I have noticed on the back of some Purple Line buses which come into my community (the Ilam / Riccarton area) alcohol advertising. I am unsure whether advertising of this kind is also on other routes.

The most recent World Health Organisation, UNICEF and Lancet Commission into 'A future for the world's children?' co-chaired by Rt. Hon. Helen Clark, and released in February 2020, has called for a new protocol to be added to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, for regulators to act against commercial harm to children.¹ They say:

"Children around the world are exposed to severe threats from the commercial sector, by advertising and marketing that exploits their vulnerability, by governments not regulating products that harm their growth and development, and by use of their data and images without their knowledge and permission. According to Kickbusch and colleague's approaches to health promotion have "totally underestimated globalised corporate power combined with its global marketing onslaught and its transnational influence on political decision making," a discussion that has yet to be explicitly extended to children." - (Page 630)

"Children worldwide are also highly exposed to advertising for products nominally for use by adults only, such as alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes, with exposure to advertising associated with greater consumption." – (Page 631)

They also call on local government to strengthen their links with households, communities and national wellbeing projects:

"Ideally, local governments address the local social determinants of health, implement public health policies and programmes for children and young people, and coordinate multi-sectoral action for the children most affected. District and municipal authorities are often focal points in convening and coordinating the actions of multiple actors. The capacity of local government to manage relationships, improve synergies, constructively resolve conflict, and mobilise populations, is an essential role in the SDG era." - (Page 627)

In 2018 I was a Panel Member of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction, in our report we stated that:

"Throughout the Inquiry process, we heard a strong appetite for strengthening alcohol reforms, particularly around decreasing the exposure of young people to alcohol advertising and promotions. We believe the case for change has been made and action on alcohol reform is required. In our view,

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32540-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32540-1/fulltext)

the main impediment to stronger alcohol reform is a lack of political will.” - (Page 175)²

The case we highlighted can be further read in ‘He Ara Oranga – The Report of the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction.’ In this report we raise key past recommendations from Ministerial forums and the Law Commission which were not enacted and should have been. As an organisation which identifies children as one of the three most “transport disadvantaged customers”,³ and in wanting to be able to support them to travel to education, their other commitments, connect and maintain health and wellbeing, I ask that you all stand strongly against alcohol promotion that affects children and young people.

Could you please consider

1. ECAN Establishing an ethical exclusion policy for all contractors it uses, including bus operators that they be required to not advertise alcohol and or, alcohol products, tobacco, e-cigarettes and gambling.
2. I would also like ECAN to review the wider WHO, UNICEF and Lancet findings and develop a public response to this. One specific area I would like to see addressed in this paper is whether the findings that broader exclusions for fast food and other products which contractors may advertise is socialising harmful products for children and should also be included in an ethical exclusion policy.

I will also be writing to Red Bus who I understand is the contract holder of the Purple Line route, asking their Governors to consider the call from the Clark co-led commission that:

“Commercial governance is essential to protect children from alcohol, tobacco, and insidious advertising which encourages formula feeding, junk-food diets, consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, gambling, violent media and games, inappropriate sexual behaviour, and other risks.” - (Page 608)

I look forward to hearing from you all, and would happily meet you to discuss this proposal.

Fa’afetai lava,

Josiah Tualamali’i

² <https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/>

³ Canterbury Regional Public Transport Plan 2018 – 2028, Page 79