



**SUBMISSION TO COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT, TRANSPORT
AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: LAND TRANSPORT
AMENDMENT BILL**

January 2014

Submission to:

Committee Secretariat
Transport and Industrial Relations
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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To
Committee Secretariat
Transport and Industrial Relations
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Date: 22/01/14

This submission is from: College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc

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The College of Nurses is deeply concerned with the role alcohol plays in bringing significant harm to many New Zealanders. The current legislation does not reflect just how serious that harm is. The cost to our society is immense and the harm caused by alcohol impaired drivers is just one facet of that harm. Nevertheless, at a cost of nearly \$5 million per fatal accident as reported just this week, and the known connection between alcohol consumption and traffic accidents, this legislation is one step, but not the only step forward.

The College of Nurses supports the Land Transport Amendment Bill with its purpose of lowering the legal alcohol limits for drivers aged 20 and above from:

- 80 milligrams to 50 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood (0.08 to 0.05) and
- 400 micrograms to 250 micrograms of alcohol per litre of breath.

The College of Nurses support increased penalties for those with drivers with raised blood alcohol levels as an important mechanism to shift the public tolerance for driving under the influence of alcohol. These measures include:

- the introduction of an infringement offence for driving with blood alcohol levels between 51 and 80mg per 100ml of blood or 251-400mcg per litre of breath.
- a \$200 infringement fine and 50 demerit points for those people who drink and drive under the new infringement offence range.
- a \$500 infringement fine and 50 demerit points if blood test was taken after the person failed or refused to undergo an evidential breath test.

The College of Nurses supports:

- retaining existing penalties for those over 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100ml of blood (0.08) and 400mcg of alcohol per litre of breath.
- the introduction of a three month driver license suspension for drivers who accumulate 100 or more demerit points from drink driving offences within two years.
- allowing an enforcement officer to immobilise a vehicle or forbid a person to drive if it appears to the enforcement officer that the result of an evidential breath test is positive (currently this can be done only if the person's breath exceeds 400 micrograms of alcohol per litre of breath).

Comment:

We support the Land Transport Amendment Bill because evidence shows that a lower adult blood alcohol level is a cost effective intervention that saves lives and improves road safety (Babor 2003, MoT 2013). The public has shown strong support for lower levels, demonstrating the acceptance by New Zealanders of this change (MoT 2013).

The College of Nurses considers it important that the impact and effectiveness of this intervention is monitored; and if significant reductions in alcohol-related road crashes are not observed within 3 years that consideration be given to increasing the penalties and a further reduction of the BAC level for driving.

Any legislation must be well-advertised, enforced and part of a broader legislative framework. To this end, the College of Nurses stresses that it is imperative that:

- there is a media campaign which encourages society in general, to regard drinking and driving as a socially unacceptable combination.
- the Police are adequately resourced to enforce these changes.
- there is increased use of alcohol screening & brief interventions and referral to treatment for those caught drinking and driving.
- a reduction in the accessibility of alcohol both in terms of the hours it is available, and the outlets at which it can be purchased.

We do not wish to appear before the committee to speak to the submission.

Written on behalf of the College by:
Annette Milligan
Fellow College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc

References:

- 1)Babor T., Caetano C., Casswell S. et al. (2010). Alcohol: no ordinary commodity-research and public policy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2)Ministry of Transport (2013). Regulatory Impact Statement- Safer Journeys: lowering the legal alcohol limits for driving.
<http://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About/Documents/RIS-safer-journeys-lowering-legal-alcohol-limits-for-driving.pdf> (Accessed 08 January 2014).