

**Letter to the Editor**  
**Sunday Star Times, 5 February, 2016**

**Harmful Drinking Coming Down**

Dear Sir/Madam

A recent article by Adam Dudding (SST January 24) would have us believe that the drinks industry not only survives because of risky-drinking consumers but actively targets them to make a buck. This is simply not true.

The fact is 80% of us enjoy a social, responsible drink. Additionally, the Ministry of Health also reports that fewer of us are drinking, risky drinking amongst youth has substantially decreased, drinking-related injuries have decreased, the age which we start drinking has increased (this is a good thing) and binge drinking has decreased.

But let's be clear - young men, young women, Maori and Pacific Islanders continue to be over represented in harmful drinking statistics. This is as unacceptable to our industry as it is to all of us.

To fix this some say increase prices or shut the doors of pubs and bottle stores earlier and still others promote putting the purchase age up. But none of these actually work to improve the way we drink.

To do this means all of us taking responsibility for better drinking – the pub and bottle store owner, the parent, the workmate, the friend, the person lifting a glass right now, government and industry. It's a long term conversation which will accelerate the positive changes already happening.

To see what we're doing collectively as an industry to help create a moderate drinking culture take a look at [cheers.org.nz](http://cheers.org.nz).

Robert Brewer  
Chief Executive  
Spirits New Zealand

Jenny Cameron  
Acting Chief Executive  
Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand

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