

Booze ban at sports fields?

OTOROHANGA police sergeant Andy Connors wants binge drinkers banned from the side lines.

At a submissions hearing on May 11, Mr Connors urged the Waitomo District Council to consider extending their CBD liquor ban to include council owned sports fields when finalising its 2015-2025 Long Term Plan (LTP).

He made his submission on behalf of the clubCHAMPS project team, which comprises police, Population Health staff and the Waitomo district road safety co-ordinator.

The clubCHAMPS project was initiated in 2010 to help North King Country sports clubs reduce alcohol-related harm following the deaths of two Otorohanga Sports Club members in an alcohol-related car crash earlier that year.

"The extended liquor ban would encourage a safe and welcoming environment in these public spaces and reduce the negative impact of alcohol consumption in public spaces," said Mr Connors.

"It would also support sports clubs which use these fields, especially those advocating for improved sideline behaviour, to provide family friendly environments which have the ability to de-normalise alcohol use for children and young people.

"We are aware that there may be special events where organisers may wish to sell or supply alcohol and it is noted that in Hamilton City, the council is able to grant dispensations or a waiver to allow special events to sell or supply alcohol via a Special Licence application.

"This may be an option if there is a decision to extend the liquor ban to council-owned sports fields."

Council-owned sports fields are Te Kuiti Domain, Centennial Park (Te Kuiti), Marokopa Domain, Benneydale Domain, St Helen's Domain (Aria), Rukuhia Domain (Piopio) and Tainui Weterere Domain (Mokau). Rugby Park in Te Kuiti is owned by the Maniapoto Rugby Sub-Union.

Following the meeting, Waitomo mayor Brian Hanna identified several of the district's sports grounds that the council could influence through liquor bans.

"It's all about getting people to stop drinking while watching sports and we're really keen to support that. It's probably only a small number of people who do it, so we'll look at how we can help clubCHAMPS reduce that number even further."

Submissions to WDC's draft LTP will be considered at a meeting on Wednesday.



BOOZE PATROL: Otorohanga police sergeant Andy Connors has called for the Waitomo District Council to extend their CBD liquor ban to council-owned sports fields throughout the district.

Books bound for Fiji

IT'S often been said that one person's trash is another person's treasure.

That's how Te Kuiti Rotarian Roger Wiggins saw Waitomo District Library's old children's non-fiction books.

Past their 'use by' date, the books were to be removed from library shelves but Mr Wiggins and his fellow Rotarians believed they still had some use - in Fiji.

"We didn't want the books to be thrown out when they could be used by those who needed them," he says.

Librarian Jean Hitchen acquired Waitomo District Council's approval to gift more than 100 books to Mr Wiggins, who then emailed Malcolm Paterson of the Suva North Rotary Club to find a school in need of books.

Mr Wiggins says St John Bosco Primary School students in Nasinu, near the capital Suva, were perfect candidates as the 720 youngsters have not had one library book to read since the school was established in 1980.

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