

Profiting from the harm caused by alcohol

October 31 2016



“The industry relies on the harmful use of alcohol for its sales and therefore its profits, and we should not be surprised by the extent to which they go to protect these,” Professor Sally Casswell says. Credit: Massey University

New research from the International Alcohol Control study, coordinated by Massey University, demonstrates the extent to which the alcohol industry relies on harmful use of alcohol to make money.

Professor Sally Casswell, director of The SHORE and Whāriki Research Centre is the lead author on the paper entitled 'How the alcohol industry relies on harmful use of alcohol and works to protect its profits', published in the *Drug and Alcohol Review*.

She says [public health](#) researchers and advocates are increasingly concerned by the involvement of the [alcohol industry](#), especially the powerful transnational alcohol corporations, in the development of [alcohol policy](#) internationally.

"The industry consistently lobbies against effective policy and, as in the recent case in Scotland with minimum unit price, successfully holds up or completely blocks policy that would reduce alcohol-related harm.

"This analysis shows clearly the conflict of interest that exists between the transnational alcohol corporations and public health. It's very similar to that of the tobacco industry," Professor Casswell says.

"Results from five different countries, New Zealand, Australia, Mongolia, Vietnam and Thailand, have shown a similar pattern. Overall more than half [59 per cent] of the alcohol consumed was consumed in heavy drinking occasions. That's eight or more drinks for men and six or more for women.

"The industry relies on the harmful use of alcohol for its sales and therefore its profits, and we should not be surprised by the extent to which they go to protect these. A stronger response by governments around the world is needed," Professor Casswell says.

More information: Sally Casswell et al. How the alcohol industry relies on harmful use of alcohol and works to protect its profits, *Drug and Alcohol Review* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/dar.12460](https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.12460)

Provided by Massey University

Citation: Profiting from the harm caused by alcohol (2016, October 31) retrieved 28 December 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-10-profiting-alcohol.html>

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