



Auckland City Centre Residents' Group MEDIA RELEASE

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Auckland city centre residents are appealing for a police substation to be returned to the downtown area. They also want more enforcement of existing public alcohol bans to combat anti-social behaviour.

A spate of recent assaults, many alcohol-fuelled, are concerning those who live in apartments in and around Queen Street and Karangahape Road, says the Auckland City Centre Residents' Group (CCRG).

"We would like to see the return of a permanently manned city centre police station" says CCRG spokesman Antony Phillips. "When the one in Fort Street was closed in 2013 there were fears crime in the area would increase. Unfortunately these fears have now been realized."

"At the time officials stated that the city centre would be well served by the central police station on Mayoral Drive. Subsequently that closed and the station moved further out to College Hill. This leaves the most densely populated residential area in the entire country without a physical police presence."

Lack of police on the beat in the city centre is resulting in more anti-social behaviour says Antony Phillips. "A lot illegal public drinking goes on until something bad happens, then policing is reactive."

There are also too many alcohol retail outlets located in such a densely populated area maintains the CCRG. Particularly late night liquor stores selling cut-price alcohol. These outlets often become focal points for public drinking and subsequent anti-social behaviour.

The Auckland City Centre Residents' Group fully supports licensed restaurants and bars which responsibly serve alcohol in a congenial environment. "What we need is better enforcement of public alcohol consumption bylaws and a reduction in the proliferation of cut-price liquor stores," says Antony Phillips.

The alcohol industry should be made to pay more for the damage it does adds the CCRG. Current taxes on beer and wine in New Zealand are much lower than in Australia. It's estimated the damage from alcohol consumption costs NZ society about \$6 billion a year, yet taxes on alcohol generate barely 20% of that.

"Alcohol abuse isn't being sufficiently tackled in Auckland's city centre and its residents must live with often serious anti-social public behaviour as a consequence," says Antony Phillips. "The police do a good job but they are mostly reactive, not proactive, in preventing crime. We need police on the beat again and more resources to be focused on the city centre by both the police and council enforcement."

Many people now call Auckland's city centre home and they need better protection from bad public behaviour fuelled by alcohol and drugs says Antony Phillips.

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