

Social well-being must be driven by the Community.

New Zealand Licensing Trusts epitomise the community enterprise methodology. They were established in the mid 1940s. Returning troops from World War two and their home families voted to restore liquor licensing to a number of 'dry areas'. The 'dry areas' evolved from the New Zealand temperance campaign of the late 1880s and early 1900s. There was at this time public concern on drinking conditions and the facilities provided by the private sector. Have we as a society now come full circle?

Advocates of community control for liquor consumption looked overseas for successful examples of community ownership of licensed premises. This was the catalyst for the introduction of a slightly modified version from that of the Carlisle scheme in the north of England. The profits from the liquor outlets that they owned and operated were distributed to the state. The proposed New Zealand model differed in that profits would be distributed by the local community Licensing Trust boards in support of community activities. This was and remains their strongest benefit which endears them to their communities. Did our forefathers have it right all along?

In 1943 following local representations to the New Zealand government on the merits of the Carlisle scheme, a form of public control under the Invercargill Licensing Trust Act (1943) was set up. In 1947 the Masterton District Licensing Trust was formed with their act providing for an elective trust board as opposed to the appointed trust of Invercargill.

By 1949 the Licensing Trust Act which encompassed the establishment of all future licensing trusts was passed. The Act has since been written into Sale of Liquor Act legislation. This includes the important mandate that all Licensing Trust boards would be elected from within their local communities. Referral in the legislation was that Boards would be required to uphold the social mandate to sell alcohol with care, moderately and responsibly. Paramount would be the well-being of its communities.

This model of alcohol control worked well in New Zealand for many years. However public pressure has since diluted the positive impact that New Zealand Licensing Trusts has had on responsible alcohol sale and consumption. This article does not set out to support the merits

of licensing trusts but argues that if communities in New Zealand are serious about improving regulation and consumption should look no further than what is before them. In essence, let's not reinvent the wheel!

Masterton Licensing Trust has and will continue to have the well being of its communities as an engaging value for its existence. It is however a partnership. We must provide outlets and customer experiences that fulfil expectations. But the community must also play a part and inform what its expectations are and when delivered, support what we are attempting to achieve. Equally so, if it does not like what is being delivered, it must say so, even through agitation if necessary. For little is worse than complacency and apathy.