SELLING ALCOHOL IS NOT AN AUTOMATIC RIGHT

Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says the decision by the Liquor Commission to restrict the sale of full strength beer at two communities highlights a number of things.

Firstly the debate, lead by the Government, as to whether people in communities should be able have social club on their land has omitted the fact that the liquor commission is the one who grants liquor licenses regardless of any public support for a license.

Gerry says that under the Liquor Act the Liquor Commissioner must take into account the objects of the Act

Objects
(1) The primary object of this Act is to regulate the sale, provision, promotion and consumption of liquor:

(a) so as to minimise the harm associated with the consumption of liquor;
and
(b) in a way that takes into account the public interest in the sale, provision, promotion and consumption of liquor.

Gerry says that whether someone wants full strength beer to be sold at a social club, that decision is not made because someone used it in an election campaign to attract votes, but by a Liquor Commission who is not subject to the strategies of political campaigning but by the objects of the Act.

In the end the Liquor Commission has shown that to achieve its objects, to minimise the harm associated with the consumption of liquor, you need to reduce supply because the alternative promoted by the Government, that is reducing demand, requires a massive change of mindset regarding the consumption of alcohol and that will take decades, if ever, and by that time many people will have suffered the consequences of a flawed theory.

Of course in the end, all this debate can be hypothetical; Minister Macklin has the final say, at least on most aboriginal land.