



**Media Statement**  
**Monday 10 October 2016**

**Beverage habits shift to water and low sugar options.**  
Research shows Kiwis consuming more water, diet drinks - less sugar.

The latest research out today on beverage trends in New Zealand calls into question the need for a 'sugar' tax on soft drinks.

Olly Munro, President of the New Zealand Beverage Council says the data clearly shows that the buying and consumption patterns of Kiwi consumers indicates that soft drinks – being targeted for a soda tax – are not the significant contributor to the obesity problem they are made out to be. He says that product innovation, changes in pack sizes and marketing initiatives has seen major transformation take place in the category in the past five years and the impact is significant.

The research commissioned by the New Zealand Beverage Council from independent research company Nielsen shows that almost 53%<sup>i</sup> of people surveyed say they are concerned about the role that sugar plays in their diet, and their consumption behaviour – certainly around soft drinks – would seem to corroborate that.

Munro says that sales of low and no-calorie soft drink options have jumped by 67%<sup>ii</sup> between 2008 and 2016. “That means that despite a 4.2% decrease<sup>iii</sup> in consumption of regular soft drinks since 2010, we see obesity levels in this country continuing to rise. That means there are clearly other factors at play,” he says.

“Water (tap, bottled and cooler) is still the most popular beverage for both children and adults in New Zealand, up over 10%<sup>iv</sup> on 2010 and growing. Bottled water sales have grown more than 25%<sup>v</sup> year on year for the past two years.”

The research showed that there has been a significant increase in consumption in alternate beverages like milk, herbal teas and smoothies<sup>vi</sup>, while almost a third<sup>vii</sup> of New Zealanders say that they never drink soft drinks. It also revealed that Kiwis drink twice as much alcohol vs soft drinks<sup>viii</sup> on a weekly basis. “That’s telling,” says Munro.

“The research produced a lot of facts and figures but the story this is telling is that soft drink as a single product, yes - some of which contains sugar, should not be made into public enemy number one. We are drinking more water, fewer regular soft drinks and are actually getting most of our daily energy intake (over 98%<sup>ix</sup>) from food and other beverages – not soft drinks,” he says.

Munro says that the Beverage Council has consistently said it is eager to be part of any cross-party solution that addresses childhood obesity in this country. “What we also want, though, is for there to be some balance to the discussion which seems to have skewed towards soft drinks in the past couple of years,” says Munro. “We believe this research provides some of that balance.”

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:

Emma Morrison  
New Zealand Beverage Council  
Email: [emma@nzbev.org.nz](mailto:emma@nzbev.org.nz)  
Mobile: +64 21 916 647

### **About the NZBC**

The New Zealand Beverage Council (NZBC) represents the manufacturers of New Zealand's juice, carbonated drink and bottled water brands, and their suppliers. The NZBC acts:

- as a forum to discuss issues of concern and interest to the industry
- as a self-regulator ensuring product adherence to all relevant codes and statutes
- as a provider of technical assistance to members
- as an advocate for consumer education on health and nutrition issues.

Its members represent over 95 per cent of all juice and non-alcoholic beverages sold at retail level in New Zealand.

### APPENDIX

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<sup>i</sup> Source: Nielsen Consumer and Media Insights YE Q1 2016. Base: 18+ (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>ii</sup> The NZ Beverage Council calculation based in part of data reported by Nielsen through its Retail Measurement Service for the Non Alcoholic Beverage category volume sales for the 52-week period ending September 14 2008 and September 18, 2016, for the following markets: Total Supermarkets, Defined Service Stations, Fix, Four Square, Night & Day, Liquorland, Liquor King Retail, Total Henrys, NZ Liquor Centre, NZ The Mill, The Trusts, NZ Thirsty Liquor. Non Alcoholic Beverages = Carbonated Soft Drinks, Fruit Juice and Drinks, RTD Energy Beverages, RTD Other Beverages (e.g. Teas), Sports Lifestyle, and Water. (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>iii</sup> The NZ Beverage Council calculation based in part on frequency of beverage drinking reported by Nielsen through its Consumer and Media Insights service for YE Q1 2016 (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>iv</sup> Source: Nielsen Consumer and Media Insights YE Q1 2016 and YE Q1 2010. (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>v</sup> The NZ Beverage Council calculation based in part of data reported by Nielsen through its Retail Measurement Service for the Bottled Water category volume sales for the 52-week period ending September 20 2015 and September 18, 2016, for the following markets: Total Supermarkets, Defined Service Stations, Fix, Four Square, Night & Day, Liquorland, Liquor King Retail, Total Henrys, NZ Liquor Centre, NZ The Mill, The Trusts, NZ Thirsty Liquor (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>vi</sup> Source: Nielsen Consumer and Media Insights YE Q1 2016 and YE Q1 2010. Base: 18+, drink Beverage Category at least monthly. (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>vii</sup> Source: Nielsen Consumer and Media Insights YE Q1 2016. Base: 10+, people who answered yes to do not drink Fizzy/Soft Drinks or Not Specified. (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>viii</sup> The NZ Beverage Council calculation based in part on frequency of beverage drinking reported by Nielsen through its Consumer and Media Insights service for YE Q1 2016 (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)

<sup>ix</sup> The NZ Beverage Council calculation based in part on frequency of beverage drinking reported by Nielsen through its Consumer and Media Insights service for YE Q1 2016 (Copyright © 2016, The Nielsen Company.)