



ALCOHOL FEES BYLAW 2025: INSIGHTS REPORT

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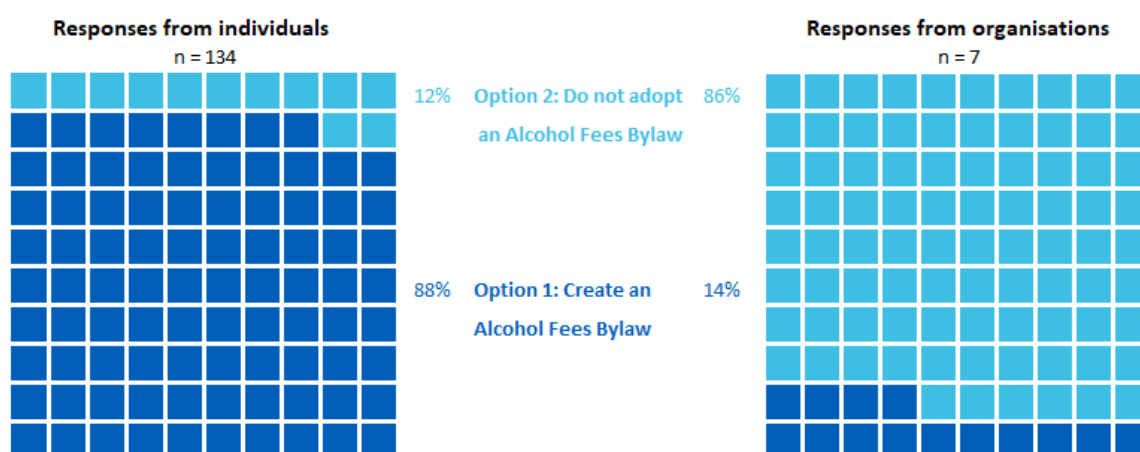
Report reviewed by:
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March 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is proposing a new Alcohol Fees Bylaw (Bylaw) to set fees and charges for alcohol licences in Hamilton.

Council consulted with the community on whether they would support the proposed Bylaw. The community could have their say either digitally or in hardcopy form, anytime from 21 January to 25 February 2025. Council received a total of 142 submissions; after one duplicate submission was condensed, in total Council heard from 134 community members and seven organisations.

The vast majority of individual respondents (118 of 134) were in support of the Bylaw, while almost every organisation (six of seven) was opposed.



SUBMISSIONS INSIGHTS

Council is proposing a new Bylaw to set fees and charges for alcohol licences in Hamilton. This Bylaw would allow Council to set the amount it charges to alcohol licence holders (e.g. bars, alcohol stores and supermarkets), to help cover costs relating to alcohol licensing.

Council currently use the fees set by legislation 11 years ago; these fees are no longer recovering a reasonable amount of the costs of licensing activities. This means every time Council processes an alcohol licence it costs more than the fee paid by the licensee. Council is proposing to increase alcohol licensing charges by 34% in July 2025 to recover 95% of current costs. The remaining 5% would continue to be covered by rates.

Council consulted with the community on their levels of support for the proposed Bylaw. Response forms were available both online and as hardcopies in the Municipal Building and local libraries. In total, we received 142 submissions. One of these was a duplicate (i.e. multiple submissions from one person) and was condensed into a single submission. After this process, we received a total of 141 unique submissions; we heard from 134 individuals and seven organisations.

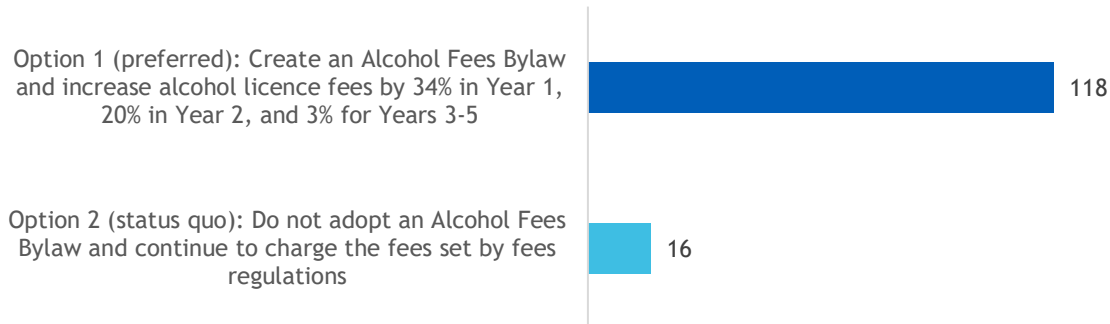
FEEDBACK THROUGH SUBMISSION FORMS

Individuals

Of the 134 individual respondents, 118 (88%) supported Option 1 (preferred), to create an Alcohol Fees Bylaw and increase alcohol licence fees by 34% in Year 1, 20% in Year 2, and 3% for Years 3-5.

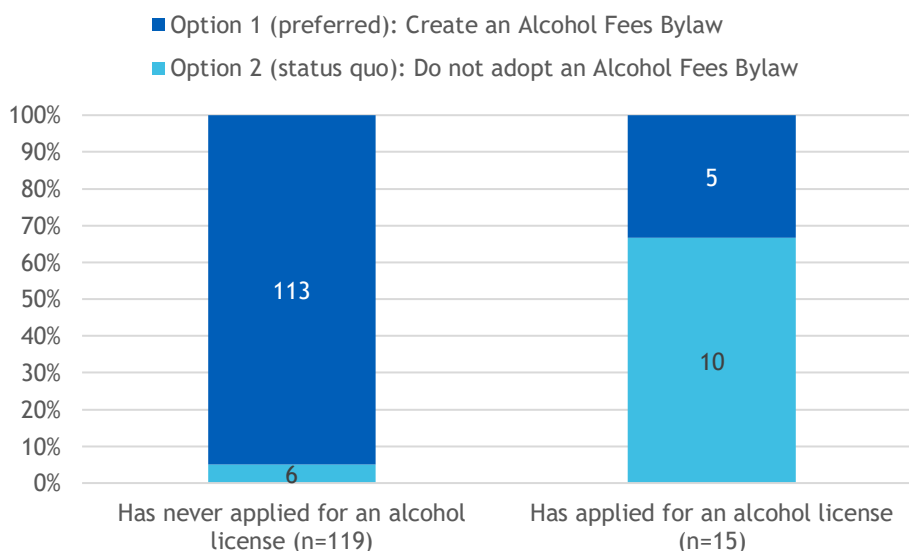
16 (12%) preferred Option 2 (status quo), to not adopt an Alcohol Fees Bylaw and continue to charge the alcohol licence fees set by fees regulations.

Which of the following options would you prefer? Individual responses



Respondents who have personally applied for an alcohol licence were less supportive of the proposed Bylaw than those who had never applied for an alcohol licence. A third of the 15 respondents with experience in alcohol licensing supported the proposed Bylaw (n = 5, 33%), compared to 95% (113 of 119) of respondents with no alcohol licensing experience.

Preferred option by experience with alcohol licensing Individual responses



Of the 134 individual respondents, 87 expanded on their answer.

The most common themes from those supporting Option 1 - to create an Alcohol Fees Bylaw and increase alcohol licence fees – were (comments mentioned once unless stated otherwise):

- Alcohol licensing costs should be user-pays (68 comments)
 - 40 wanted to see alcohol licensing costs be covered 100% by applicants, as opposed to the 95% intended in the proposed Bylaw

- Concern for the social harms of alcohol/wanting more control over alcohol provision/against rates funding a social harm (19 comments)
 - Five supported fewer liquor stores in general
- Suggestions for how alcohol is managed more broadly (two comments)
 - One respondent proposed an increasing tax placed on alcohol, similar to cigarettes
 - Another supported more frequent and harsher inspections of liquor retailers
- Local issues should be managed by local government, not central government

The most common themes from those that supported Option 2 - to not adopt an Alcohol Fees Bylaw and continue to charge the alcohol licence fees set by fees regulations – were (comments mentioned once unless stated otherwise):

- Times are already tough for businesses, don't want a fee increase (eight comments)
 - One commenter argued that liquor retailers uniquely face cost pressures from additional security expenses.
- Council should look for cost savings in licensing process/find efficiencies/reduce licensing fees (eight comments)
- The increase in fees would negatively impact hospitality/vibrancy in Hamilton (three comments)
- Comment/concern regarding the engagement process (three comments)
 - Two commentators claimed Council should have engaged more with key stakeholders such as business owners on this proposal
 - One believed Council should not indicate our preferred option in our consultation document
- Penalties/fines for non-compliant businesses should increase, instead of fees for all businesses (two comments)
- This Bylaw would result in more unregulated alcohol
- Need more clarity/transparency on how fees are used

Both supporters and those in opposition to the proposed Bylaw had suggestions for how alcohol licensing fees are set. These suggestions were (suggestions received one comment unless stated otherwise):

- Reduce or exclude licensing fees charged to non-profit/community group events (four comments)
- Fees reviewed every three years
- Fees charged should exceed the cost of alcohol licensing, to fund recovery/prevention of alcohol-related harm
- Hamilton should follow the model of the [Invercargill Licensing Trust](#). The licensing trust exclusively manages the development of venues licensed to sell alcohol, and profits are used to support local charities and social good
- Tiered fee structure

See the end of this report for a break down of individual respondent demographics.

Organisations

Seven organisations shared their views on the proposed Alcohol Fees Bylaw. Five organisations currently hold an alcohol licence, and two have never held an alcohol licence. Five of these organisations were advocacy groups, and two were private businesses.

We received two submissions from Hospitality New Zealand – one from the Hospitality New Zealand Waikato Branch President, and one from the Central North Island Regional Manager. These have been counted as two distinct submissions.

All organisations who submitted on this consultation except for one opposed the proposed Bylaw and preferred the status quo.

The themes from these comments were similar to those from individuals opposing the proposed Bylaw. Comments received one comment unless stated otherwise:

- Times are already tough for businesses, don't want a fee increase (four comments)
- Council should look for cost savings in licensing process/find efficiencies/reduce licensing fees (four comments)
- The increase in fees would negatively impact hospitality/vibrancy in Hamilton (three comments)
- Encourage central government to review alcohol licensing policies (e.g. risk rating, on vs off licence) (two comments)
- Penalties/fines for non-compliant businesses should increase, instead of fees for all businesses
- This Bylaw would result in more unregulated alcohol
- Should implement fee changes gradually over time
- A higher proportion of fees than the status quo should be covered by ratepayers
- Need more clarity/transparency on how fees are used

Verbal submitters

12 respondents have indicated interest in making a verbal submission.

While 84% of all respondents supported Option 1: Create an Alcohol Fees Bylaw, only half of verbal submitters (50%) were in support of this option.

Therefore, the 12 verbal submitters are less likely to support Option 1, and are more likely to support Option 2, than the 129 submitters who chose not to speak to their submission.

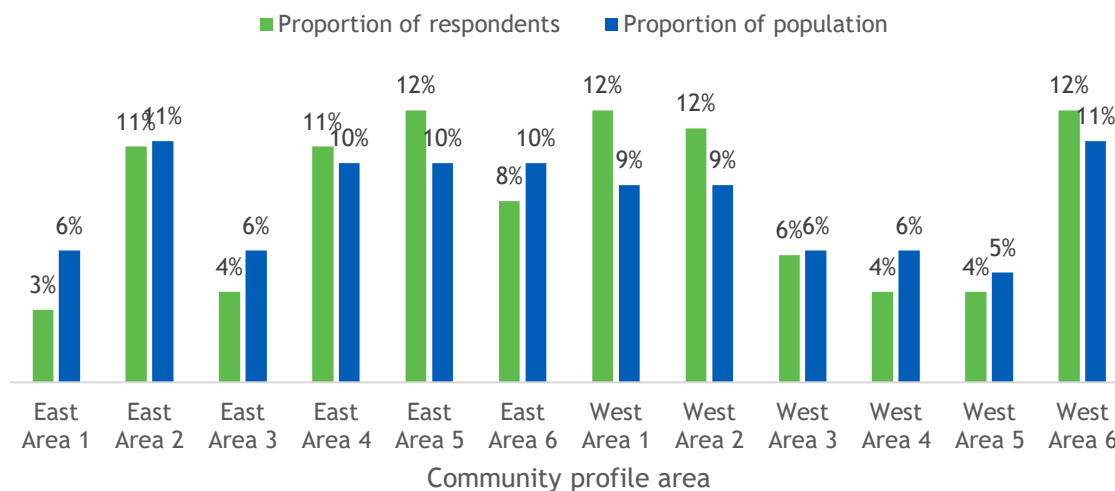
Demographics of individual respondents

This data helps Council understand which groups of the community are engaging with us. Answering demographic questions is optional for all respondents – the demographic information of those who decided to share it are summarised below.

Hamilton city profile statistics are from the 2023 Census published by Stats NZ.

Location

Area Comparison

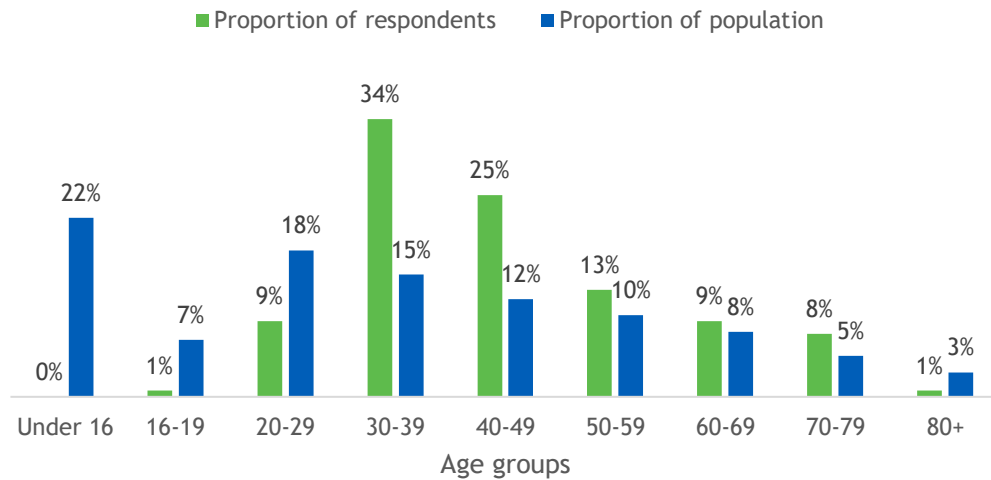


See table below for a list of suburbs in these community profile areas.

Community Profile Area	List of suburbs
East Area 1	Flagstaff
East Area 2	Callum Brae, Huntington, Rototuna, Rototuna North
East Area 3	Chartwell, Chedworth, Harrowfield, Queenwood
East Area 4	Enderley, Fairfield, Fairview Downs
East Area 5	Claudlands, Hamilton East, Peachgrove
East Area 6	Hillcrest, Ruakura, Riverlea, Silverdale
West Area 1	Avalon, Beerescourt, Forest Lake, Northgate, Pukete, St Andrews, Te Rapa
West Area 2	Crawshaw, Grandview Heights, Nawton, Rotokauri, Western Heights
West Area 3	Aberdeen, Dinsdale, Temple view
West Area 4	Frankton, Maeroa, Swarbrick
West Area 5	Hamilton Central, Hamilton Lake, Hospital, Whitiara
West Area 6	Bader, Deanwell, Fitzroy, Glenview, Melville, Peacocke

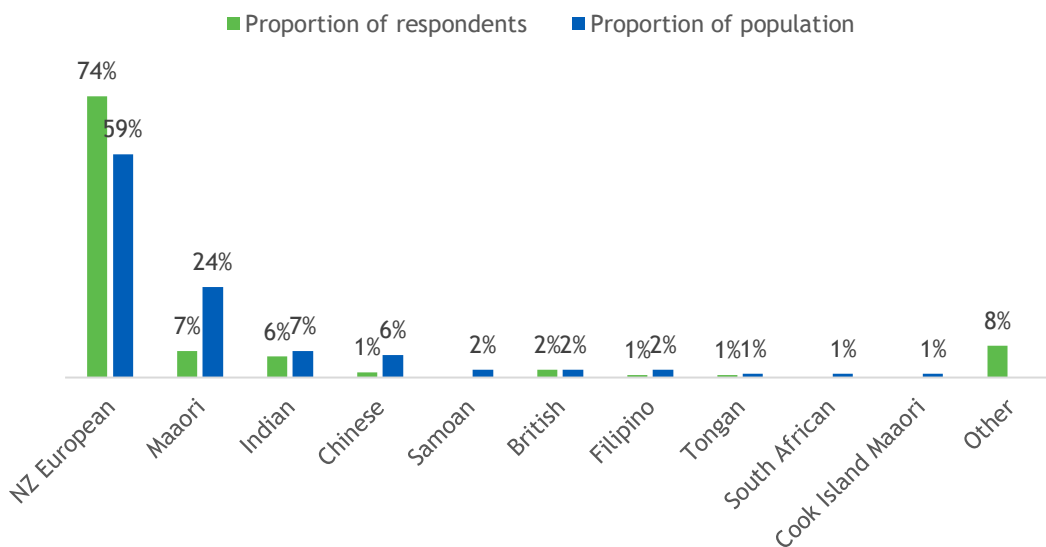
Age

Age comparison



Ethnicity

Ethnicity comparison



FEEDBACK FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to analysing formal submissions to the consultation, we also analysed comments made on Hamilton City Council Facebook posts relating to this consultation.

Council made one Facebook post relating to the survey, published 28 January with advertising spend behind so it was being pushed to audiences throughout the whole consultation period. This received 30 comments, and 26 replies to comments. 18 of these came from Hamilton City Council. Across all comments left by the community, 34 were relevant to the consultation. The feedback received from these comments has been summarised below.

- Should be user pays (seven comments)
- Fees should be 100% on applicants (six comments)

- Want more transparency on how alcohol licence fees are calculated/spent (five comments)
- General support for the status quo (two comments)
- Concern for cost impact on businesses (two comments)
- Want less alcohol retailers in general (one comment)
- Cost of alcohol related harm should be incorporated into alcohol licensing fees (one comment)

ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

GOAL

To gather comprehensive feedback on the proposed Alcohol Fees Bylaw 2025, particularly from directly impacted stakeholders, ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and informed decision-making.

OBJECTIVES

- More than 50 submissions are received during the consultation period.
- All media coverage of the draft Bylaw is balanced.
- Any and all inaccurate social media commentary on Hamilton City Council's pages will be responded to publicly with the correct facts.

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME

Council understands the community's view on the proposed Bylaw and subsequent fee increases.

ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN REVIEW

The campaign tactics for the community engagement:

- Information, including consultation documents, available at all 7 Hamilton City Libraries and Hamilton City Council reception
- Email to all current alcohol licence holders
- Email to pre-engagement industry stakeholders
- Organic social media post
- Social media advertising on Facebook
- Media release to local media and public signs ups
- One-on-one support for additional information
- Information to customer services
- Comprehensive FAQs
- Two public notices, one in the Waikato Times and one in Waikato Local.
- Consultation website page.

ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

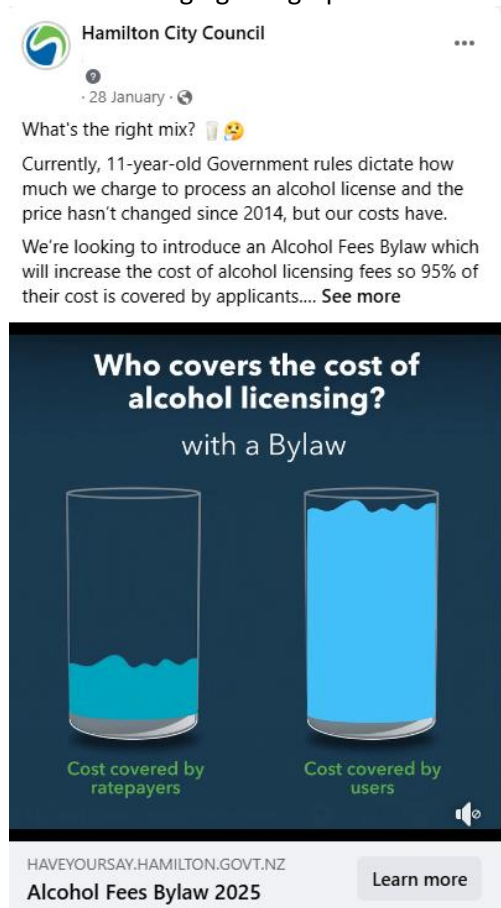
SUBMISSION FORM (ONLINE & PAPER COPY)

Council heard from 134 community members and seven organisations. All submissions were submitted digitally, no hard copies were returned.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Combining our organic and paid social media reach on Facebook. Our media featured an animation showing the cost split between ratepayers and applicants. Here is a summary of the engagement:

- 49,380 views
- Reached 29,361 people
- 670 clicks
- 104 post interactions
- 63% of the engagement was from people who do not follow Hamilton City Council on the platform
- The average watch time of the animation video was 5sec and in that time, all the key messaging and graphic were visible.



WEBSITE

The below statistics relate to the <https://haveyoursay.hamilton.govt.nz/alcohol-fees-bylaw-2025> webpage between 20 January 2025 to 5 March 2025:

- 1,001 page views
- 803 active users
- 1.51 views per user
- 28 seconds is the average engagement time per user

EMAILS/ LETTERS

On 21 January, an email was sent to all current alcohol licence holders (221) in Hamilton with details about the proposal, how it impact them, FAQs and a link to provide feedback.

This direct communication was:

- Viewed by 71% of recipients (156)
- Opened 1288 times by those 156 people
- 23 people clicked the link to read the statement of proposal
- 11 people clicked the link to the consultation webpage