

# **ALMR Press Notice**

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*Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers*

**8 January 2008**

## **Supermarket solutions**

In a concerted lobbying campaign, the *ALMR* has met the Licensing Minister at DCMS and Home Office officials to press for urgent Government action to tackle irresponsible off-trade promotions. This follows hard on the heels of briefings to the Prime Minister, No 10 Policy Unit and Department of Health before Christmas.

Nick Bish, Chief Executive said:

"We had some extremely positive meetings with the Licensing Minister and Home Office Alcohol Team during which we put forward a number of well-received proposals and urged them to act firmly and decisively to send a clear message to the supermarkets and consumers. There has been much talk about 24 hour licensing, but this is only a reality in the off-trade sector. The number of 24 hour off-licences has doubled since the Licensing Act was introduced - almost all of the new ones are supermarkets. It is no surprise, therefore, that retail sales of alcohol through the off-trade are up 50% since 1997 and are 24% cheaper in real terms over the same period. If the Government is serious about alcohol consumption then it must do more to encourage all industry sectors to adopt a more responsible approach to alcohol retailing."

He went on:

"During the meetings we explained the changes which had taken place in respect of off-sales and the fact that all restrictions on hours and siting of alcohol had effectively been swept away. This has led to the explosion of alcohol promotions within supermarkets - at the entrance, beside foodstuff and even at the checkout. We also explained the implications of below-cost selling on neighbouring pubs and bars, as well as overall levels of consumption. Pubs and bars themselves now face paying 44% more for Carlsberg or Grolsch than their customers can buy it at Sainsbury or Tesco - that cannot be right."

At the meetings, the *ALMR* urged the Government to impose a ban on below cost selling, but also put forward a number of other recommendations for revisions to Guidance to address this problem:

- the presumption of longer licensing hours for supermarkets should be removed from Guidance - currently supermarkets are allowed to sell alcohol at any time when the shop is open
- re-introduce controls on the siting of alcohol displays
- references in Guidance to control of irresponsible promotions should explicitly refer to off-trade offers

Nick Bish concluded:

"These are simple steps which the Government could and should take to give a clear signal to the supermarkets that they need to put their house in order – pubs and bars are stamping out irresponsible promotions, it is high time they did so too."

-ENDS-

**The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers**

9B Walpole Court, Ealing Studios, London, W5 5ED

Tel: **020 8579 2080** Fax: 020 8579 7579 E-mail: [info@almr.org.uk](mailto:info@almr.org.uk)

## **Notes for Editors**

1. *The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR) is the only national trade body dedicated to representing the interests of pub and bar operators and providing their companies with business support and advice. There are currently 89 companies in membership, between them operating 15,000 outlets – of which more than 4,000 are managed operations. The bulk of ALMR membership is drawn from small independent companies operating 50 outlets or fewer under their own branding.*
2. *An ALMR paper (published in November 2007) was sent to No 10 and other government departments and used at the meetings at DCMS and the Home Office. Copies are available on request*

For Further information please contact

*Kate Nicholls on 07958 796238 or*

*Nick Bish on 020 8579 2080 or 07831 778993*

### **Nick Bish Chief Executive**

Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers  
9B Walpole Court, Ealing Studios, London, W5 5ED  
tel: 020 8579 2080 or fax: 020 8579 7579

**Registered office - as above. Registered in England & Wales No: 3964186**

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