**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**14 JUNE 2024**

E Tipu e Rea Whānau Services, Hāpai Te Hauora, Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira and Communities Against Alcohol Harm, are a collective called Te Waiora, made up of community, iwi and Māori health and social service providers and are deeply concerned with the recent article published on the data collected by the New Zealand Police on the high level of harmed caused by alcohol in our communities. The article quoted billions of dollars in harm, with only limited police resourcing put towards alcohol harm prevention.

The police estimated the harm from alcohol to be about $7.8 billion a year, compared to $1.8 billion for illegal drugs, but with no budget given to police to reduce this harm. Te Waiora want more to be done to support the police to take alcohol harm more seriously, and to prevent further harm.

Our concerrns as a collective are:

* Only 0.84 per cent (84 out of 10,000) of the police workforce are trained Alcohol Harm Prevention Officers (AHPO). More trained Alcohol Harm Prevention Officers would help to support alcohol harm reducing initiatives.
* Of those 84, just 37 are full-time, and the other 47 do alcohol harm prevention work alongside other duties, such as community or rural policing.
* Police are aware that alcohol was a key contributing factor in crimes of violence, homicide, and family abuse.
* Out of the police budget of 2.5 billion, none of it goes to training police in alcohol harm prevention- yet it is the cause of significant harm.

Although E Tipu e Rea, Hāpai Te Hauora, Te Runanga o Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Communities Against Alcohol Harm want the police to place more priority on resourcing more alcohol harm training and increasing the number of prevention officers, the collective also agree with the Police Commissioner that new measures should be considered, including allowing bottle stores to only open during daytime hours and raising the price of alcohol.

Zoe Hawke, CEO from E Tipu e Rea, believes that it is a *“combination of more police resourcing and looking at changes to things like opening hours and pricing and fewer alcohol shops that would make the difference – both are very important in the quest to prevent alcohol harm. As an organisation who works with young parents and hapū māmā, we are particularly concerned about the impacts of fetal alcohol syndrome, we need mātua taiohi, and their tamariki to be free of the harms of alcohol now and in the future, we also have a sense that harm is greater than the police estimate “*

Aidan Ritchie, from Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira, supports the suggestion that *“an increase in focus on targeting bottle stores that supply to problem drinkers or sell single serve cans of high strength alcohol would go a long way to create change. We do not need our rangatahi, our future generations, to know that alcohol harms and that we are doing everything to prevent it”*

Hāpai te Hauora CEO, Jacqui Harema, says *“Off license alcohol outlets have been intentionally located within our low socioeconomic communities, placing the burden of harm on whānau Māori. It is imperative that the NZ Police have appropriate resources allocated to ensure they can play their part in preventing entrenched and inequitable alcohol related harm in our communities.”*

As a collective made up of community, iwi, and Māori providers, we are saddened that the police have said that their own staff have a lack of knowledge about alcohol licensing hearing preparation and management and require training so they can provide better advocacy for the communities benefit overall. We fully support the police being resourced to make this happen, additionally we strongly support changes to the way alcohol is sold in our communities as part of a comprehensive

joined up strategy to urgently address the harm that whānau and our communities see and experience on the daily.