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Thought I would pass on my views on minimum pricing. I used to smoke and every time the budget put them up I still purchased the same amount of cigarettes (I stopped when I first became a father). What you do is just buy cigarettes where ever they are cheapest. I believe that is the same with alcohol and that many people but it where it is cheapest. Because there are no controls in a supermarket as to how much that person can buy, there are then no controls on how much that person drinks. If those people were drinking in my pub, myself and my staff would be controlling just how much somebody could drink. In other words I do not believe price makes a significant difference on how much somebody drinks, but I do believe where people drink can make a difference.

As far as I can work out cheap cider that homeless people drink on the streets will now not be cheap, cans of premium lager will be about £5 per case of 24 more expensive in supermarkets, wine will be around £4.20 cheapest bottle and spirits will not increase at all in general. I do not believe this will have any affect on what and how much young people spend on alcohol. My view is that the minimum price should be at least double what they are proposing. In my opinion it is the younger generation that are binge drinking and causing problems on the street late at night, they simply load up at home on cheap wine and spirits then go out to pubs and bars where they hardly spend any money. When these people are ejected or refused service in these bars, the public presume they have been drinking in those pubs and that they are to blame for them getting so drunk. While times are hard for these people with little disposable income they will spend it on cheap drink from supermarkets, there is too great a difference in pricing between supermarkets and pubs. If an 18 yo goes into a supermarket he/she can buy 24 can of stella artois and a bottle of vodka for about £30, he/she can then share that with three other people and get blind drunk for £7.50 per head. The person in the supermarket selling the alcohol has no responsibility to how much that person drinks just what he/she buys. Myself as a landlord, along with all my staff have a responsibility to how much someone drinks, whilst this is never full proof in stopping someone getting drunk, I believe that it helps control more effectively what and how much someone drinks. Licensees that do not control in a suitable way should pay more rates to help police costs. I know I probably have a bias view as I am in the pub trade, but I do feel we are better equipped to control drinking. While ever there is such a divide in prices between the supermarket and pubs some people will always choose the cheaper option.

There is much talk into what can save the dying pub trade. Here are my ideas

- 1) Increase minimum pricing, closing the gap in price between pubs and supermarkets.
- 2) Create fairness in business rates - pubs, cinemas and petrol stations are the only two businesses where it is not based solely on location and square footage. For some reason revenue comes into it. So because someone makes a success of a pub he pays more vat, then gets hit with more rates. Greggs don't pay more rates than the bakery next door despite them taking more revenue.
- 3) A slightly more radical solution to helping pubs make money is to allow them sole rights to sell alcohol. In many parts of Australia you cannot buy alcohol from supermarkets, only from specialised off licenses (many of which are placed within public houses)
- 4) Make irresponsible licensees pay more in rates and let responsible ones pay less, that way the right people are covering the council and police costs of the area. I pay £16,000 a year in rates (this will be doubled in 2015 at the next review as we have increased our trade so much since last review in 2010. The Star pays about £3500 a year in rates. During my three years in