

Just Water Entrepreneur Breaking Soft Drink Habit of New Zealanders



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Customers pay for water, which costs about \$1 per litre, making it cheaper than a soft drink, he said, basing his calculation on a 2.5-litre cola costing \$3.99. Falkenstein says the novelty of the water cooler encourages people to drink water. "It's a novelty. It is a hell of a lot better for them to drink tap water than coke, but they won't drink tap water."

Professional research will start in the near future but Falkenstein said Just Water's surveys found families were choosing water over soft drink.

"Kids will come in and would rather take water than go to the fridge and take soft drinks."

He admitted he was not a philanthropist because he was making money from the water but said he was concerned by the rate of type-two diabetes in New Zealand and its cost on the nation's health and economy.

He tried to join the Counties Manakau District Health Board's strategic committee to offer "lateral thinking" on diabetes but was turned down because of a conflict of private and public sector interests.

Falkenstein advocates a sugar tax on all products with over 10 per cent sugar, reducing to 4 per cent over six years.

"If you accept that sugar is addictive, you can't just say let's just put a tax on sugar products immediately because people won't be able to handle it, so I am saying, wean people off it over six years and allow manufacturers time to reduce the amount of sugar in their products."

Diabetes New Zealand national president Chris Baty said sugar tax is one of many options that needs to be considered in the battle against obesity.

"There has to be something, because without a doubt our increasing rates of obesity is leading to all sorts of health issues, diabetes, being one of the main ones."

She said the government needed to consider its success in decreasing smoking. "Why do they put so much tax on tobacco? The reason they put it on is because every time there is a price increase in tobacco there is an equally marked decrease in smoking."

"Obesity isn't as simple as giving up smoking but we have got to start somewhere. People are getting diabetes earlier, which means they have complications for longer, which costs money this country cannot afford to keep them well."

"I know what people will say is that this is nanny state-ish but it is not. If an individual on their own in modern society cannot deal with this, it needs to be a societal issue."

Baty supported Falkenstein's work, saying providing alternative options helped.

Diabetes, she said, had become both a health and an economic issue, with diabetes twice as prevalent in Pacifica men, who develop it up to 20 years earlier than Pakeha men.

"It is very frightening. They are developing it in their 30s and 40s when they are at their peak. This is an economic issue because that's the age of peak working life when they need to be supporting family, not in dialysis wards."

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With more than 20 years experience and over 40,000 satisfied customers you can trust Just Water to provide your business, family or organisation with the best quality water and the highest level of hygiene and service available, no matter what your budget.

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