

**PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

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27 April 2008

**ALCOHOL TAX INCREASE AND NEW FUNDING WELCOMED**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) has welcomed today's announcement by Health Minister Nicola Roxon that the price of premixed alcohol drinks ("Alcopops") will be dramatically increased. This will have a major impact on drinking among young people – especially young women, and is a much-needed response to the growing problem of binge drinking.

The Government has increased the tax on premixed drinks from \$39 to \$67 a litre as from midnight. This coincides with research released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) showing that teenage girls are out-drinking boys.

"This is a timely response to a growing social problem" said PHA President Professor Mike Daube. There is now dramatic evidence showing that young women are out-drinking their male counterparts – and unfortunately many of them drink to get drunk. This has been helped by the ready availability of cheap spirit-based drinks, which have become the first drink of choice for young women. Alcopops are the first drink for as many as 60% of girls."

"We know that price is the most effective single measure in reducing alcohol consumption, especially by young people," Professor Daube said. "This increase will make a real dent in one of our biggest current social problems."

The PHA also welcomed the announcement by Minister Roxon that next month's Budget will see a major investment in prevention. "Some of the greatest gains in health can come from prevention – if it is adequately funded. Currently less than 2% of our health spending goes to prevention, which the Prime Minister recently described as "crazy". We know that more than 50% of cancers, 50% of heart disease and 90% of type 2 diabetes can be prevented, but this needs adequate funding. It is exciting news for all concerned with the public health that this government is willing to provide proper support for prevention".

ENDS

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