

30 May 2011

## **Alcohol Industry-funded campaign is a ‘public relations stunt’**

Leading health and related organisations are calling for the drinks industry’s Drinkwise organisation and the Sporting Hall of Fame to support the phasing out of televised sports sponsorship by the alcohol industry.

In Melbourne today (30 May), Drinkwise and the Sporting Hall of Fame are announcing a new component of a program entitled “Under Your Influence”, which they claim is about “developing a safer and healthier drinking culture that picks up on the crucial role parents and other influential adults play as role models”.

The National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) has slammed this as a “meaningless public relations stunt” as the alcohol industry established and funds Drinkwise which has six senior drinks industry representatives on its Board.

“How can anyone take seriously Drinkwise claims to be concerned about drinking and young people when the alcohol industry spends hundreds of millions of dollars exposing children and young people to alcohol promotion,” NAAA Executive Spokesperson, Mr David Templeman said today.

“The industry itself is investing massively in associating drinking and drinking cultures with children’s sporting heroes and the function in Melbourne in the NAAA’s opinion is just another Drinkwise public relations campaign.”

Mr Templeman said that Drinkwise still remarkably claimed to be “independent” despite its alcohol industry funding and links, and today’s announcement will do nothing to counter the impact on young people of televised alcohol sponsorship.

“Alcohol sponsorship is out of control, with no regulation or constraints,” Mr Templeman said. “Key health authorities have recommended that children and young people should not be exposed to this form of alcohol promotion.

“Drinkwise will continue to have no credibility until it supports measures that work, even if that means offending its drinks industry funders.”

Mr Templeman said that Drinkwise and the Sporting Hall of Fame should show that their concern about alcohol and young people is genuine by making a clear public statement urging the alcohol industry to stop spending hundreds of millions of dollars promoting a drinking culture, and associating children’s role models with alcohol.

“The NAAA believes that anything short of this makes events like today’s launch look like a meaningless public relations exercise,” Mr Templeman said.

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Contact Brian Flanagan for the NAAA on 02 6215 9802 (w), or 0400 860 058 (m)**