

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
MEDIA RELEASE

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CALL FOR MANDATORY DECLARATION OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING SPEND

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is calling for mandatory declarations of alcohol industry advertising and promotional expenditure.

President of the PHAA Professor Mike Daube said, "The drinks industry, and groups such as the distillers, are very good at opposing action, but they do not provide even the most basic information that will help us to understand the influences on young people to buy alcohol products."

"We are seeing massive efforts by industry groups such as the distillers to counter tax increases and public education with relentless promotion through advertising, sponsorships, bottle shop promotions, discounting, websites and other forms of marketing," he said.

"Youth and binge drinking have been increasing in recent years, with very serious consequences for the health and well-being of young people. Australian kids are as exposed to alcohol advertising as the over-18s. Is it any wonder we have problems with under-age binge drinking? The drinks industry spends hundreds of millions of dollars promoting its products, with no effective controls. They advertise heavily in all media, at times when millions of children are viewing. They promote their products to young people through sponsorship that turns sporting heroes – such as the Australian cricket team – into alcohol billboards."

"A survey last year found that during one afternoon televised sporting event the alcohol sponsor's logo was clearly visible for 75% of playing time."

"The major televised sporting codes such as AFL, cricket, rugby league and rugby union are awash in alcohol sponsorship. The PHAA has called for proper controls over this form of promotion, which makes a mockery of solemn statements about players' responsibilities as role models."

"The distillers are desperate to oppose the alcopops tax because this helps to reduce drinking by young people. But we also need to know what else they are doing to promote their products in efforts to undermine the tax and influence kids to drink these and other products. This means public reporting on all forms of advertising and promotion by the drinks industry, as well as indirect forms of promoting alcopops and other spirits such as price discounting and two-for-one offers."

"Drinks companies should either reveal their full promotional spend or face a legislative requirement that this information be provided regularly to governments and the community. This will ensure that we know exactly what is being done to encourage drinking by young people, and how much effort is going into undermining measures like the alcopops tax and public education programs. Alcohol is no ordinary commodity: its promotion should be much more effectively controlled and regulated," said Professor Daube.

For further information/comment:

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