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PHAA - Support alcopops tax to reduce harm

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has called on all Senators to support the Alcopops Tax legislation due to be considered by the Senate this week (Drug Action Week). The PHAA emphasised the strong support for the tax from public health and alcohol and drug organisations, as became clear at a meeting of groups from these sectors hosted by PHAA and VicHealth last week.

Representatives from more than 20 key public health organisations met in Canberra last week ahead of Drug Action Week to discuss alcohol policy issues, including the proposed 'alcopops' legislation. The group emphasised the importance of an alcohol policy designed to reduce alcohol related harm in Australia, with the alcopops tax identified as one component.

The Minister for Health and Ageing along with the Shadow Minister and key crossbench Senators also attended the meeting to speak about their perspectives and hear the recommendations from experts in the field.

"These experts agreed on the importance of a comprehensive alcohol tax policy that is harm-based, while also allowing specific targeting of at risk groups. The Alcopops Tax fits this category and should be passed with the additional measures agreed, including a further \$50 million for sponsorship replacement, other community initiatives and stronger labelling," said Professor Mike Daube, President of the PHAA. "There is clear evidence that the tax is working, and the additional measures negotiated by the Greens and Senator Xenophon will further increase its impact."

"While the alcopops tax alone will not solve all the problems associated with alcohol in our community, it is an important part of the comprehensive approach that is required. The PHAA and the public health community generally have endorsed the alcopops tax as part of a continuum of measures from education and prevention through to treatment and care. Research shows that price does have an impact on people's drinking choices and taxation measures must be considered as part of the broader package of initiatives," according to Michael Moore, CEO of the PHAA.

"Drug Action Week, coordinated by the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA) is focussing on the theme '*Alcohol is a drug – TOO!*' It is important that key public health groups are able to put forward a clear vision for addressing alcohol-related harm," said Professor Daube.

For further information/comment:

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