

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
MEDIA RELEASE

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PASSAGE OF ALCOPOPS LEGISLATION A BIG WIN FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has hailed the passing of the alcopops tax legislation in the Senate today as a significant victory for prevention and public health in Australia.

“The government should be congratulated for staring down alcohol interests in driving this important legislation through parliament. The passage of this legislation by the Senate is an important step forward in terms of reducing alcohol related harm in the community. We are also delighted to see cross party support for the legislation,” said Professor Mike Daube, President of the PHAA.

“Experts are 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 there is clear evidence that the tax is working. Data from the Australian Taxation Office has shown that since the new tax rate for alcopops has been in effect, total spirits consumed has decreased by 8 per cent.

“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,” said Professor Daube.

“The Australian Government has developed a comprehensive National Binge Drinking Strategy that includes the alcopops tax, but has also involved the development of a marketing campaign and the announcement of community grants to a range of services addressing binge drinking at the local level. The Australian Government should be congratulated for taking some tough decisions to try to reverse the current statistics on alcohol related harm,” said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer of the PHAA.

“A Newspoll survey commissioned by the PHAA, Heart Foundation, Cancer Council and Action on Smoking and Health late last year indicated that Australians overwhelmingly support increased alcopops and tobacco taxes if funds raised are used for preventive health programs. 84% of respondents indicated support for the alcopops tax if most of the revenue was used to fund preventive health programs and 57% still supported the alcopops tax irrespective of how the revenue was used. The community understands the importance of taxation measures in reducing alcohol related harm,” said Mr Moore.

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