

THE PROBLEM

- Young people experience disproportionate levels of alcohol-related harms.
- Exposure to alcohol marketing shapes young people's attitudes towards drinking and behaviours.^{1,2}
- Alcohol marketing in Australia is more prolific than ever, with an unprecedented number of platforms for advertising including through social media and the sponsorship of sporting and cultural events.^{3,4}
- The current self-regulatory environment for alcohol marketing in Australia is inadequate for protecting young people from alcohol marketing.^{5,6}
- Leading health authorities, including the World Health Organization and the Australian Medical Association, as well as international scientific reviews, recommend restrictions on alcohol marketing as part of a comprehensive approach to reducing alcohol-related harms.^{7,8,9}

THE NEED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

The Commonwealth Government needs to act to protect young people, beginning with:

1. Immediately closing the loophole that allows alcohol advertising during live sporting broadcasts before 8.30pm on commercial free-to-air television.
2. Replacing the current system of industry self-regulation with a legislative framework for regulating alcohol advertising, overseen by an independent body, with mandatory controls which cover all types of marketing activities, flexible enough to adapt and respond to changing environments, and include penalties for non-compliance.
3. Phasing-out alcohol sponsorship of sporting and cultural events that expose young people to alcohol promotions.

In addition to the above, we call for a Parliamentary Inquiry into the impact of alcohol marketing on young people.

THE EVIDENCE ON ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- A review of 12 longitudinal studies of over 38,000 young people has shown that the volume of alcohol advertising they are exposed to influences the age that they start drinking and their consumption levels. The review concluded "that alcohol advertising and promotion increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol."²
- A cross-sectional survey of 1,113 Australian adolescents (aged 12 to 17 years) explored the relationships between multiple drinking behaviours (initiation, recent consumption and regular consumption) and various types of advertising (television, magazine, newspaper, internet, billboard, bottleshop, bar and promotional material). Alcohol advertising across a range of media was found to strongly influence the drinking patterns of young people, with the impact most pronounced on initiation into drinking.¹⁰
- A cross-sectional survey of 6,651 school students (mean age = 13.95 years) across four countries found that exposure to online alcohol marketing, and exposure to alcohol-branded sport sponsorship, both increased young adolescents' intention to drink and also increased the odds that they had been drinking in the past 30 days.¹¹

THE UBIQUITOUS NATURE OF ALCOHOL MARKETING

- The volume of alcohol marketing to which young Australians are exposed is unprecedented.
- Young people are exposed to alcohol marketing through traditional media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines and billboards, and also through the internet, including social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.^{12,13}
- Alcohol marketing also occurs in the form of sponsorship of cultural and sporting events. Studies show that alcohol sponsorship in sport is not only associated with hazardous drinking by sporting participants¹⁴, it also communicates strong messages about alcohol brands and drinking that are absorbed by children.
- During the *Bathurst 1000* in 2008, those who watched the whole race (from 10.35am until 5.05pm) were exposed to 35 minutes of alcohol advertising including in-break alcohol advertisements and sponsorship. This audience included an estimated 117,000 children and young people aged 5-17 years.¹⁵

- An Australian study of 164 children aged 5 to 12 years found that 76% of them were able to correctly match at least one sport with its relevant sponsor.³
- A survey of 155 young people (aged 9 to 15 years) in Western Australia found that 75% recognised Bundy Bear and correctly associated him with an alcoholic product.¹⁶
- A study in Sydney and Wollongong found that alcohol advertisements made up 22% (n=416) of all of the outdoor advertising surrounding schools. For each square kilometre there were 25 alcohol advertisements.¹⁷

THE REGULATION OF ALCOHOL MARKETING

- There are many flaws in the self-regulated Alcohol Beverages Advertising (ABAC) Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code system, including:
 - The system is voluntary and does not cover the whole alcohol industry;
 - It does not have the authority to penalise code breaches, nor provide certainty that a non-compliant advertisement will be modified or removed;
 - It only deals with the content of advertisements, not the placement;
 - It fails to cover many substantial forms of alcohol advertising such as sponsorship of sport, music or other cultural events, gift with purchase, or product placement (e.g. in music videos);
 - It requires complaints to be first lodged with the Advertising Standards Board (ASB) but this acts as a barrier to lodging complaints about specific products and a range of other alcohol marketing.
 - The process is entirely contingent on community members making complaints; many may not have the motivation, confidence and awareness required to engage with the cumbersome complaints system.¹⁸
- International evidence shows that in countries with stricter alcohol advertising regulations there is a lower prevalence of hazardous drinking.¹⁹
- In Australia, several voluntary codes and guides seek to give the impression that alcohol marketing is appropriately regulated, but this is not the case.
- The alcohol industry's current system of self-regulation, the ABAC, has consistently been found to be ineffective by studies that have examined compliance of advertisements with the ABAC.^{20,21,22} Several Government reviews have also highlighted the deficiencies of the ABAC.^{23,24}
- The ABAC was established over 20 years ago when media channels and advertising techniques were less diverse and sophisticated than today.
- Alcohol advertising is currently permitted at any time as part of the broadcast of a live sporting event on weekends and public holidays. Several studies show that this exemption for live sport contributes significantly to the frequency and amount of alcohol advertising to which young people are exposed on television.^{25,5}

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR ACTION

- A majority of Australian adults (71%) believe that alcohol advertising and promotions influence the behaviour of people aged under 18 years.²⁶
- Two-thirds (67%) of Australian adults support a ban on alcohol advertising on television before 8.30pm.²⁶
- Three-quarters of parents support the introduction of policies to restrict unhealthy food, beverage and alcohol sponsorship of children's and elite sports.²⁷

¹ Wyllie A, et al. Responses to televised alcohol advertisements associated with drinking behaviour of 10–17-year-olds. *Addiction* 93 (3): 361-371. 1998

² Anderson, P, et al. Impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on adolescent alcohol use: a systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Alcohol Alcsm* 44:229-43. 2009

³ Pettigrew S, et al. Game on: do children absorb sports sponsorship messages? *Public Health Nutrition* (1):1-8. 2013

⁴ Lindsay S, et al. Eat, drink and gamble: marketing messages about 'risky' products in an Australian major sporting series. *BMC Public Health*. 13(719) 2013

⁵ Fielder L, et al. Exposure of children and adolescents to alcohol advertising on Australian metropolitan free-to-air television. *Addiction* 104(7):1157-65. 2009

⁶ Jones S, et al. How effective is the revised regulatory code for alcohol advertising in Australia? *Drug and Alcohol Review* 27(1):29-38. 2008

⁷ World Health Organization (WHO). *Global status report on alcohol and health, 2014 Edition*. Geneva: WHO. 2014

⁸ Australian Medical Association (AMA). *Alcohol marketing and young people*. Canberra: AMA. 2012

⁹ Anderson P, et al. Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of policies and programmes to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. *The Lancet* 373 (9682): 2234-2246. 2009

¹⁰ Jones, S, and Magee, C. Exposure to alcohol advertising and alcohol consumption among Australian Adolescents. *Alcohol Alcsm*. 46(5):630-637. 2011.

¹¹ de Bruijn A, et al. *Report on the impact of European alcohol marketing exposure on youth alcohol expectancies and youth drinking*. AMPHORA. 2012

¹² Carah, N. *Like, Comment, Share Alcohol brand activity on Facebook*. University of Queensland and Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Canberra. 2014

¹³ Winpenny EM, et al. Exposure of Children and Adolescents to Alcohol Marketing on Social Media Websites. *Alcohol Alcsm*. 2013

¹⁴ O'Brien K, et al. Alcohol Industry and Non-Alcohol Industry Sponsorship of Sportspeople and Drinking. *Alcohol Alcsm*. 46 (2): 210-213. 2011

¹⁵ Davoren S, and Sinclair C.A. Children and adolescent exposure to alcohol advertising during Bathurst 1000. *ANZJP* 36(1):90-91. 2012

¹⁶ Carter O, et al. Three-quarters of Australian children recognise Bundy R. Bear: alcohol advertising restrictions are not working. *ANZJP* 34(6):635-36. 2010

¹⁷ Kelly B, et al. The commercial food landscape: outdoor food advertising around primary schools in Australia. *ANZJP* 32(6):522-528. 2008

¹⁸ Management Committee of the ABAC Scheme. (2010). *The ABAC Scheme: Annual Report 2010*. Stirling, SA: ABAC Scheme Ltd.

¹⁹ Basque-Prous M, et al. Association between stricter alcohol advertising regulations and lower hazardous drinking across European countries. *Addiction*. May 2014

²⁰ Donovan K, et al. Magazine alcohol advertising compliance with the Australian Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Code. *Drug and Alcohol Review* 26 (1): 73-81.

²¹ Jones S, et al. Adolescent and young adult perceptions of Australian alcohol advertisements. *Journal of Substance Use* 14(6): 335-352. 2009

²² Pettigrew S, et al. Introducing and applying a new Australian alcohol advertising code. *Journal of Public Affairs* 13(1):72-83. 2013

²³ National Committee for the Review of Alcohol Advertising. *Review of the self-regulatory system for alcohol advertising*. Canberra, Department of Health. 2003

²⁴ Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy. *Communique*. 24 April 2009.

²⁵ Pettigrew S, et al. The extent and nature of alcohol advertising on Australian television. *Drug and Alcohol Review* 31:797-802. 2012

²⁶ Foundation for Alcohol Education and Research (FARE) *Annual Alcohol Poll*. Canberra: FARE. 2014

²⁷ Kelly B, et al. Views of children and parents on limiting unhealthy food, drink and alcohol sponsorship of elite and children's sports. *Public Health Nutrition* 16 (01): 130-135. 2013