



Sport urged to cut liquor deals

AUSTRALIA'S biggest three sporting leagues are under pressure to drop alcohol sponsorship after a dozen other codes effectively banned similar types of advertising and support.

Twelve leading sporting organisations - covering athletes in soccer, basketball, netball, swimming, cycling, hockey and others - have agreed to end all existing and future alcohol sponsorship agreements.

In exchange, the groups will share \$25 million in replacement government funding taken from new Alcopops tax revenues.

But the nation's biggest sports organisations -

AFL, NRL and Cricket Australia - have not yet signed up to the new program, prompting alcohol abuse experts to push for a similar approach.

"We urge the remaining sports such as AFL, NRL and cricket to start discussions with the government as to how they too can move away from their present role in exposing children to alcohol promotion," said Professor Mike Daube, co-chair of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol.

Sports Minister Kate Lundy, who announced the 'Be The Influence' strategy yesterday, said more sporting groups

were not part of the initiative partly due to funding issues.

"With \$25 million available, this is the best we can do," she said in Melbourne.

She did, however, praise the three big leagues for their own efforts in trying to reduce binge drinking.

Last week, the AFL announced a 10-year extension to a major sponsorship deal with Carlton United Brewers.

Cricket Australia is sponsored by VB while the NRL has commercial partnerships with Foster's and Diageo, which makes Bundaberg Rum.